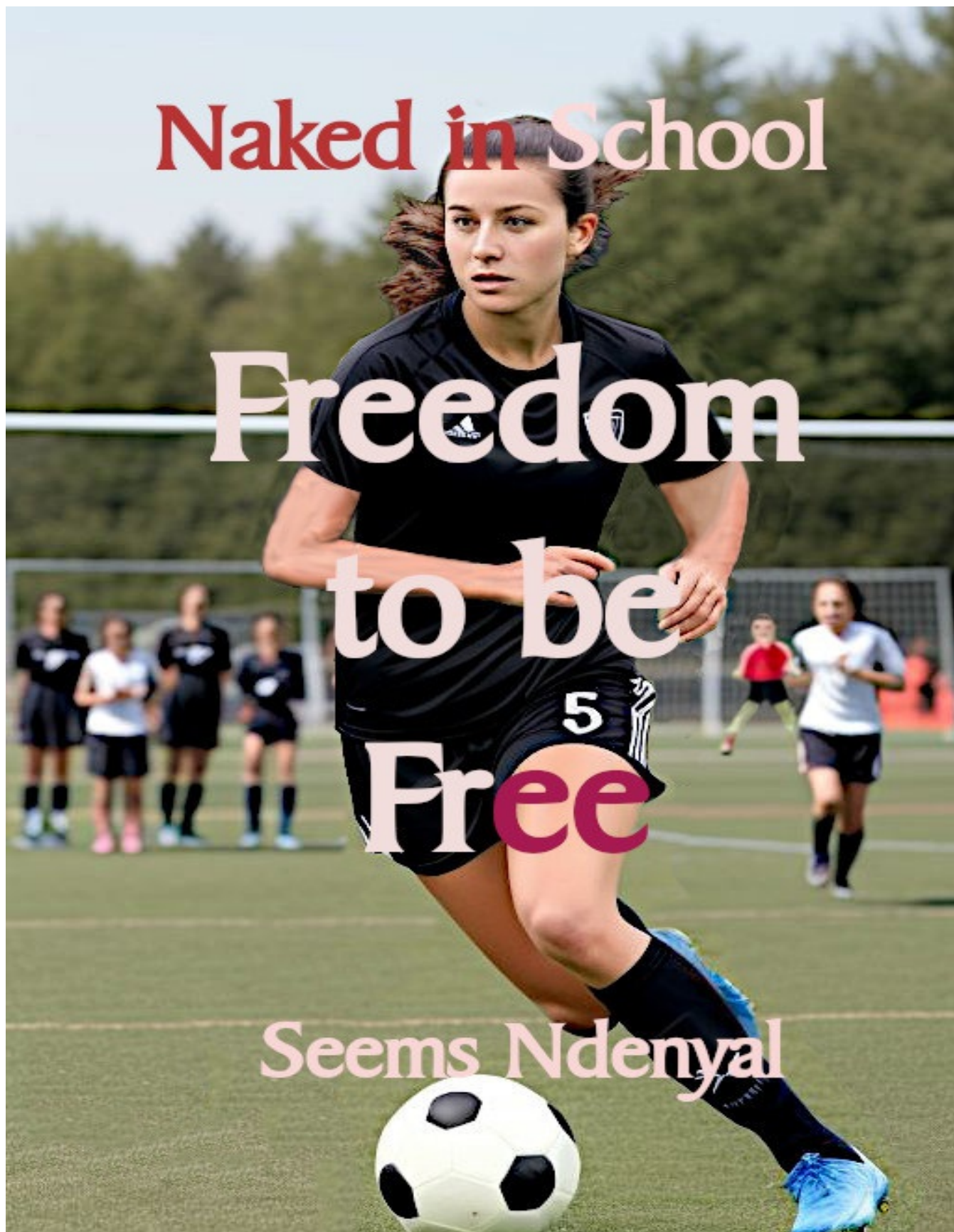


Naked in School

Freedom
to be
Free

Seems Ndenyal



Freedom to be Free — Naked in School

The “Kevin and Denise” series of stories has a somewhat chronological order to their events and if you’re new to them, you would enjoy them more if you read them in order. The suggested series reading order is *Kevin and Denise*; *Roger and Cynthia*; *The Exported Rebellion*; *Tom’s Troubles*; *Emma Comes in from the Cold*, and *The Vodou Physicist*, then this one. But there is no strict linear chronology between the stories, since in some cases, the events in one may overlap the events in others. Thus most stories can contain references to events mentioned in earlier ones, so many spoilers exist in the later stories for events in the earlier stories. However, the current story can be enjoyed without reading any of the others—with one caveat: This story is a follow-up, in a way, to *Emma* and has many references to the *Emma* story, many of which are major spoilers, and a few spoilers also exist for events which occur in *Vodou*.

This story is published as adult entertainment and contains material of an explicit, sexual nature.
If such materials offend you, please do not read any further.

All characters and other elements portrayed in this story, while they may be modeled after existing people, locations, and organizations, are completely fictional; any semblance to real people or places is entirely fictional. The author does not necessarily endorse any of the activities described.

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Foreword

Freedom is a romantic coming-of-age story which is set in the “Naked in School” universe. A young teen, emotionally abandoned by her father and harassed by the father’s girlfriend, tries to cope with her life while living essentially on her own. On the day she begins attending her first year in high school, she’s forced to face the school’s new nudity program while trying to cope with memories of her past, the problems of her nonexistent family life and her burgeoning adolescence.

Although this is a “Naked in School” story, any sex here is minimal, but where it occurs, it’s essential to the plot. If you’re looking for a tale with lots of sex, sorry; you won’t find it here. There are plenty of “Naked in School” stories which are replete with sex and sexual situations for those who search for them. In this story, you’ll read the tale of a resourceful young teen who finds a way to navigate through the pitfalls of adolescence while trying to maintain her own moral sensibilities. The plot relies heavily on Christian doctrine, teachings, and customs, but these elements are dealt with in a very respectful manner, as they guide our heroine to what she hopes will be happiness in her life.

Notice

This story is set in a fictional parallel universe very closely related to our Real World. In this story, the names of characters, organizations, localities, events, and references to cultural artifacts, which resemble those found in the Real World, are used to establish this story’s world setting. All of the identifying names and descriptions used here which are similar to any real people, locations, and organizations, exist in this story’s universe too and their use here is for strictly fictional purposes, to provide context and reality for the plot. Their use here does not imply that any events described as occurring in those places represent depictions of events involving any real organizations or characters. And of course, any similarities between any real person and any character appearing in this story are purely coincidental and unintentional. In other words, this is fiction.

Freedom to be Free - Naked in School

Chapter 1 - Drew Harper

“You get back here, you stupid bitch, and talk to me! Why didn’t you make sure there was enough pasta for dinner tonight? You know I always make pasta for your father’s Monday dinner! You’re a worthless fuckin’ slut!” Candace ranted as Drew shrugged on her backpack and headed for the door.

Drew Harper lived with her father and Candace Ames, her father’s girlfriend, and the two women were constantly at each other’s throats—mostly it was Candace who was the instigator of their arguments. Drew wasn’t even listening to Candace’s rants this morning; grocery shopping was certainly not one of her own chores—and the woman typically blamed anyone else to excuse her own procrastination. Drew had to get to school; this was her first school day. She was an entering freshman at Memorial High School. Ignoring Candace, Drew dashed out the door.

She had a lot on her mind that morning; chiefly the question of how she could get another chance to try out for the Memorial High girls’ soccer team. She had missed the tryouts the previous week, having had a bad cold and fever. When she called the school office to see if she could get another chance, they told her that she’d have to see the coach and then a counselor, if a P.E. class schedule change was needed.

Too bad none of my community league soccer team members go to Memorial. I don’t know anyone who goes there, either. My whole freakin’ neighborhood is filled with oldies, mostly retired people, and no kids either, she mused. Except for my soccer, I hate this town. Even my middle school years were bad; I could never fit in with the girls there.

Arriving at school, Drew looked around at the halls leading away from the entry lobby; she had been here just once before and thought that she recalled how the room numbers went. Deciding on one hall, she walked past several rooms, checking their numbers, and was happy to see that she had picked the right hallway. Soon she was at her home room classroom. She found a desk toward the back of the room. That was in her comfort zone. Don’t stand out.

She checked out the other kids in the room and then watched those still arriving; none looked familiar—but then she saw several girls from her middle school come in. She did a little hand-wave at them and was happy to see that the girls looked at her, smiled, and waved back.

Okay, maybe I can make friends here? I don’t see any apparent groups, other than those girls—can’t think of their names though.

A teacher arrived and a minute later, the last bell sounded.

“Morning, class, and welcome to Memorial High and your new high school experience. I’m Ms James and I’ll be your home room teacher. I might see some of you later as I also teach freshman English. Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves. Give your name—a nickname is just fine—your middle school, and anything special you want to say, like a sport you play, music group you follow, or a hobby you enjoy. Start here,” she pointed to a kid at her left.

They went around the room and at Drew’s turn, she said, “I’m Drew Harper, went to Lister

Middle School, and play soccer.”

A few kids turned around to look at her at that and a few gave her a thumbs up. That made her happy.

Then James thanked them, told them how she ran the home room period, and then told them, “You will get your locker assignments here tomorrow so you’ll need to keep your stuff with you today. Now, at the bell, instead of your first-period class, there’s an hour assembly. After assembly, then go to your first period. The classes will be ten minutes shorter today to make up that time. Now, since you’re new to the school, let me go over its layout because some areas can be confusing, especially near the shops and art department.”

James went over those topics and soon the bell rang. On the way out, Drew tried to get closer to the girls she had recognized but they had seated themselves much closer to the door and had gotten out faster. So she followed the crowd of kids headed for the auditorium, which she had noticed was near the main entrance. She overheard some kids’ chatter.

“You think that this is it?”

“I bet they’re starting today.”

“Damn, I’m scared. I hate this.”

Drew wondered, *What could they be talking about?*

Drew looked around when she went into the auditorium. There didn’t appear to be any assigned seating areas, so she took her typical seating choice and found an empty seat at the back. *You get noticed less when you stay in the back.* She tried to ask the kids seated at either side of her what was going on but just got angry head shakes in response, and from the girl on her left, “Wait; you’ll see.”

So weird, she mused. *What the hell is going on?*

When the bell rang, the volume of the hubbub in the room dropped rapidly and then the room became silent as a man climbed the steps at the side of the stage and crossed to a microphone stand.

“Welcome to Memorial High, everyone. For our incoming students, I’m Principal Walters, and we’re happy to introduce a number of new teachers to you. Teachers, please wave your hand when I call your name.”

After he introduced the teachers, Walters went on.

“You all are probably aware that this is a special assembly since we’ve never before interrupted a school day like we’ve done today. This is because we are taking this opportunity to introduce the beginning of our planned Naked in School Program.”

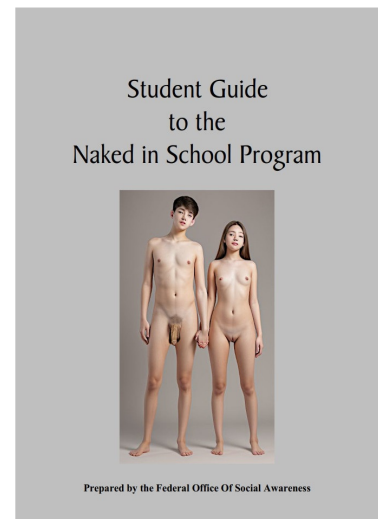
There were lots of moans and hisses from the listeners.

“Please be polite, everyone. Recall that last spring we told those returning students, our current seniors, juniors, and sophomores, that the school board had decided to start the Program in the

fall. I told you the details about it back in the spring, when we decided that we'd introduce it this fall, and that's right now, everyone. For you students in our freshmen class, the info about the Program was in your registration materials."

What? Naked in School? What's this all about? Oh, that's why all those kids look angry or scared. Shit! People have to get naked? No way! Father didn't tell me anything about this! Drew thought angrily. That's just like him, not telling me important stuff!

Walters was going on, "I'll do a quick review of the Program's requirements now and summarize the rules, and when you're selected, you'll need to follow them and the rest of the rules that are listed in this booklet. [He displayed a copy to the audience.] You all will get a copy of it after this assembly. Essentially, the Program requires each one of you, when your own turn comes to be a participant, to be naked for one week of school. You will be required to undress at the main entrance doors when you arrive here each morning and you must remain naked until you leave at the end of the day. If you're in a school activity during your week, you must be naked for that activity too. That includes during club and sports participation. Next, if another pupil makes a request for you to pose for them or to touch you or manipulate your genitalia, you must follow their requests and allow them to do what they Request. [He actually pronounced the word "Request" as if it was capitalized.] Also, in your classes, your teachers have been told that they should use you for sexual demonstrations."



[Click to load Program Booklet](#)

Drew was beginning to feel her panic building at hearing this summary of the Program rules.

"Program participants must use the restrooms, locker rooms and showers of the opposite sex, and participants are encouraged to use the first five minutes of every class period to relieve their sexual tensions by masturbating in front of the classroom, either by doing it solo or using another student's assistance. This is intended to reduce your modesty and to serve as a teaching demonstration of human sexuality."

Drew was having a difficult time keeping control of her rising panic. She could feel the stress flooding her body—it was something like the stress she felt just before the kickoff in her games, but this feeling was so much worse. It brought back some terrible memories which plagued her at random times, causing her to experience episodes of severe anxiety or even panic. And panic was what she was feeling now. The fact that a number of girls nearby were crying wasn't helping at all.

"Now I will call the names of the first group of students to participate. I'll call the groups by class, our seniors will come first, you'll come up to the stage, you'll get undressed, and you'll put your clothes in one of these boxes here. The following seniors are this week's Program participants."

He called two names and two kids in the audience gasped and shook their heads "no." Some

teachers got them out of the seating rows and pushed them toward the stage. They moved reluctantly, heads down, as they were led—or pulled—to the stage. The girl was crying when she climbed up the stage steps and, when she didn't immediately start undressing, two teachers started to pull off her clothes. She was quickly stripped naked while her wailing turned into screams, and Drew saw her fall to the floor as she struggled against being restrained.

Then Walters spoke again, "Now that the seniors are naked, it's the juniors' turn. I call these juniors to participate..."

That did it for Drew. Shaking with fear and panic, she stood up uncertainly, squirmed her way out to the aisle, and ran for the nearby exit door. When several dozen other kids who were sitting near her saw her heading out of the auditorium, it encouraged them to also leave, and that resulted in a few dozen kids running out of the auditorium too, all ignoring Walters' commands to stay seated.

Blinded by her tears and panic, Drew rushed headlong out through the auditorium doorway and, three steps into the lobby, she collided with someone who was approaching the same auditorium doorway. Arms grabbed her to keep them both from tumbling.

"Whoa, hang on..." a boy's voice penetrated Drew's panic. "What's wrong?"

"N...n... naked program..." Drew stammered. "Stripping kids in there... can't do that..."

"You're all pale and shaking," he said. "Stripping kids? That's scared you like that? Yeah, I figured the assembly was to start off that crazy naked program; info about it starting this term was in the school registration stuff. Read that booklet that came with the paperwork too. Stupid shit. So the assembly was to get that naked garbage started, then?"

"Ye... yes... they were st... stripping kids and they... kids picked... did... didn't want to do it," Drew sobbed.

"Damn. I heard some stuff about shit like that happening in the high school back where I used to live and getting picked to strip in front of everyone like that would scare me too," Connor mused.

"I did... didn't know *any... anything* about this. My fa...father never told me that st... stuff about it was in the school reg... registration papers."

"So you got blind-sided. That's shitty. You know? I think I've seen you around... do you play soccer? Ah, sorry, where's my manners. Name's Connor, Connor Martin; I'm a freshman. Let me give you some help getting that panic under control. First, let's get you some water."

He led her to a drinking fountain, got her to drink a little, then found a towel in his backpack, wet part of it, and held it to her forehead. He refreshed the cold water on the towel several times until her breathing became normal.

"T... th... thanks, C...Connor," Drew said after he checked her face and nodded; then he dabbed away the tears on her cheeks. "I'm D... Drew Harper, and yeah, that scared the shit out of me. A couple... ah... years ago, I was attacked in my own house, my father's girlfriend's son grabbed me..."

“Damn... were you raped?”

Drew sighed. “Thank god no, but it terrified me and gave me awful dreams. Still have them. And I get severe anxiety at random times, when I see something disturbing.”

“Let’s go somewhere quiet and talk a bit, okay? My counselor told me that talking about scary things really helps dealing with them. Looks like that assembly will go on for a while... and hey, all those kids came running out of there behind you. We almost got trampled by them! What happened?”

“I think my rushing out started that stampede,” Drew said wryly. “Thanks for the cold towel treatment. That was awesome and really helped settle me. Yeah, I think I can trust you, so let’s talk.”

“Cool.”

They went outside and around the building and found a few picnic tables in a kind of courtyard. They stopped there and sat. Drew described the scene in the auditorium and how she had panicked in a reaction to the kids’ stripping and the crying girls, which had triggered her memories of the assault.

“They forced that poor girl to strip,” Drew said as she wept, “They pulled off her clothes right on that stage and seeing that brought back all those bad memories.”

“Jeez, what happened back then? Two years ago?”

“Yeah, I was twelve when it happened. Let me explain my so-called family. Not. Not a family, I mean. My mother died when I was little, don’t remember her much. My father’s a truck driver. He used to be an over-the-road driver and would be away for two-three weeks and then was home a week. Grandma, my mother’s mother, watched me when he was away. Anyway, maybe three years ago, my father met this harpy in a local truck stop, Candy’s her name—figures, right?—and they hooked up. She liked to travel with him, which was fine by me. Kept her away from me. Such a nasty person—I don’t know how my father stands her. Maybe it’s just the sex. But the two of us fight all the time when she’s around, and my father doesn’t stop her—usually takes her side too. Actually, he’s never treated me like his daughter in any way.”

“Damn, that’s as bad as my own story. I’ll tell you about that in a bit, but go on,” Connor urged.

“Yeah, um, okay... So this one time when they were away on the road, I was home from soccer practice and Grandma wasn’t in the house. I was taking a shower and Tony, Candy’s son—he was maybe seventeen or eighteen then, barged into the bathroom. He was naked down there—his pants were off—and had a disgusting erection. He started grabbing me and groping me but I was all soapy so I slipped away, kicked him in the balls, and then spotted the toilet bowl plunger. I grabbed that and whacked him right on the side of his head with it and that stunned him. I locked myself in my room till Grandma returned. I told her what happened, but when the cops got involved after she reported it, Tony had an alibi. His friends said he was skateboarding with them, fell and hit his head. Anyway, Tony was banned from the house after that but he kept hanging around and making threatening remarks.”

“Jeez. Is he still doing that?”

“No, thank god.”

“What happened to stop it?”

“Ha. He’s off the street. Got arrested for being involved with a stolen car ring.”

“Good. So you live with your grandmother now?”

“I wish. She had a stroke a year ago and lives in a nursing home now. After Tony’s attack, the social worker warned my father that he could get arrested if I didn’t have good adult supervision and she felt that Grandma was too infirm to watch over me. That meant that my father made Candy stay home to ‘supervise’ me, like she wanted that. And she blamed me for what happened to her son. Like I made him steal cars? She took out her anger on me. And my father had to give up his over-the-road job for local work, with a pay cut. And I took the blame for all that. But I still get bad dreams about the attack so this naked crap scared the shit out of me.”

“I can see that, sure,” Connor nodded. “Maybe talking about it more will help you. I said that I see a counselor for things in my past and the talking helps. If you agree, we can meet—maybe at lunchtime—when’s yours?”

“Um, fourth.”

“Sweet. Me too. Okay?”

“Sure.”

“Hey, changing subject... you mentioned soccer. I’m sure I’ve seen you at the soccer field over at Asbury Park.”

“Right, but we call it a pitch, not field. I’ve been in the community soccer league since I was nine or ten. When I was twelve, I started to grow tall. So with my size and speed, I play defensive fullback now.”

“Yeah, couldn’t miss the height. And your body mass when you ran into me. Ouch. Sorry, I don’t mean to diss you, but at first I thought you were a boy. You’re tall, pretty muscular, and with that kinda short hairstyle too, you know.”

Damn, this kid is a hoot. Just says what he thinks. I like that. Strange, I also get the sense to trust him. That’s new, never could trust anyone before—except Grandma.

“I was always a tomboy,” she smiled at him. “I don’t feel feminine at all. Also, I got nothing to speak of in the boobs department, and it doesn’t bother me saying that. But think of the other kids’ reaction, if I were forced to be naked, to seeing a naked girl with a boy’s chest? Big yikes! Add that to the panic from my bad memories. Hey, your turn. You mentioned your family?”

“Yeah. But it’s not like your family; mine’s gone now,” Connor said, his jaw clenched.

Drew gasped.

“It’s true. Dad died, and not in a nice way. Mom? She had divorced him years ago and she didn’t

want to be burdened with a kid, me. Anyway, some years ago, Dad got into drugs and was cooking meth in the garage—this was two years ago and I was thirteen. The place blew up and the house caught fire. I barely made it out but my father... not much left there. The house was a total loss and the insurance, because it was a criminal activity, wouldn't do much for me. I went into the county foster system but there aren't many foster parents for teen boys. So I live in a group home over near Asbury Park and that's where I've seen you play."

"Oooh... You're right, that's an awful family story. Way worse than mine. Hey—why were you in the hall where I ran into you, anyway?"

"The fallout from my dad's meth lab and drug dealing is still going on. I had an early-morning appointment with a detective and the county prosecutor before school, so I was a bit late getting here. Oh, I'm a freshman like you but a year behind. I just turned fifteen last week. Lost a year of school what with the fire and being shifted around in the foster system. Say, let's compare our schedules and see if we have any classes together."

"Okay. I have home room in 210," Drew replied. "U.S. History A in first, Algebra 1B second, then Health and Psych. Lunch in fourth. Then English 9B, Spanish 1, Biology, and P.E."

"Sweet. We're in the same home room and History, Health, and Biology, also lunch," Connor said, smiling.

Just then, they noticed an ambulance and police patrol car drive onto the road leading to the main school entrance.

"Huh. Wonder what's up over there?" Connor said. "Um, yeah, maybe we should go in?"

"You think?" Drew smiled. "I'm liking doing this talking out here better. Um, the teacher said the periods are shortened today 'cause of the assembly." She looked at her watch and did a mental calculation. "When the bell rings, we need to go to first period."

They went back into the building and saw many kids milling around in the hall. Connor stopped one and started to ask a question when the bell rang.

The kid he had stopped told him, "That's first bell; we got ten minutes. You were asking?"

"Yeah. I missed the assembly—had an early appointment. What's going on? Saw an ambulance outside."

"Bad shit. They started that naked Program in there. When they stripped the first kid, a whole bunch of kids ran out of the assembly so they blocked the doors. The one girl that they stripped first passed out and hit her head really bad on a chair... I was near the stage and saw her head bleeding. They must have called for the EMTs then. Anyway, when the principal called the soph kids to strip, apparently their 'squad' had made plans of what to do when they started the Program, 'cause when Walters called out those names, maybe a dozen kids, maybe more, got into the aisles and wouldn't let the kids who got called get stripped. Some of those kids even threw punches at teachers who tried grabbing them. They never got to call the freshmen 'cause then there was a wholesale stampede for the doors. The teachers blocking them just ducked away."

"Crap... you're right—that's some bad shit," Connor sighed and looked at Drew.

She was looking pale again.

“Hey, thanks. Guess we gotta get to class now,” Connor said.

When they got to their history classroom, all the kids were still buzzing about what they had seen. After the bell rang, the PA came on and Walters began speaking.

“Students, what happened at the assembly was outrageous and totally unacceptable. We will try to identify those involved in that needless violence and will assess an appropriate punishment. The administration will not tolerate any further non-compliance. Now, those students who were called to participate during assembly, you must come to the office now and I will expect your complete cooperation. We will also need to select several alternate, backup student participants, if those students I named cannot be located. Teachers will be notified of the selected students during this period. Other named participants, come to the office now. Again, non-compliance will not be tolerated. That is all.”

Connor looked at Drew. “Goddamn,” he sighed.

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When the first period ended, Drew left the room with Connor to walk to their next class.

“I’m in Algebra A,” Connor told her. “It’s the next room over to yours. Then we’re together for the third period.”

As they passed near the school office, the two came upon a sizeable group of kids.

“What’s going on?” Drew asked as she heard the kids were chanting “Reasonable Request” over and over. “Huh. Look, they’ve got someone cornered... no, two... oh god, two naked girls!” she exclaimed.



*Janice and Wendy enduring humiliating Reasonable Requests*

Drew was frightened by the size of the crowd surrounding the two girls; they were cowering against the wall. As they got closer, she saw one girl slide to the floor, crying, while the other was already there, shaking in fear. She watched in horror as two guys pushed through the surrounding horde and one pulled the first girl to her feet as the second guy faced her. She was tiny,

only about five feet tall.

“Hey little chickie girl, your daddy give you permission to be naked? Are you even old enough? You must be, those are cute tits. But I think your tits look lonely; they need some attention. I can give them just what you need, a nice squeeze,” as he pawed and squeezed her breasts and she cried out in pain.

Meanwhile, the second guy had turned on the other girl.

“Honey bunch, your sweet little pussy’s just crying for some lovin’. I know just what you need.”

The girl screeched as the guy attempted to push a finger into her vagina but Connor got there first and grabbed his hand.

“Hey, fucker, what the hell...” the guy exclaimed.

“Did you *ask*? It’s called *Requests*, you know,” Connor growled. “Get your buddy and scram.”

The guy tried to throw a punch, but Connor deflected it with one hand and drove his other fist into the guy’s solar plexus. He folded over and dropped like a rock as the other guy watched, open-mouthed.

Pushing the open-mouthed guy aside, Connor grabbed both girls’ hands and dragged them out of the crowd into a nearby classroom. Drew followed them in a daze. A teacher in the room came over to them; the girls were openly crying.

“Hey, you kids have to stay in the hall for the Requests,” the teacher began but Connor cut him off.

“What requests? What I saw were actually sexual assaults...” he began, but one of the girls broke in.

“Ohgod, thank you, thank you.” She looked at the teacher. “A guy grabbed me and tried to stick his finger in my... my... I’m a virgin; he could have hurt me...” She looked at Connor. “Thank you for saving me! Um, I don’t think I’ve seen you around. You must be new, right?”

The other girl added, “The other guy groped me... squeezed me...look! My boobies! See the bruises! Thanks for helping us!”

“Yeah, I’m Connor and this is my first day of high school. Hope this isn’t what it’s like here.”

Both girls grabbed him and kissed him on the cheeks and thanked him again. The teacher was trying to get their attention.

“Okay, then, can you identify your assailants?” he asked.

The taller girl shook her head. “No, I was kinda in shock,” and the others told him they had no idea who they were.

“All right, then. Just go to your next classes. It’s almost time for the bell.”

On the way out, Connor told them, “I have a Request, and while you’re doing it, I think you can decline any others. I Request that you walk with me to your next classes.”

“Oooh, that’s so smart! I’m Janice and got shanghaied to replace the original soph girl; it appears

that she vanished after her name was called. And thanks again!” the taller girl told him.

“Yeah, thanks too. I’m Wendy and a freshman. You saw that mob? Well, we were in the office during the last period and we had just gotten forced to strip ourselves naked. Then they sent us out into the hall before the guys because the guys were still trying to resist being put in the Program. And then those kids were out there waiting for us; you saw how they were.”

“Sure did,” Connor told her. “Sorry you got mauled like that. At least I got there in time to help Janice.”

“Oh, you did help! You got us to safety! So thanks again. Ooh, gotta get to class...”

“We do too; we have math now, just down there,” Connor pointed to the room.

“So do I. Algebra. We must be in the same class,” Wendy said.

“I’m in Algebra A,” Connor said. “Drew’s in Algebra B next door.”

“I’m in your class then, Connor. Um, when do you have lunch? Mine’s in the fourth period.”

“Us too,” Connor told her. “Janice? What about you?”

“The same. Let’s meet up then.”

Drew, Connor, and Wendy went into their classrooms while Janice continued on to her own room. The halls were mostly empty now.

After their individual classes were over, Drew met Connor in the hall. She was wearing a concerned expression. Connor told her that she looked worried.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s about Health and Psych,” she told him. “If there are any naked kids there, I hate to think about what’ll happen to them.”

He just nodded, deep in thought. Fortunately, it turned out that everyone was clothed. The teacher greeted the students and then just discussed the topics that he’d be covering during the term. Then it was time for lunch. They both wondered what they’d find waiting for them.

They found six naked kids there; they had all gravitated toward a single table—it was strength in unity.

Connor asked Janice and Wendy, “Would it be okay to sit at your nudies’ table?”

The girls insisted that he and Drew join them, and as they did, the two girls told the others how Connor had helped them. In addition to Janice and Wendy, the other Program kids were Scott, a sophomore, Jerry, a freshman, and another girl, Lydia, a senior, who was built like an Amazon. It turned out that she was on the soccer team, a halfback. And another boy, Simpson, who was a junior.

They traded stories and learned that Lydia, Scott, and Simpson, in addition to Janice, were all substitutes for kids who got away during the assembly and didn’t go to the office when Walters made his first-period PA announcement.

“No idea where the others bugged out to,” Lydia said. “I know that Harmony got a bad cut and concussion when she fainted and hit her head and I got picked in her place. One of the sophs who got in a fight in the auditorium had a broken arm but he wasn’t a Program kid. He was trying to keep a teacher from forcibly stripping a girl, though.”

“Yeah, she got away, maybe ran out of school, and I got picked in her place,” Janice told them.

“The junior girl, Rosemary, is trying to hide out,” Simpson offered. “She’s having a bad time of it and when I offered to try to help her, she just blew me off.”

“Who’s the senior? Not that I know anyone here,” Connor asked.

“Gary,” Lydia answered. “He’s a sigma—you know, a loner, always has been. Popular but shy. He’ll try to hide out, kinda like Rosemary, maybe.”

They had been eating and when the period was about half over, some big husky guys came up to their table. They were built like football players and their expressions spelled trouble: superior and sneering. One of them seemed to be the top dog.

“I got a Reasonable Request,” he leered, looking at Lydia. “I want Lydia to go down on the red-head.”

He was referring to Janice.

“I won’t; no way is that reasonable,” Lydia shot back. “Besides, you can’t make Requests at lunch,” she told him angrily.

“You have to do it,” he demanded, staring at her defiantly without moving.

“Okay,” she said, “you asked, I said no. Have a complaint, go to the office. But get lost now. Try something and I’ll kick your ass, Roger.”

The gang muttered among themselves and then slunk away.

“Holy shit, Lydia,” Connor remarked.

“Dumb footballers. They know I can wipe up the floor with them,” Lydia smirked. “One of them tried to put the make on me when I was a soph. Didn’t give him a case of blue balls—gave him a case of *black and* blue balls. He was limping for a week.”

The others laughed at the mental image she portrayed.

“Yeah; I’m a big strong gal and nobody messes with this gal, either.”

Drew decided to ask her soccer question. “Hey Lydia, I play fullback in the community soccer league but was sick when you had tryouts. I need to see the coach to maybe get a second chance. When’s a good time?”

“We’re still thinning down the varsity roster; there’s a practice session after school today. Come by then. How are your stats?”

“Good at deep progression, I’m very fast, and last season I had four goals and twelve assists.”

“Playing D? No cap? That’s dope, really good. Coach might give you a look then.”

“Hey, a thought,” Drew responded. “You’re naked this week. Does that mean you need to practice or play naked?”

“Coach addressed that question last spring when we heard about the Program. The state high-school athletic association won’t allow nudity. The entire team must wear the identical uniform, goalie excepted, and the home team has to wear dark-colored jerseys and visitors must wear solid white. Naked as a uniform won’t fly with the association. Also, like football, soccer’s considered to be a contact sport and protective clothes would be allowed anyway. The jersey, shorts, and socks aren’t much, but they do give protection from road rash when we go down.”

“The community league had mostly the same rules, so that makes sense. As opposed to most of the crap about the Program,” Drew responded.

“Yeah, right?” Lydia shrugged.

They laughed.

“But that association rule didn’t stop the dumb assistant principal from throwing a hissy-fit when Coach told him that all players had to be dressed the same,” Lydia said. “He insisted that it could be played naked because he said he once saw a video clip where the naked teams wore black and white soccer stockings. So Coach told him that there was no way the athletic commission would vary the rules and pulled out the rule book and showed him chapter and verse what it said about legal uniforms. He had to back down since the other option was to forfeit games.”

## Chapter 2 - More Abuses

On the way to class after lunch, Drew had another frightening encounter. She had left Connor to head for her English class and was walking there with Wendy, who was in her class, when three boys popped out of a stairway vestibule. They looked like wanna-be toughs.

One of them walked up to Wendy. He grabbed his crotch and pushed his hips forward.

“I got a Reasonable Request for you, sweet little thing. I wanna blow job. Get on your knees and take it out.”

“Hell no, that’s not Reasonable,” Wendy cried, shying away from him.

“Listen, cunt,” he said, “you gotta do what I say; it’s the rules.”

“Not for that, it isn’t!”

Drew looked around wildly but saw that they were alone. Then one of the other boys with him came close to the two girls and started to lower his own zipper.

“Hey, little bitch, how’s this? Say no again and I’ll just slap the shit outta you and then you’ll give all of us blow jobs. Hey, tall gal, you’re included too. You’ll both blow us or we’ll ... just fuck you both.”

He reached for Drew, putting one hand on her head to push her down while he grabbed her top with the other. The buttons popped off as he tore it open, and that did it for her. Recalling her previous assault, she acted without thinking. Using her soccer skills in a unique way, she aimed herself at his chest and, just like heading a ball, slammed her forehead hard into it. He staggered back from the chest blow as Drew followed up with a powerful soccer kick, crushing her foot into his groin. His anguished scream brought a bunch of people running; two of them were teachers.

Drew wound up in the principal’s office with Wendy. The boy had been taken away with a separated sternum and crushed testicles. Drew had gotten a few safety pins from the nurse to hold her top together.

“So explain to me why you attacked that boy,” Walters demanded.

Wendy answered instead. “He threatened us that the three of them were going to rape us,” she said forcefully. “Oh yeah! Two of them were the ones who attacked Janice and me this morning!”

Walters scrubbed his face with his hands in frustration. “Damn, what else can happen today?” he muttered. “Yes, I heard about that. But you couldn’t identify them.”

“Seeing them again, I recognized them. See, my boobs are still bruised.”

Drew went on. “Thought they looked familiar. When they appeared out of the stairway alcove, they first demanded that Wendy give them blow jobs. Of course she refused, so the guy I disabled started to pull his cock out and tell us that if we didn’t, that they’d rape us. Then he came over to me, tore my top open, and tried to push me down in front of him. I was sexually

assaulted two years ago and had fought the guy off then. Did it again here now. Mr Walters, why aren't you giving the naked kids any physical safety, anyway? Do you have any idea how they're being mistreated?"

Wendy shot her a grateful look.

"All right, your story matches what the third student told the police. He wasn't a part of the assault, right?"

"No. He hung back maybe ten feet and was just watching," Drew said.

"Do you want to press charges?" Walters asked.

Drew looked at Wendy, who nodded. "Yeah, we do."

"I'll make the arrangements then. Wendy, you can go to class now; I need to discuss something with Drew. Get your pass from Mrs Taylor."

When she left, Walters looked at Drew and then at a file on his desk.

"Drew, all the girls in the school were required to have the contraceptive and STD shot but your record shows that you haven't. It's a Program requirement."

"I never saw anything about that. My father never gives me anything from the school so I didn't know about the Program at all. Anyway, for my school physical, the nurse told me that I have delayed puberty and that I mustn't take contraceptives. They could make things worse."

"Ah, I'll need to consult with the school nurse then. All right, back to class now. Mrs Taylor can give you your pass."

There was just fifteen minutes left in the sixth period, but she decided to go anyway. On the way there, she passed a boys' room and Wendy popped out of the door as she went by.

"Oh!" they both exclaimed.

Wendy just chuckled ruefully. "Yeah, I took the opportunity to go in private. It's so fuckin' nasty to have the boys watching you go pee if you do it during class change."

Drew shuddered at hearing that. "What a stupid rule."

"Yeah, for sure. Say, you and Connor damn, the two of you—you're awesome. You guys an item?"

"Just met this morning, so not sure. He sure is an interesting boy, though."

Later, in Biology, Drew found that both of the freshmen participants, Wendy and Jerry, were in that class. They all met at the classroom door and a round of greeting with Jerry ensued, but when Connor saw Drew's pinned-up top, he asked her what had happened. She briefly told him about the ambush she and Wendy had just gone through.

"So two of them were those kids from this morning—the ones who assaulted the girls outside the office—and you destroyed the one of them. Good job there."

“Thanks. I just reacted, I guess. Made like he was a soccer ball.”

“Ha. That’s good. Hey, we need to get into the classroom now.”

The teacher’s eyes lit up when she saw the two naked students entering the classroom.

“Either of you two want relief?” she asked as they scanned the room for open desks.

They both shook their heads “no.”

“Good. Gives us more time for the lesson. I’ll need you for it, so stay up here at the lab bench. What are your names?”

They told her and the teacher turned to the class. “Welcome, class, I’m Mrs Steward. Since we have two naked subjects, let’s look at sexual anatomy today.”

She began with having Jerry and Wendy stand there, at the front of the room, legs apart and arms spread wide, forming a “T” with their bodies. Both were so embarrassed that their flesh was glowing red.

“We’ll look at secondary sexual features first. Hair. Males and females have scalp hair but only males grow facial hair—although it appears that Jerry’s beard hasn’t begun to grow yet.”

He blushed even harder.

“Next is the neck, specifically the throat. Can anyone explain the male-female difference here?”

Hands were raised and Steward pointed at a student.

“Boys have an Adam’s apple.”

“Correct. The medical term is ‘laryngeal prominence’ and it’s simply the cartilage which covers the larynx. Females have the same structure but it’s more visible in most men. Now look at the overall torsos of our subjects. Apart from their chests, what are the visible differences?”

She pointed to a student who had raised her hand.

“Um, she has wider hips?”

“Precisely. During puberty, the production of estrogen causes changes in the female’s body and one major change is widening of the pelvis. Why does that happen?”

Another student answered: “For childbirth.”

“Very good. You students are well informed. What other torso differences can you see—they might not be all that visible on our subjects... Anyone?”

She leaned over to her two “display models”; their arms had begun shaking with fatigue.

“You can drop the arms and Jerry, flex your biceps like a body-builder,” she whispered.

Turning back to the class, Steward asked, “Does seeing Jerry give you a hint?”

She pointed to a student whose hand was up.

“Muscles? Oh, sure, guys have um, denser muscles, right?”

“Good. That’s correct. Muscles develop in response to increased testosterone, and at puberty, the gonads begin producing the sex hormones. Also axillary and pubic hair begin to appear then; in females, estrogen causes that hair to begin growing. But dosing oneself with testosterone drugs—steroids—doesn’t just increase muscle mass, it also actually damages the body in a number of ways, including causing mental problems. There’s yet another difference in females and I’ll give you another hint. Please turn around, Wendy.”

She did, her face turning scarlet again.

Steward whispered to Jerry, “Without blocking the classes’ view of Wendy, take hold of her buttocks and jiggle them.”

He stared at her. “Really?”

“Do it.”

Wendy jumped and let out a little shriek when Jerry did as he was asked.

“Sorry... had to do that,” he whispered as she turned around to face the front again.

Steward asked, “Prompt any ideas? Look at her thighs and compare them to Jerry’s. Ah, yes?” she pointed to a boy.

“Do you mean body fat? Gals tend to get bigger butts,” the boy answered.

“Exactly. Increased estrogen also promotes the growth of fatty tissue. In evolutionary terms, that likely happens because the female body needs to have the resources to nurture a developing baby and fat storage is the bank the body uses in times of food stress, like famines. Okay, you two, turn around, please, facing away from the class. See the difference in their buttocks?” she asked, running her hands over Jerry’s buttocks first, pointing to the crease where they met his thighs and then repeating that for Wendy.

“See how the male’s buttocks tend to be flatter and kind of square at the gluteal sulcus here?” She ran her hands over their upper thighs where they met the buttocks and pulled their cheeks up a little, “and the female buttocks generally tend to have an inverted heart-shaped form.

“A final female change, related to widening hips, is how the femur bone connects to the pelvis. It allows for a wider opening in the pelvic base for the delivery of a baby. Wendy and Jerry, please stand erect, hands at your sides.”

They did.

“Class, look at Wendy’s hip. That’s where the femur joins the pelvis. Now draw an imaginary line from that point to her knee.”

Steward traced that line along Wendy’s body with her finger.

“Now do the same with Jerry.”

She repeated the finger-tracing on his body.

“Who can tell me what you see?”

Hands raised and Steward pointed to one student.

“Jerry’s thigh bone is almost straight up and down and Wendy’s angles in toward the knee.”

“Correct, the angle of convergence of the femur bones is larger in females because of their wider pelvises. Now let’s move to the different sexual characteristics. Look at Wendy’s chest. Obviously there’s a difference there from Jerry’s chest.”

The class giggled.

“The female breast is composed mainly of fatty and secretory tissues. No muscles, as you can see as I can easily manipulate them.”

Steward cupped her hands, grasped Wendy’s breasts, and moved them up and down and then side-to-side as Wendy’s eyes started leaking tears again.

“The shape of Jerry’s chest is solely due to his pectoral muscles. Wendy also has those muscles, they’re under her breasts. Now what’s the purpose of the female breast—besides giving boys something to grope?”

Kids in the class chuckled at that.

“Feeding babies, of course,” one girl answered.

“Fine, correct answer. Let’s take a look at the structure of the female breast. There’s the breast tissue itself, which is a fatty tissue, and it surrounds the milk-producing glands. From those glands extend the milk ducts, which lead to the nipples.” She was pointing all this out while manipulating Wendy’s breast. “The milk ducts terminate in a ring around the central tip of the nipple itself, and the nipple is surrounded by a structure called the areola which has a skin color usually darker than the surrounding skin. And the nipple has a very rich supply of sensory nerves; these can give pleasure to the female when nursing a baby, and also produces sexual arousal on their stimulation. Jerry, wet a finger and lightly stroke Wendy’s nipple and areola.”

“Unh!” Wendy croaked. “Really?”

“Really. Go ahead, Jerry.”

Very quickly the students could see Wendy’s nipples swell and project noticeably out of her areola as she closed her eyes and sighed.

Steward pointed out how Wendy’s nipples had swelled and pointed out, “See how Jerry’s stimulation made both of her nipples grow. These structures are very rich in erectile tissue.

“Males’ nipples also have a plentiful supply of nerves and erectile tissue and some males can be sexually stimulated by nipple play. But now here’s a tough one for you and extra points if you know the answer. If they don’t give birth to babies, why do males even have nipples?”

A sea of blank faces looked at her.

Then a girl raised her hand and ventured, “Is it when boys and girls develop in the mother, they

can have the characteristics of both sexes and that's why there are some intersex babies?"

"Oh my, that's excellent! Very few of my prior students knew this answer and yours is close enough for my extra points. The first part you mentioned is particularly accurate. Your name?"

"Ella Grison, ma'am."

"Excellent. Very good answer. Here's what's generally accepted. The embryo, as it develops during the first six or seven weeks of gestation, has the identical female and male characteristics, which include the development of nipples. After that initial six or seven weeks, the sex chromosomes become defined and activate, and the fetus begins to take on the aspects of its gender. The nipples, though, have already developed. I'm very pleased with this class, you're doing very well.

"While Jerry is standing here and his penis is still flaccid, notice that he isn't very far past the beginning of puberty, since his flaccid penis is only about two inches long. Now look at this, class; see how his left testicle hangs lower than the right? Hold your penis up, Jerry, so the class can see better. This is the most common scrotal asymmetry. Testicular asymmetry is also normal, with the right one being larger in volume than the left. Because his scrotum is warm now, you can see how the testes inside look like little eggs."

Steward took hold of his left scrotum and stretched the skin tightly over the testicle, revealing its ovoid shape.

"Now watch when I do this."

Steward opened a little cooler and took out a large beaker of water. She dipped a washcloth in the water and held it over Jerry's scrotum and he jumped in alarm.

"Relax; it's just cold water, Jerry. Class, see how the scrotum pulls the testicles up close to Jerry's groin? This is the body's way of regulating the temperature of the testicles to maintain the best conditions for spermatogenesis. Sperm manufacture. The ideal testicular temperature is about two or three degrees Celsius lower than the core body temperature and if the testicles are exposed to elevated temperatures for prolonged periods, it can impair sperm production, affecting both their quantity and quality.

"Release your penis now, please. Now note, class, that you can see the entirety of the head, or glans, of Jerry's penis. This is because he's been circumcised—the prepuce or foreskin of his penis has been surgically removed. This is done for ritual reasons by some religious communities, or for supposed health reasons by many practitioners, and the practice is becoming somewhat controversial in this country. It's a far more uncommon practice, for example, in Europe.

"All right then, I need my subjects to hop up on the lab bench at the front here. Get your buttocks close to the edge, pull your heels up close to your buttocks, and spread your knees as wide as you can. We're going to closely explore your genitalia now."

The class began buzzing with excitement, and the two youngsters groaned in embarrassment. While they were moving into the requested positions, Steward opened a cabinet in the bench and

pulled out two video cameras on tripods, connected them to a panel, turned them on, and set them right in front of the two kids. She flipped a switch and a monitor over the bench came on, displaying their genitals in high definition on a split screen.

“The sexual organs of males and females are both external and internal but obviously the male has much more showing outside the body,” Steward said as she took Jerry’s penis and lifted and wiggled it.

Despite his humiliation, it began to swell.

“We will compare how the perineums of the two of them look. So let’s begin with the male and examine his pelvic floor, the perineal area—it’s commonly known as the ‘taint.’ Oh, Wendy, you can sit up now for a bit to watch. I’ll get to you soon.”

Wendy squeezed her eyes shut and shuddered in a sigh as she sat up.

“Okay, looking at Jerry, starting at the bottom here, between his buttocks or gluteus maximus muscles... Jerry, use your hands to spread your cheeks... we find the anus, the waste outlet of the digestive tract. Look at the image on the monitor and you’ll see his very tight anal sphincter muscle. Sphincters are ring-shaped muscles which work to open and close openings or passages inside the body. There actually are more than fifty distinct types of sphincters in the human body; the anus is one of the largest. Jerry can demonstrate for us how the area around the sphincter responds to muscular control. Jerry, pull up on your pelvic floor muscles—ever hear of Kegel exercises?”

He grunted, “Um, no.”

“It’s flexing the same muscles you’d use to stop peeing, understand?”

“Uh huh.”

“Do it now and class, watch how his anus pulls in and out. What he’s doing is contracting his levator ani and to a lesser extent, his transverse perineal muscles. We won’t ask Jerry to show you how the sphincter does its actual job because cleanup can be messy.”

This comment evoked lots of groans and smirks.

Connor looked over at Drew who was sitting there, looking glassy-eyed and pale. “You okay?”

She closed her eyes and shook her head “no.” Then she just kept her eyes closed and he could tell that she was trying not to listen.

Steward was continuing. “The most obvious sexual characteristic of a male are his external genitalia, the scrota and penis. Contrary to what many people think, the penis isn’t a muscle—or a bone, despite one of its slang terms when erect, boner. It’s a complex organ which is composed of a number of parts. The actual internal working parts are two chambers containing spongy erectile tissue, hence the term ‘erection.’ These structures, the corpora cavernosa, sit side-by-side, and when the male becomes sexually stimulated—or other times too—they fill with blood, and like a hydraulic pumping system, their spongy tissues swell and an erection is produced. Let’s see that in action now. Jerry, sit up and make an erection for us.”

Jerry, thoroughly humiliated now, was totally flaccid and when he tried stroking himself, got no response.

Steward watched and when she saw the result of his attempts, stepped in.

“You need better stimulation, it would appear. Class, who would like to assist Jerry to get erect?”

A few hands went up, including several boys.

“Have a preference?” Steward asked Jerry.

Jerry looked around. He thought of Drew, but she looked like she was elsewhere. So he chose a girl sitting in the front row. She came trotting up to him.

“What do I do?” she asked.

“Ever give a hand-job?” Steward asked.

“Um, no...”

“Just stroke him, Jerry will tell you what feels good. You should use this personal lubricant gel to make it slippery, though.”

She handed her a tube of lubricant.

It took a couple of minutes before Jerry was mostly hard.

“Hmm, not very much to show here. Class, Jerry’s erection is at the smallest size for an erect fourteen-year-old. Just under three inches. Normal sizes range from three to five-and-a-half inches.”

Jerry’s face was flaming red now and the flush had spread to his upper body.

“All right then. It’s easier to see the external structure of a penis when it’s hard like this. The smooth end here [she stroked it and Jerry’s penis jerked in response] is called the glans, and this ridge around where the glans meets the shaft is called the corona. Jerry is circumcised, but in an uncut male, the glans is usually covered by the male prepuce, or foreskin, which can be pulled back off the glans manually or it will slide on and off the glans during penetrative intercourse. This friction helps to intensify male sensation during coitus.”

A number of kids in the room were groaning now.

“At the very tip of the glans, we find the urinary meatus, this is the external opening of the urethra which carries urine from the bladder through the penis to exit the body. The urethra also carries the semen and sperm during an ejaculation. We’ll get into the mechanics of sperm manufacture and ejaculation tomorrow.”

Jerry groaned; he was hoping that this ordeal would be over today.

“Pull up your penis, Jerry, and hold it up against your abdomen now.” After he did, Steward went on, “See this triangle-shaped area where the underside of the corona meets the shaft? That’s the frenulum and typically this is the most sensitive spot on the penis. It’s the primary anchor point of the foreskin. And this tubular-like bulge along the underside of Jerry’s penis is where the

corpus spongiosum is situated. This is an erectile tissue too, but its function is to cushion the urethra, which it surrounds, so that the urethra isn't crushed closed during an erection. During an ejaculation, one can see and feel this tubular bulge swelling and pulsing.

"Now, attached to the groin below the penis is a double sack of skin called the scrota, singular is scrotum. Inside each sack of the scrotum is a testicle, or testis; these are the organs where both the sperm and the male sex hormones are manufactured. Lean back, Jerry, and hold your scrota up away from your perineum. Good. Look carefully here where I'm running my finger... see this hard bulge in the perineum right under Jerry's scrota? That's the location of the internal portion of the penis, the root, and it can't be readily seen, absent an erection. Since he's erect, the area bulges out somewhat. The root is the fixed part of the penis and contains three sets of erectile tissues, two are called the 'crura,' and the other is the 'bulb' of the penis. The root is supported by two sets of muscles, the ischiocavernosus and bulbospongiosus muscles. These muscles, which run along the sides and underside of the root of the penis, contract during an erection to help force blood into the penile shaft and also support the root of the erect penis so it won't collapse when it's thrusting into a vagina.

"Tomorrow you'll all have a chance to closely examine Jerry's penis and scrota, we'll get to feel its texture when it's both flaccid and erect. We'll also discuss his internal sexual parts then as well. Questions?"

With so much information thrown at them, the students were overwhelmed and there were no questions.

"Right then. We've got enough time now to examine Wendy's external genitals. There aren't many since most female parts are internal. Wendy, lean back again and spread your knees apart like before. Jerry, you can sit up and watch now."

Wendy sighed as tears began flowing from her eyes while she leaned back.

Steward started again at Wendy's anus and asked her to spread her cheeks.

"The female anus looks and functions identically to the male's, but as we move our inspection of her groin away from there, moving toward her front, we see at once that her perineum is almost entirely occupied by the female pudendum, the genitalia. Much like the penis, this is a complex area. The external female organs are known collectively as the vulva—not vagina—the vagina is an entirely internal structure and only its external portal can be seen where it opens into the vulva. The slang term 'pussy' is variously used to describe all of the external parts but sometimes it can also include the vagina, or at times only the vagina is meant, so it's a very inaccurate term. Of course there are other terms that are more or less vulgar; I'm sure I don't need to elaborate.

"The vulva is principally composed of two sets of lip-like structures which cover and protect the vaginal opening and the urinary meatus. Let's examine those structures now. I'll move the camera in close. The very front part of the vulva is called the mons pubis, mons veneris, or pubic mound; it's the pad of fatty tissue which overlays the pubic bone. This is the part where pubic hair begins to come in at puberty. Wendy's hair here is very light and fine so she's still in the middle part of puberty. Its function is to pad and protect the pubic bone from injury when the boy's penis is pounding into her during coitus; overly energetic sexual intercourse can bruise this

area in both boys and girls.

“You can see on Wendy’s vulva here, her outer lips—called the labia majora—these are complex skin folds which form the side margins of the vulval clefts and cover the internal vulval parts. The labia are composed partly of erectile tissues and are homologous to the penile shaft. Tomorrow we’ll see if we can demonstrate how much the labia can swell up on stimulation. Notice that Wendy’s outer labia are very tightly closed; in many females, some or much of the inner lips, the labia minora, protrudes from between the outer ones. This is not an abnormality; just as females have different breast sizes and males have different penis and scrotum sizes, girls’ vulvas will have a wide variety of appearances.

“Look at how Wendy’s outer labia come together at the front of the vulva at the mons. This is called the female prepuce or clitoral hood. And at the back of the vulva, where the outer labia join together near the anus, is the fourchette. Now we need to examine the area inside the lips. Wendy, please use your fingers to spread your lips apart for us.”

She did as her weeping became open sobbing. She was totally mortified by this treatment.

Steward adjusted the camera again. “Class, I expect that you’re paying close attention, but if not, the video of this demo and my commentary will be posted on the school’s website after this class so you can review the lesson. Now, starting from Wendy’s mons [with her finger, Steward pulled Wendy’s prepuce up a little higher], here’s the underside of the clitoral hood and this shiny button-like area here is the glans of the clitoris. Girls, and boys too, the clitoris isn’t just this little button here; it’s a very complex organ that’s quite similar to the penis. Boys, pay attention. When you engage in foreplay with your partner, knowing how to properly stimulate her clitoris is essential to pleasuring her.”

Groans and sighs sounded in the room.

“The clitoris has a very similar structure to the penis, including this glans—that’s the only external part [she touched it again]—a body, which, like the penis, consists of two corpora cavernosa, which become engorged during arousal, and a pair of appendages called ‘crura’—the singular is ‘crus’—which straddle the vulval area on both sides of the urinary meatus and the vaginal portal. The crura are also composed of erectile tissue.

“With Wendy holding herself open like this, I’ll show you on her vulval surface where those parts are located, though remember that they’re completely internal. Here’s the clitoral glans again [she pressed on it lightly and stroked it, causing Wendy to moan]. It’s the only external part and, like the male glans, has no erectile tissue, but will swell somewhat during sexual stimulation. Next, here is where the corpora cavernosa are located—along here [she traced her finger along Wendy’s inner labia, eliciting more moans], and the clitoral crura run around the area like this [more touching]. As in boys, girls have ischiocavernosus and bulbospongiosus muscles too; they’re paired like in boys and are located on both sides of the urinary meatus, next to the clitoral crura.

“Now a question—are you familiar with the female part known as the ‘G-spot’? Raise your hand if you’ve even just heard the term. Good, looks like everyone. It’s not a myth and it’s not a special independent organ either. It’s part of the clitoral structure. It’s where the vestibular bulbs

which make up the root of the clitoris are joined, analogous to the penile root and its bulb, and that spot is located a few centimeters inside the vaginal canal on its front wall. Presumably the sensations from that site during coitus are what produce what girls call a ‘vaginal orgasm.’ Okay, that’s the clitoris. Remember, it has a structure very similar to the penis. Questions so far? None? Excellent. I hope that means you’re paying attention.

“Next in the vulva is the urinary meatus and here’s why, girls, you need to keep your vulval area very clean: the female urethra is only about three or four centimeters long—an inch and a half is all. For males, it’s seven to eight inches long. This means that it’s so easy for bacteria and other bad things to make the short trip up to the bladder and a UTI, a urinary tract infection, results. They’re painful, so keep your vulva clean. Now moving on, we see the location of Wendy’s vaginal vestibule, the opening to her vagina and see? Wendy’s a virgin. See how her vagina is mostly covered by her intact hymen—maidenhood, cherry, whatever. The hymen is right at the vaginal opening, not a few inches in, the way some people think.

“The function of the hymen is to protect the girl, when she’s young, from things getting up there and causing damage. After menarche, when menstruation begins, the monthly periods tend to flush the vaginal walls to keep the internal parts clean. I was hoping to have a subject with no intact hymen to show some internal vaginal structures like the cervix, but that will need to wait for another Program participant.

“All right, Wendy and Jerry, thanks for your help; now class, thank them...”

Half-hearted applause; the kids were thinking of demos *they’d* be forced to do.

“In tomorrow’s class, we’ll cover internal sexual anatomy and sexual response in boys and girls and will again employ our models here. Are there any questions?”

One boy raised his hand. “Wendy’s hymen, it looked like it had a number of little holes and a bigger one. What’s up with that?”

Steward nodded. “Good question. Wendy, do you menstruate now and use tampons?”

She was still weeping a little but answered that she did.

“By far the most common intact hymen has a single opening, one large enough to allow the use of a tampon. In Wendy’s case, hers has a few extra holes and its tissue appears to be extremely thin. Wendy, you’re probably lucky; when you have your first intercourse, your hymen shouldn’t give you any pain when it’s torn.”

Wendy blushed all the way down to her toes, hearing that.

“A hymen with a number of little holes and no larger one is called cribriform. If it has just a single small hole, it’s called microperforate; if there are no openings at all, then it’s imperforate. And I believe that I recall a rare situation where the membrane is extra thick across its center with a hole on each side, meaning that the vagina has two openings into it. That’s called a septate hymen. But all those forms are atypical and fairly uncommon. Any other question?”

Just then the bell rang and Wendy sighed with relief while Drew came to life and looked at Connor.

“I’m back again,” she told him. “I had to tune it out; I couldn’t stand seeing Wendy’s humiliation up there. They have to do another session of this crap tomorrow?”

Connor nodded.

“Shit, shit. That’s awful.”

“You have P.E. now?” he asked.

“Right. And I think that I’ll ask to see the soccer coach now instead of waiting until their practice. She might be very busy then and won’t have much time to talk.”

“Good thinking. Well, see you tomorrow then at home room.”

“Bye, Connor. And thanks for your support all day too.”

### Chapter 3 - Soccer Team

Drew found her way to the gym and entered the girls' locker room. She saw movement inside an office located near the exit door into the gym, so she went over and knocked.

"Yes? You can enter," a woman answered.

"Hi, I'm Drew Harper and was hoping to talk to the soccer coach. But I also have P.E. now."

"Ah, I heard that there was a girl who missed the tryouts. Okay, she's in the weight room; you can go there. Go into the gym, turn left, and take the second door. Her name is Coach Velonis."

"Thank you. I can join the P.E. class after I speak to her?"

"We're just doing an orientation today, so no, since they'll be doing individual activities. Come see me if you take less than fifteen minutes with the coach and I'll cover what you'll need to know for the class."

"Thanks."

Drew went out to look for the weight room and when she found it, the coach was there and so were Lydia and eight other girls.

Lydia saw Drew and said to the coach, "Ah, here she is. I had told her to come to practice but now is better. Coach, this is Drew, is that right?"

Drew nodded as Velonis looked her up and down.

"So you want to try out for the team. I did hear that you were sick during the tryouts."

"Yes, Coach Velonis, I had a fever for two days. Wiped me out."

"Just 'Coach' is fine. Lydia was telling me what you told her about your prior soccer experience."

"Right, Coach. I was mostly a defensive back and my team had the lowest goals scored against us. Last season we played a 5-3-2 formation and I was a fullback, um, center back. In some plays more of a stopper 'cause of my speed and attacking ability. My team won the league, too."

"You certainly have the height and build for a fullback, Drew. Lydia said you had four goals and twelve assists on the season."

"Yeah, on assists, I cross very well and with my speed, I can usually beat the other team's D. That's why they usually had me play as a stopper. I've been timed at up to 18 kph on some dashes. But my own D abilities are my best skills."

"Well, you sound like a good girl to have play for us. You know, I never really scouted the community soccer league because all those gals wind up going to Parkside High. Maybe I need to look at those games more."

"Coach, that's true. No one on my community team is at Memorial—they all went to Parkside. I'm at Memorial 'cause of the funny way the district boundaries come out 'cause I actually live closer to Parkside."

“Okay, Drew, can you stay for practice? I’d like to assess your skills,” Velonis asked.

“Sure, Coach.”

“Have you done any weight—resistance—training before?”

“Not in an organized way, Coach. I use the equipment at the community center near Asbury Park sometimes.”

“You want to work with Lydia here for the rest of the period? She can show you the training regimen we use.”

“Yes, ma’am, I do.”

At the practice session after school, Velonis put Drew through a skills assessment, including ball handling, passing, and progression. She timed Drew’s speed on sprints and longer runs. After an hour, she gave Drew her assessment.

“I’ve seen enough to want you on the team. If you continue to perform like you’ve shown me, you could be a starter next year. I understand that you’ll need to switch your P.E. class assignment to the athletes’ schedule, so I’ll let the office know to have you see a counselor to do that. Meanwhile, I’d like you to come to team practices this week. Is that possible?”

“Sure is, Coach, and thanks.”

“Okay, go get with the other gals and join in with what they’re doing. They’ll explain my training system.”

“Yes, Coach!”

Delighted with that news, Drew ran off to join the others.

After practice was over, gloom descended on Drew. She hated to go home.

*Maybe I can sneak in and hide out in my room, she mused. I’ll scrounge some food later.*

She was able to avoid both Candace and her father that evening. On Tuesday, when she arrived at school, there was a crowd at the front door.

*Oh, right, it’s where they*



*Scott coping with a Reasonable Request*

*have to strip for the Program, she realized. What total crap this is.*

After her home room period, on her way to Algebra, Drew continued to witness more abuse taking place, masked as Reasonable Requests. A common Request, which she had seen numerous times, was to require that the boys and girls display themselves in a variety of degrading sexual poses. Now, on her way to her Health and Psych classroom, she encountered yet another scene. Apparently a girl had asked Scott to do a Request. When Drew passed nearby, he was in a pose with his legs spread, bent over, and his hands stretched in front of him. With his anus exposed to the girl and the other onlookers, to Drew's shock, the girl attempted to push a pen or pencil into Scott's rectum. Scott shouted for her to stop and scuttled out of her reach as the girl laughed.

Drew walked away, shaking her head in disgust.

*Jeez, the girls do abusive stuff too.*

Turning a corner into the hallway of her next classroom, Drew heard crying. She looked into the stairwell alcove at the hallway's side and saw an unfamiliar naked girl—she realized that this must be Rosemary—sitting on the floor with legs spread apart, and some kids were ordering her to use her fingers to spread her lower lips apart and rub herself to an orgasm.

Drew got really angry at seeing that and waded right into the scrum surrounding Rosemary, picked her up by her armpits, and dragged her away from the complaining kids. Rosemary gratefully thanked her and then scurried away, trying to look invisible. Drew shook her head.

Connor walked up to her just then. "I heard shouting and there was a crowd—and you popped out of it dragging a naked gal. Still doing the vigilante gig?" he asked and then chuckled at her blush.

"Um, I guess. Seeing that crap just wigs me out. Did I tell you that I yelled at Walters for not making the school safe for the naked kids?"

"Uh uh, you didn't."

"Yeah. I was with Wendy and that was after our ambush. Walters was trying to blame us for getting ambushed, it seemed, and that pissed me hugely. Now, after seeing what happened in Biology yesterday, I'm worried about the crap that this health class will have."

They had no idea.

After the teacher welcomed them, he remarked, "I see that we have no Program kids here this week but my lesson plan requires four naked students. Do I have any volunteers?"

There were none.

"All right; I'll explain today's objectives and then I'll draft four of you into the Program for the class."

The kids in the room made sounds of outrage.

"Quiet down! Teachers are empowered to do that, you know. This lesson goes into human sexual

response and is based on psychology. Sexual arousal is a very powerful... urge... one can call it, and the ultimate goal of that arousal, in the male, is ejaculation. Females reach a sexual climax more slowly; there is possibly more mental stimulation than physical stimulation involved, and it's more difficult for females to orgasm solely through vaginal intercourse. Later this week, we'll study in detail the differences between male and female arousal, but for today, we'll demonstrate how powerful sexual stimulation can be, how it can overcome intentional thought. I need two boys and two girls. In the first exercise, the girls will attempt to bring the boys to orgasm but I want the boys to resist; you must hold back and don't let yourself ejaculate. This is called 'edging' because it keeps the subject at the edge of their climax. Then we'll switch and have the boys stimulate the girls..."

While he was talking, the kids in the class were looking horror-stricken.

"...and you'll see, I believe, the differences in how boys and girls respond. First, the girls will have ten minutes to try to coax an orgasm from their partner using whatever method they choose, manual or oral. Now to pick partners, let's see... okay. The ones at each end of the first row of desks and the last row. That gives us two of each sex. Come up here and get naked now."

The selected kids looked around and at each other; one girl began to cry. Then the boy in the front row grabbed his backpack and dashed out the door, which led the other boy to flee too.

"Girls, come up here now. I'll give you a zero for participation if you don't. Those two have received zeros already."

Both girls just sat there shaking their heads "no," and one said, "I'll take the zero. Not doing it."

Connor stood up then and announced, "This is a stupid and flawed psych demo. I'd refuse too. Will any of you guys in class here do that exercise willingly?"

He sat down as there was a loud "no" from everyone in the class. The teacher looked at Connor.

"Oh, we have a troublemaker in here? Okay, you're in the Program for disobedience. Get your clothes off and you'll take part in the demo, even if you must do it solo."

There were gasps and Connor replied, "Nope. I won't do that. You can fail me or send me out to the office, but I won't agree."

"All right, then, here's a note for the office..." He scribbled something on a sheet of paper and handed it to him. "You get a week's detention and fail the week. And I'm sure that the principal will put you in the Program."

Connor got up and Drew got up too. "I'm joining him," she said. "Fail me too."

As they went out the door, most of the rest of the class followed. They all headed for the office and the entry of an entire class brought Walters out of his office to see what was going on.

Connor gave him the note and explained what had happened.

"Aren't these demos supposed to be done with Program draftees, not just anyone in the class?" he asked. "Are teachers allowed to run their own Program in their rooms and use any kid they want for whatever?"

“This issue hasn’t come up before...” Walters began.

“This is only the second day, sir,” Drew responded. “So it looks like maybe teachers—kids too—are making up rules as they go. And as Connor pointed out, that demo really doesn’t show anything about response... it’s simply a test of personal willpower—don’t you see that?”

“I’ll have to talk to your teacher about this,” Walters replied. “Issues like these need discussion at our next staff meeting. All right, carry on. The period ends in a little over forty-five minutes, so just go to the cafeteria, don’t cause a commotion, and then continue following your schedule.”

They all left and exchanged a lot of high-fives with each other when they got into the hall.

“That worked fine,” Drew said as they entered the cafeteria. “I wish we could help Wendy and Jerry like that.”

“Yeah. Today’s Biology sounds like it’ll be rough for them. I didn’t see Wendy in Math today, though.”

When their lunch period began, the two waited for the Program kids to show up in the cafeteria. They did, but again, Rosemary wasn’t with them.

“She didn’t come to my last class,” Simpson reported. “Someone mentioned that she had a bad Request session earlier today.”

“Yeah, I helped her then,” Drew told them. “Then she just ghosted away.”

“That’s what she does,” Simpson nodded. “She was a scared mouse last year, but she’s much worse now.”

Then Jerry entered, supporting Wendy, who was looking shaky.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” Lydia called; she had seen them first.

Jerry shook his head. “She freaked out after Biology yesterday and her mom had to take her to the doc. They put her on a strong anti-anxiety med and she’s kinda zoned out today. She had to go to the nurse during second period ‘cause she got dizzy. The nurse got her to lie down and she got a quick nap there.”

“Yeah, feelin’ no pain now,” Wendy slurred. “But I can’t concentrate. Hope this week ends quick.”

Drew shook her head in dismay. “Look at how that frikkin’ Program is destroying us,” she told them. “Wendy, Rosemary, that girl who hit her head, the senior boy... that’s four, and there were nine of you who were forced to be naked in the Program... 45 percent of you guys are damaged by it somehow. It’s an indictment for how bad it is, right?”

They all agreed.

“Another thing’s bothering me about that Bio class,” Connor told the others. “All the shit that teacher covered—you’d think that we were in med school with all of the damn details she spouted. How essential is it for a freshman kid to know that the bulbo-whatever-fuckin’ muscle is at the root of a guy’s cock, anyway? And we gotta sit through more of it. Wendy and Jerry are

getting shafted with big-time humiliation too.”

The other kids offered their sympathy but all Wendy and Jerry could do was to shrug in resignation.

Later, in Biology, Wendy was still in no better shape. Steward had the two kids come to the front again.

“Today we’ll start with the female and explore her sexual arousal and I’ll be able to show you the physical signs of that arousal. Wendy, please hop up on the bench like yesterday and spread your legs for us.”

Moving in slow motion, she grudgingly complied.

“Do you have a favorite way of masturbating?” Steward asked her.

“Ah... no... don’t do that... feels funny... touching there...”

“Can you try stroking around your clitoris? Many females don’t like the sensation of directly touching its glans unless they’re highly stimulated and close to orgasm. Ah, have you ever *had* an orgasm?”

“Um... don’t know... get tingles... how do you know... when... it’s an orgasm?”

Some kids in the class tittered at that.

“Well, just try it. Stroke above it and on the sides.”

She did, and after several minutes of watching closely, Steward saw no signs of any engorgement of her labia.

“Um, when can I stop?” Wendy asked. “This is... ah... starting to ... hurt.”



*Jerry spends time licking Wilma’s vulva to no effect*

“Do you feel any increased sexual tension in your groin?” Steward asked. “Are you lubricating?”

“Huh? What’s that?” Wendy asked.

“Oh dear,” Steward whispered to herself, “Has she no sexual response?”

Aloud, “When you were younger, were you ever abused, sexually or otherwise?”

“Oh... no... never...”

“Experience an injury to the groin?”

“No...”

“Well, let me try something else. Jerry, I want you to kiss and lick Wendy’s vulva and use your tongue to tickle around her glans—under the prepuce. Are your hands clean? Here’s an alcohol wipe, use it. Now use your fingers to hold her labia apart while you lick her.”

Wendy was crying again now, and after two minutes, she complained, “That’s hurting me... my legs hurt... stop...”

Jerry had spent the two minutes licking her when he stopped.

“My jaw hurts,” he reported. “And Wendy says to stop too.”

Steward checked Wendy’s vulva for any vaginal secretions and found hardly any. There was no labial engorgement either. She looked up at the class, then at Wendy, who was weeping and staring blankly, glassy-eyed.

“Ah, Wendy, are you taking any medicine? I’ve noticed that your speech has been slurred today.”

“Er, my doc put me... on something... to help cope with anxiety...”

“Okay, that explains things. First, some girls just naturally have a low libido—that is, they don’t ever get very horny, which is what a low libido is. Apparently Wendy is such a girl. This isn’t abnormal, it’s just how she is. Then she’s taking a drug to control excessive anxiety. One typical side effect of these medications is a reduced libido, so Wendy’s gotten a double whammy here. This means that I can’t show you how the vulval area responds to sexual stimulation, so I’ll need to verbally summarize the arousal stages for a female instead. Oh, you can sit up, Wendy. Jerry, fetch her a chair to sit on; she looks a bit unsteady.

“Female arousal has four stages: Excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution. During the excitement stage, which we tried here, the manual or oral stimulation results in an increase of watery secretions from the vaginal walls, which results from their constriction, congestion, and engorgement, and from the Bartholin’s glands, which are located close to the opening of the vagina. This fluid provides the lubrication necessary to ensure the comfortable penetration by a penis. Also, in many cases, just thinking romantic thoughts can cause this engorgement; you can hear girls saying things like, ‘Oh, watching that guy flexing his muscles gets me all wet.’”

Titters from the class.

“Also, during excitement, the outer labia swell and flatten and that exposes the clitoris, which, in turn, increases in size, just like the male glans swells with a strong erection. Then the plateau stage occurs and again, I’m sorry that I can’t demonstrate that on Wendy. Females can remain at the plateau stage for quite a long time, then orgasm, and then return to plateau, unlike males, who can orgasm and ejaculate only one single time. The most significant physical feature of the plateau stage is the thickening of the inner labia, they can double or triple in thickness, and that results in their spreading wider, which opens the vaginal portal.

“Then comes orgasm, the climax of sexual arousal. The clitoris will have attained its greatest engorgement, and for its protection—possibly to lessen any damage from the pounding of the male’s pubic bone against it—its glans retracts back into the clitoral prepuce. The orgasm itself is a series of powerful rhythmic muscle contractions which occur at the pelvic floor—the lower part of the vagina—and also involve the muscles around the anus and uterus. This last effect is likely to assist in the delivery of the semen to the uterus.

“The final stage is resolution. Now the vaginal and vulval engorgement with blood dissipates and the thickening of the tissues resolves and they return to their normal state. However, in many females, the clitoris might remain very sensitive for a while longer. Any questions?”

A girl raised her hand and Steward called on her.

“Um, what about squirting during cumming? I heard about that but lots of my friends say that’s an urban myth.”

“Oh, not at all; it’s real. Both ‘squirting’ and ‘female ejaculation’ can occur and they’re different. The liquid ejected during squirting comes mostly from the bladder but it isn’t straight urine, which some people believe. It’s an extremely dilute form of urine and contains several other components too, coming from the Skene’s glands which sit alongside the urethra. Also, in urination, urine is propelled from the bladder by the voluntary contraction of its muscles, including the detrusor muscle at the bladder’s neck, while squirting results from the involuntary contraction of the pelvic floor muscles and the others involved in orgasm. Female ejaculation is considered a bit different by some experts because that fluid comes mainly from the Skene’s glands, and their secretions are again expelled through the urethra. There’s just a tiny distinction between the two processes, so you can safely consider them as a single thing. Okay?”

“Um, thank you. Good knowing what’s true or not.”

“Anyone else? No? Now let’s consider the interior sexual anatomy of the female. As I mentioned yesterday, almost all of these structures are internal and not visible from outside the body, except for the cervix, which guards the opening of the uterus into the vagina, and seeing that requires a speculum inserted into the vagina to open it to expose the cervix. I was hoping to show you Wendy’s cervix but her hymen prevents us doing that. What you’d see is projected on the screen now; it’s a picture of a model’s getting a pelvic exam. The area at the top of the vagina here [she pointed] is called the ectocervix and this is its external os, the opening to the cervical canal. In appearance, see how it looks somewhat like a pink glazed donut where the hole in the middle is smoothly and completely closed. Look at the pictures in your textbook for other examples.”

Steward went on to describe the rest of the female reproductive tract in detail, and then checked the time.

“Well, we took more time than I had planned, so we’ll have to postpone our session with Jerry on male sexual function till tomorrow.”

Then she assigned the homework topic.

“We’ll be having a quiz on male and female sexual anatomy in our Friday class, so be sure to review the text and the online video demos.”

After class, Drew spoke briefly with Connor.

“What a simply horrible experience for that poor girl!” she said. “I wish there was a way to stop the teachers from humiliating the kids like that.”

“I definitely agree. We could have learned the same stuff from a video clip.”

Drew parted with Connor then and went to the gym. She checked with the gym teacher and who told her that she should continue to work with the soccer team girls. Today they were studying the playbook and then it was stretching and doing laps on the track. At practice after school, there were passing and sprinting drills. Drew got to work with the team’s defense on ball handling, tackling, and other defensive plays.

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On Wednesday, Jerry and Wendy had to endure a third day of the biology class demos by submitting to Steward’s demand to allow the entire class to manually explore their sex parts. Even though Wendy was still somewhat dazed by her drugs, Steward required her to submit to the handling of her body by members of the class, who were instructed to manipulate Wendy’s breasts and the genitalia of both subjects. Then Steward asked the class members to take turns to try to stimulate Wendy, but since she was taking her anti-anxiety medication, she was still unable to achieve any stimulation on assisted masturbation; in fact she was crying in pain as her vulva had become extremely irritated from all the hands in there. Even though Steward had suggested to class members that they try stimulating different parts of Wendy’s vulva to see if they could evoke any signs of physical arousal, they were unsuccessful. But during the ninth kid’s attempt, Drew couldn’t stand seeing Wendy’s misery and stepped in to stop it.

“That’s enough. Just stop now, okay?” Drew shouted as she went up to pull the boy away from Wendy. “Can’t you see that this is torturing her? Look at how much pain she’s in!”

“Young lady, you were told that students were not to interfere with class demonstrations. Now, are you volunteering to take her place?” Steward asked. “I could draft you into the Program, you know.”

“Absolutely no!” Drew exclaimed. “If you do that, and also if you continue this torture, I’ll bring in the cops and have you charged with sexual abuse. Wendy’s in real pain there. There are plenty of witnesses here too, right, class?” she turned to ask them.

There was a muted assent from class members; the warning not to interfere with class demos had them somewhat intimidated.

“I’m not volunteering and you’ve made your point, Mrs Steward. Wendy’s in no shape to show what you want, so please, just stop.”

“I don’t like being threatened, miss. There’s no time now to pursue this, but I’ll remember you when you’re in the Program. All right, class, let’s turn to sexual stimulation in a male—and I trust that there’ll be no interruptions.”

In Jerry’s case, with twenty-seven sets of eyes staring at him, and to his great embarrassment, he once again failed to achieve a hard erection on being forced to masturbate. So he was again compelled to allow a classmate to bring him to an orgasm, this time by oral sex.

“Miss Vigilante to the rescue again,” Connor joked with Drew after they left the classroom and had stopped to allow many of the kids to tell her how brave she had been.

“I couldn’t stand seeing that, Connor. That was just so awful.”

Wendy shuffled out of the classroom then, leaning heavily on Jerry, but stopped to hug Drew.

“Thanks so, so much...” she slurred.

“Goin’ to the nurse now,” Jerry said. “She’s all inflamed down there and says it hurts bad.”

Drew looked at Connor and whispered, “Oh shit.”

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Drew’s and Connor’s Health and Psychology class on Wednesday was almost anticlimactic; their teacher didn’t say a single word about the Tuesday class nor did he mention anything about demonstrating how sexual arousal affects the kids. Instead he told the class that during the first part of the term, they would cover human development, sensation and perception, and learning and memory.

The events of the rest of the week followed the same pattern; the Program kids continued to experience what most of them considered to be *unreasonable* Requests, but, to Drew’s relief, nothing overtly violent occurred. Wendy was so grateful for Drew’s intervention that she became a fixture at Drew’s side whenever they were together. She told Drew that the nurse found that she had a severe vulval irritation, most likely caused by excessive rubbing plus something like a soap product on one of the boys’ hands. Wendy finished her Program week while still taking her meds; the sedative effect she had first experienced had only somewhat lessened by Friday so she still got so tired before the day’s end, that twice she almost fell asleep in class.

In her home room on Friday, the teacher had a message for Drew. It said that she’d be contacted by the office staff on Monday morning to finalize her schedule change with her counselor.

Drew never laid eyes on Gary, but Lydia told her that he was in a kind of vocational



*Jerry being brought to an erection in Biology*

apprenticeship program for his senior year and would be spending a lot of time at the school's shop. That was where he had been hanging out this week and he could wear protective clothes there. He only had two academic classes, Lydia told her, and he dashed in and out of them, returning to the sanctuary of his shop. Drew also learned that Rosemary hadn't returned to school on Tuesday and had been absent for the rest of the week.

"Do you think she's okay?" Drew had asked Lydia at their Friday practice. "The one time I saw her when she was being harassed, she seemed very fragile then."

"She's terribly introverted," Lydia told her. "And she just about collapsed when she got called at that assembly. Maybe she couldn't face coming to school, so she stayed home."

Returning to her house after school on Friday, Drew was thinking of how she would spend her time during the weekend. Both her father and Candace would be home and she wanted to avoid them.

*I'll camp out at my hide-out, she decided. I'll just need to restock some supplies there. That won't work when it gets cold, though.*

Several years ago, while exploring the "forest" adjoining the park next to the soccer pitch where she had played—it was actually just a wood lot, about fifty heavily wooded acres. She had wandered off one of the trails one day and had noticed a copse of dense bushes from which the sound of water gurgling could be heard. She had pushed through the bushes—*ouch, thorns!*—and found a tiny clearing next to a small spring. *The water from the little pool here must flow into that nearby stream, she had realized then. This'll make a sweet hidey-hole I can use to get away from Candy.*

At her house, she packed up the supplies she wanted to take and set off for her little campsite.

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On Monday morning, Drew arose very early and returned to her house, snuck in before anyone was awake, and got a shower and a change of clothes. Then she set off for school. She met Connor as they entered the building.

"The Program kids get called during home room today," Connor remarked.

"Yeah, I heard about how that works," Drew replied. "I'm gonna ask about getting an exemption. I saw something in the booklet about that and Lydia told me that one of her classmates got a psych exemption. She had been sexually abused and I was too. My father would never pay a shrink to see me, so I need to find out how to see one for free. I'd totally freak out if I'm ever chosen—especially after all the shit I saw last week. I simply couldn't do it."

"I hear ya, I'm not shy or modest myself but yeah, what we saw last week was nasty."

"If they pick you and try forcing you..."

Connor interrupted, "Shit. I'd fight. Done it before; three bigger kids went after me when I was younger. I put one in the hospital—but I did get banged up a fair bit. I don't fight dirty, I fight *filthy*."

In home room, Drew asked the teacher when she could see the counselor.

“They’ll get you out of class sometime this morning, I was told,” she answered.

About five minutes after the start bell, the PA speaker came to life and the names of the week’s Program kids were announced. Everyone looked vastly relieved; none were in her home room. On the way to her first period history class with Connor, they saw again the rabid hordes of kids demanding Requests.

“You think that it would get toned down a bit after last week,” Connor muttered to her.

“Yeah, you’d think,” she replied.

Several minutes after the period bell rang, a messenger appeared and entered the room, handed a note to the teacher, and left. The teacher read the note and looked up.

“This says for Drew Harper to go to the office. Drew? You can go.”

She whispered to Connor, “Yeah, I was expecting that call to see the counselor. See you in Health.”

Chapter 4 - Shock

Drew was directed to go to the principal's office; when she entered, she saw a boy sitting in a chair there.

Huh. What's this? She wondered.

"Hello again, Miss Harper," Walters greeted her. "This is Mr Evan Werser; he's also a freshman..."

Walters' words sunk in. *I just heard Evan Werser's name—it was in the announcements for the Program kids during home room! So why is he... no, why am I, here now?*

Her answer came very quickly.

"I had a report about you from Mrs Steward about you interrupting a class demo. So I had you called just now because this week's chosen freshman girl wasn't in school today, so in her place, and for your interference with a class, you've been selected as one of this week's freshman Program participants and Mr Werser will be your partn..."

"NO! I can't do that!" Drew cried. "I was sexually assaulted and... *no!* I just can't!"

"Sorry, but you must. You don't have any choice about participating, Miss Harper; you've been selected for this week. The nurse said that because you can't take the shot, you must avoid engaging in sexual intercourse while you participate this week. And now, both of you, please start undressing. Clothes go in those boxes next to the table there."

She shook her head in denial. "But I *can't!*"

"You must, Miss Harper. The Program is the law in high schools now; you were chosen as a substitute and you have no choice about participating; it's required. There will be legal consequences if you don't obey the rules. I asked you to begin removing your clothes; now do it."

The boy began to speak. "Sir, she's as scared as I am, but..."

"NO! I won't!" Drew interrupted. Her fright was rapidly turning into panic. *They can't make me do this. They just can't.* she thought wildly.

She whirled around and ran for the door.

"I just *won't!*" she called as she flung the door open and tore out of the room.

She ran out of the office, into the hall, and headed for the school entrance door.

A rent-a-cop guard was there and moved to intercept her, but Drew, using her soccer skills, dodged around him and was out the door before he could react.

As she ran to her house, Drew tried to gather her thoughts. *How can I get out of being in that naked Program? I think that they'll try to get my father to make me do it. Or maybe the police will come, since there's a law or something. I can't stay anywhere where they'll find me—I hate it at that house anyway with Candy, especially since grandma isn't around anymore.*

When Drew got to her house, she was relieved to see that Candy wasn't there. The phone was

ringing when she entered; a glance at the caller ID told her that the call was from the school.

Let it go to voice mail, she thought.

Drew looked around her room and then the house, planning on what to take. *I guess I'll have to run away, then. No way am I gonna do that Program. I'll go to my hideout and try to figure out what to do. This is so fuckin' unfair!*

She grabbed a large backpack which she found in the garage and began stuffing it with some clothing and the grocery items she needed; she had assembled a little camping setup in her "hideout" already, since she had stayed there overnight on many occasions, escaping Candy's wrath. She had about \$40 saved from her allowance and then thought, *If I'm running away, I need more money and I know where Father keeps some.*

She raided that stash and found a little over a hundred in fives and tens.

Ignoring the ringing phone again, Drew left the house for her hideout.

When she entered the woods, she looked around and, seeing no one nearby, she went down the trail which passed near her hide-out. She slipped off the trail and carefully made her way the two hundred feet to the bushes guarding her hide-out. She crawled through them, pushing her backpack ahead of her as she did, and looked around. Nothing had been disturbed.

Good. Nobody should be able to find me here. Now I can plan what to do. Oh! Shit! My phone! They can find me with that!

She hurriedly checked it and was relieved to see that it was still off; she had shut it off when she went into the school that morning. *Seems like ages ago, she thought.*

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Back at the school, Connor looked for Drew at their Health class but she wasn't there. She didn't appear at lunch either. He looked over at the table that was used by the prior week's Program kids—*yeah, naked kids. Looks like they've adopted it as the Program table*, he thought. Then he had a premonition. *Let me sit at the next table.*

After five minutes, Connor noticed Principal Walters heading toward his part of the room and stopping at the Program table. Curious, he decided to eavesdrop a little; Walters wasn't being exactly quiet when he spoke.

"Hello, students. No one's in trouble but I have a question. This is a long shot," Walters asked them, "but does anyone here know Drew Harper or know who her friends are?"

Connor had noticed that one of the naked kids there was Evan Werser; he had heard Evan's name announced in home room that morning but he hadn't seen him in the second period math class they shared. Evan caught Connor's eye and looked a question at him and Connor realized that Evan was asking if he should mention that he and Drew had sat together at lunch last week. Connor nodded back to him that it was okay.

As Evan began speaking, "Mr Walters, I think Connor—he's at the next table there—is a friend of hers."

As Walters turned around, Connor got up and spoke, “Drew and I have been getting to know each other, sir. Do you know where she is? We’re in the same first and third period classes and then get together at lunch. She was in my first period class, got sent to the office, but then she wasn’t in my third period class.”

“I would ask you the same question, where is she, Mr...”

“Martin. Connor Martin.”

“Ah, Mr Martin. She was called for the Program in the first period to partner with Mr Werser here since the other freshman girl was absent today. She ran out of the school when I told her. Very quickly, I might add.”

“I’m sure. She told me that she’s a soccer fullback. She said that she’s been clocked sprinting at up to 18 kilometers per hour and runs about eight to ten kilometers in every game she plays,” Connor told him.

The kids at the table were saying, “Wow” ... “Jeez, that’s crazy” ... “That’s real good” ...

Walters looked at him hard. “Ah. I did hear that she was supposed to see the counselor today to switch her P.E. section to be with the soccer team.”

“She did tell me that, yes. She was sick during the two tryout days and got another chance to try out last week; the coach is having her train with the team and she’ll probably get a spot on it.”

“Mr Martin, could you please join me in the office to speak privately? It won’t take long and I’ll make sure you get back before lunch is over.”

“Okay.”

Connor packed up the rest of his bagged lunch and followed Walters out.

In the office, Walters told Connor, “We’ve tried calling her home; goes to voice mail. I sent one of the counselors to her home but there’s apparently no one there. What can you tell me—you don’t need to break anything of confidence that she’s shared, but I want to ensure that she’s safe.”

That got Connor angry. “Safe? You call being stripped naked in school being safe? Drew told me what had happened to her when she was younger—she came this close to being raped and she still has nightmares about it. She must have panicked when you told her she had to strip. What she saw in that assembly that you ran last week actually did make her panic, then the attack on her here at school happened, and the Biology demo we saw almost made her sick. I saw how badly she was affected by those things. I don’t know her well, but from what she told me of her family life, I’ll bet that she’ll try to run away, rather than chance being forced to do the Program.”

“We can’t allow that, son. Do you know where she might be?”

“I just get to see her at school. We talk at lunch. Drew’s had a rough life and it’s toughened her; she can be very stubborn and she’s fiercely competitive. If she’s decided that she won’t be in the Program, and that she could be forcibly stripped, like she saw happen to that girl, she very well might decide to run away. Drew has no feelings for her father, and her grandmother, who

basically raised her, had a stroke and is almost unresponsive. Drew's got no one here; nothing's keeping her here. Could you assure her that she'd not be forced to be in the Program? That might get her back."

"We couldn't do that. It would set a precedent and others would expect the same treatment," Walters replied. "Would you... ah, do you think... would Drew... accept being in the Program if you were to be her partner and 'protect' her?" He made a finger-quote sign.

"We aren't in all the same classes, okay? And what about toilets and locker rooms? I'm sure she'd never agree—and for that matter, I've been considering my own situation and come to decide that I'd never take part in the Program myself. I won't allow anyone to strip me either. Where I grew up, I had to defend myself physically and if someone were to try to forcibly strip me, I could do them some real damage."

"Are you making a threat, Mr Martin? You could get arrested, you know."

"No, it's not a threat. Just a statement of fact. In the one week of the Program here, I saw enough to make me object to the whole idea of the forced nudity. Like Drew, I will not participate either."

"It's a graduation requirement..."

"And there's the GED for those who drop out. That's not a convincing reason. I have much more serious issues to worry about and a stupid nudity program isn't gonna be one of them. Do you know anything about life in the foster care system, Mr Walters? It's not pleasant. Listen, I told you what I know of Drew. I'm sure she's a runaway now or will be very soon, even though it's been less than a day. As I said, she's stubborn and determined. Can I go back to lunch now?"

"Yes. We're done here. Thanks for your very frank comments, Mr Martin."

As Connor left, he was thinking. *I maybe do know where she might possibly be. In our talking together, she commented about how she loved the solitude and peacefulness when she got away from her home and went on her runs on the park's trails. She also implied that she stays away from her home overnight a fair amount. Maybe she's holed up somewhere nearby, maybe where she goes when she stays away from home, and I can find her if I check possible places that are reasonably close by.*

Early that evening, Connor borrowed one of the group home's bikes and pedaled over to where he thought Drew's house was located. When he got to her street, he saw a police cruiser parked outside her house—it fit her description of it. After the cop left, he went to the door and knocked. An angry man opened it.

"What is it... oh, thought it was the cops again. What do you want, young man?"

"You Drew Harper's dad?"

"I am. You know where that kid is now? She skipped school today and stuff's missing from the house now."

"I only saw her in the first two classes we had today. I came by to see if you heard anything."

“No. But this wouldn’t be the first time she’s not come home. She’s gone plenty of times, gone for several days at a time and then returns. Yeah, does that lots of times. But this is the first time she’s skipped out from school. Drew and my gal don’t... ah... get along, see, and Drew disappears mostly after they fight. If you see her, tell her to get her ass back home and get back to that damn school. Wish I didn’t hafta take care of her ... ah ... Hate it when the cops come. Always after she does something stupid...”

Connor could see that the man cared little for his daughter and realized how accurately Drew had portrayed their relationship.

*She told me that she runs a few miles every morning. Maybe she’ll do an early-morning run tomorrow? He thought. I’ll get out to the park and watch for her.*

He didn’t see her Tuesday or Wednesday morning so he wracked his brain to recall the times he had seen her before high school began. It wasn’t this spring, maybe it was last fall, after he had been living at the group home here for a few months, and had started watching the girls’ soccer games. He had noticed a tall girl who seemed to dominate the play then. He realized that must have been Drew back then; her hair seemed to be much lighter and shorter now. He realized, also, that he had seen a tall girl coming into the park area during other times in the last year or so and going into the woods at the far end. He couldn’t recall seeing her reappear, though.

*Maybe she found a place to hide somewhere in there? he wondered. Something to check. I need a plan.*

Back in school on Wednesday, a police detective had Walters call a number of students who had interacted with Drew to the office to be interviewed, and Connor was one of the first called. He told the officer the same things he had told Walters, that he thought that she was a runaway, getting away from having to participate in the Program because of her abuse experience. The officer asked Walters if the school could relent on its participation policy, given her history of the assault, but he demurred, saying that he had to follow policy. Connor was now determined to try to find her.

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Drew was trying to figure out what to do now. She had limited money, and if she stayed here too long, her supplies would run out and she’d have to use the money she needed to travel with.

It’s Wednesday now, she calculated, and I have enough food and stuff for a week. By that time, people probably won’t be actively looking for me and I can leave town. I need to head south ‘cause it’s getting really cold at night now and the fire isn’t gonna work for much longer. Damn, I really would like a shower...

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By Friday afternoon, Connor had come up with a plan. He knew of the battery-operated trail cameras that hunters and wildlife fans liked to use but since he didn’t have a good idea where Drew might be, he would have to set up a number of cameras. But if he caught her image, he’d still have only a general idea of her actual location. That wasn’t such a good plan.

*The forest covers about fifty acres, he reasoned. The trails that wind through it are maybe two miles, total, if even that. And the undergrowth is thick in places; I've seen thorny plants in there too—I think they're either hawthorn or acacia. My old house had some acacia in the back yard.*

Then he recalled that a little stream flowed out of those woods.

*Maybe she set up near flowing water? I wonder if there's a way to rent an infrared camera. Then I could walk around and look for hot spots.*

Indeed, Connor found that he could rent one from a home improvement store overnight for less than sixty dollars. Fortunately he could afford it; he had some money he had salvaged from the fire...

At 11 pm Saturday night, he set out with the little camera device and headed for the stream near where it exited the woods. Backtracking it and using a little flashlight he had covered with some red cellophane to preserve his night vision, he followed the trail which generally paralleled the stream. He had gone only a quarter mile along the trail as he moved the camera side to side before he began to pick up a heat source in the dense bushes near the stream. It appeared to be large enough to be a person! He moved off the trail into the bushes and soon encountered some thorny ones.

*Okay, I know pretty much where this is now. I hear water gurgling in the bushes ahead and there are two strong heat signals. Must be a campfire there too. I'll come back when it's daylight so I don't scare her.*

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Drew was startled by what appeared to be the sounds of something moving in the woods outside her bushes. Crackling sounds and sounds of swinging branches. She didn't think that there were any large wild animals out here.

Maybe it's a dog, I've seen dogs in the woods here, she thought.

Then the sounds went away and she relaxed.

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The next day, Connor returned the camera and got his deposit back. He stopped at a fast-food place and bought a few hamburgers, several packages of fries, and a few bottles of fruit juice. Then he went into the woods. He crept up to the bushes where he had been last night and indeed, they were thorny.

"Drew? You in there? It's Connor. I've been trying to find you for several days."

He heard a little shriek, then, "Connor? Really? Are you alone?"

"Yeah, I'm alone for sure. I had figured you must be camped out somewhere in here but didn't let on to anyone else. How the hell did you get in there, anyway?"

She giggled. Her voice got closer. "It's my fort. Camouflaged the entrance."

Then part of a bush swung away and her head popped out.

“Jeez. That’s clever. You blocked your tunnel in with part of a bush, but kept its roots so it wouldn’t wither,” Connor praised her.

“Come into my abode,” Drew invited.

They both crawled back inside the ring of bushes.

“Awesome setup here,” Connor said, looking around. “I brought you some food. Thought you might need it.”

He handed the bag to her.

“Wow, thanks! Been coming here for two years now. It’s my real home. Not that other place.”

“I spoke to your father on Monday. You were right; I could tell how he feels about you.”

“Damn. What did he say?”

“Quote: get your ass home and go to school. Didn’t seem to care much where you were otherwise. And the cops visited him and the school. Walters found out that we spent time together so he tried to convince me to be your ‘protector’ when you’re in the Program. I asked him to exempt you—so did the cop—but he said no. I told him that you were sure to run away from here; nothing was keeping you.”

“That’s exactly right. So with that stupid Program running, you’ll have to do it too, you know.”

She opened the bag and took out a burger.

“No. I had a long talk with Walters after you scrambled. He was looking for someone who might know where you went. I told him that I had decided that, like you, I would never participate either. Not because I’m modest or been assaulted, but because the Program is wrong morally.”

“Damn. What did he say to that?”

“Told me I wouldn’t graduate. I told him that didn’t bother me; I could take the GED test and that would be the same.”

“Hey, you eat a burger too. I actually have plenty of food supplies here. What made up your mind about the Program?”

He took a package and unwrapped it.

“I thought about that for a long time. You know, what I think is that how the Program tries to stress how it will make a person comfortable with his or her body kinda masks what really happens with people. It seems like the Program might have been intended to empower us kids by removing our personal modesty, but its only result seems to be the kids’ exposure, both invasive physical exposure and exposure to objectifying treatment by others. I mean, the Program kids become sex objects for all the clothed kids. I think that while having a good body image is very important—accepting yourself for who you are and what you look like—getting there mustn’t come from sacrificing your safety and personal self-integrity.”

“Oooh, I like that. It’s sooo right!”

“Sure. What I’ve seen during the past two weeks is that the kids in the Program are forced into situations where their personal limits are ignored, their view of their body image is distorted—since they’ve been made into sex objects—and their personal morals violated. You know, I’ve been thinking hard about my future for a long time and now this crap came up. So I got this other idea and started planning it while I was looking for you. I think that you must have figured by now that I’ve got nothing to keep me living here, even less than you do. You know that I’ve got no family and the county is taking care of me. Right, sure they are. That group home is the pits. So I decided to ask you this: Do you want to team up and face the cold world together? It’ll be tough but I have some ideas.”

Tears came to Drew’s eyes. “Wow. I’d love to team up. I like you, Connor. But how can that work? I only have less than 150 dollars. Sure, I’d share that happily, but that means spreading us so thin...”

Connor tried to say something but Drew stopped him.

“You live in that group home so you probably have less than I do...”

Now he did speak. “Wait, Drew. Hear me out. You’ll be the only one who knows but I’ll tell you my secret. It’s *really* a secret, huge, okay?”

She nodded uncertainly. “I can keep a secret. Look at my hidey-hole here.”

Connor chuckled. “Okay, point taken. I told you that my home was destroyed when the garage blew up.” She nodded. “So my father had gotten into drugs when I was maybe ten, even younger. I didn’t know it then, but when I was thirteen—see how I look physically?”

“Yeah. You said you’re fifteen but look older. Maybe you could pass for eighteen, even.”

“You think? I know that at thirteen I could pass for sixteen or seventeen; Dad told me that. He decided that he would use me as a courier. No one would suspect a kid, he told me. I hated the idea but went along with it, since he told me that he’d wait till I hit fourteen. So he got me a driver’s license and a mid-sized motorcycle and taught me to ride. The license is actually real, not fake, and I don’t know how he managed that. Something about having influence over someone at a state motor vehicles office. So when we leave, we’ve got a ride.”

“Oh, wow, that’s really more than I hoped for. But...”

“Yeah, cash. So here’s the thing. When the explosion happened and the house caught fire, I realized what must have happened. I knew where Dad kept his private stuff, and the bike and other things were kept in this rental storage locker place. I went to his room and dug out what was there and threw it in a duffel bag—almost got caught by the fire, see?”

He shrugged off his shirt and she saw burn scars on his left arm and shoulder.

“Oh jeez, wow. Poor Connor.”

“It was worth it to me. Dad had a bunch of cash in the house and his papers and the other stuff I found included the storage locker contract and the keys. I had my IDs including the driver’s license; I even found my birth certificate. It was all together in the desk in his bedroom. All that I

dumped into the duffel and I got out of the burning house just in time, ran into the green belt behind the house, and hid the duffel up in a tree back in the woods there. Then I went back to the house but passed out from the pain just about when I got back. The fire people found me and I woke up in the hospital.”

“Oh hell, what a story... you’re okay now, but back then?”

“A week in the hospital. Second degree burns. I had a lot of counseling too; told you about that. And I got put into the foster kid system. Maybe three months afterwards, I skipped school and went to get that duffel. The house site had been razed. I read the contract; the storage place had been paid up for two years. So I sent them a money order for another year and it’s good till next May now.”

Drew was trying to assimilate this information. She just stared at Connor.

“To wrap it all up, I went to the storage place just before I got sent to the group home here. It’s in Lowell, you know, six miles north, where I used to live. The bike’s still there and starts fine. I had stashed the duffel there too. Also, there were several sports bags filled with cash there, mostly hundreds, so that’s not useful to us—kids with hundred dollar bills? So I took a bunch of fifties, twenties, and tens and keep them in a money belt, see?”

He showed it to her and her eyes goggled.

“I figure that there’s maybe sixteen grand in the storage unit there, but maybe fifteen of it is in hundreds. So I need to figure out how to break it down to smaller bills. Anyway, I told you that I had that meeting with a cop and prosecutor?”

“Um, yeah...”

“The cops are still working on clues they had found in the remains of the fire, and finally identified and located one of Dad’s ‘associates,’ as they called him. He had suggested to them that Dad had this stash of money and drugs, so they were quizzing me about what I knew about that. I told them that I didn’t know that guy from Adam and that the fire was so bad that probably everything got burnt up. I told them that it had almost killed me, too. They seemed to accept that but told me that chatter from the local Lowell gang was that Karl Martin, my father, had more drugs stashed away somewhere. I should contact the detective if anyone asks me where the drugs are. That’s what happened up to now. So those other boxes in the storage place might hold drugs, I’m guessing.”

“My head’s swimming,” Drew remarked. “Looks like I’ll be joining *you* rather than the other way around. How come you just didn’t run away when you could?”

“Dunno... stability or inertia, I guess. Leaving the area was more of an unknown than having the county take care of me. Like that worked. Better I should have run. But then I wouldn’t have met you.”

“Aw, that’s sweet. You like me?”

“Really, Drew, yeah. We seem to think about stuff the same way and have had similar bad family experiences. So yeah, I like you.”

She got up, went over to him, and hugged him.

“Let me tell you what I’m thinking,” Connor went on. “First, the money. In one of the bags I found a notebook with some contact phone numbers and I recognized one name. It was one of Dad’s suppliers. I had met him several times and although he’s in the illegal drug business, he seemed to be, well, honest? Contradiction there, I know. I think that he can launder that cash for me. I figure that if I offer 25 percent, four grand, he’ll open a bank account with the rest and I can get a debit card. Free money for him and no danger. Hey Drew, when you skipped from your home, did you get any IDs?”

“I’m only fourteen. My school ID and Social Security card is all. Oh, and my soccer awards and certificates.”

“All right, not a problem. And finally, when we go, we should head south. Winter’s coming. And I have a tentative plan. I seem to recall a possible second cousin who lives in Hershey in Pennsylvania, where my family’s from, I think. He also would have the same last name as me. I think that Hershey’s not all that big a town. Maybe we can find him and start our new lives there.”

“Huh, you really have plans. And I thought I was prepared to run away—was gonna do yard work and house cleaning and stuff like that for money and just head for somewhere where the winter’s not too cold.”

“Yeah, sketchy plan. You could get in real bad trouble, you know.”

“You’re right. My father’ll probably even stop my phone account if I don’t contact him after a few months.”

“Oh, your cell phone, Drew...”

“Yeah, it’s off. So it can’t be tracked.”

“Good. But we should get some cheap ones, I think they’re called burners. I’m gonna keep mine off, even though I doubt the authorities even know I have one. Kept Dad’s too. He had a bank account that pays the cost, it’s in a fictitious name and I couldn’t find the password to access it. I took all the papers in his desk and all his records were there. Unless that info is in one of the places in the storage place that I didn’t check.”

Drew began to cry.

“Oh jeez, what’s wrong?” Connor exclaimed.

“N... n... nothing,” Drew choked. “It’s just that I realized how harebrained an idea I had about just running with no plan. And here you come, like a shining knight, and show the way. You seem to think of everything.”

“That’s ‘cause I’ve been thinking and planning about running away for two years now. For you, it’s been just a week. I had a head start on you, okay? What you’re doing is incredibly brave. A bit stupid, but brave still.”

“Gee thanks, Connor. You’re pretty stupid yourself for throwing in with me,” Drew giggled.

“For sure. Two stupids on the run, escaping the evil clutches of the nefarious Program.”

Drew laughed.

“Let’s plan for the next several days. I need to be in school Monday, at least, ‘cause it’ll take a few days to get ready to run. How portable is this stuff here?”

He pointed around.

“If we don’t need the more perishable food, I can get it all into my big hiking backpack. The tent folds up small and the sleeping bag, air mattress, and camping oven are the only bigger things. The cooking gear all nests. The rest are my clothes. I’m not attached to any clothes left in my former house but my soccer gear and cleats are important. The other crap here I could leave if we’re traveling light.”

“Okay. I’ll need a backpack too. The bike has a nice big storage box trunk on it. Courier, remember? You’ll need a helmet and riding clothes, boots. We can get those in Lowell where they won’t be looking for us. Now, how about having you move out of here to that little strip motel at the edge of town? I can register, pay cash, and you’ll have a comfortable place to keep hiding until we pull out of here. Not that these accommodations here don’t look comfortable.”

Drew laughed. “I really did enjoy living here... except when it got too cold. Winters were bad ‘cause I was forced to stay at the house with the bitch. Kept myself locked up in my room. But I do miss a shower. The motel sounds ace. How do we get to the motel? Isn’t it several miles?”

“Yeah, but it’s on that intercity bus route. There’s a stop not far from my group home. Damn, it’ll be great leaving that behind.”

Fortunately the bus ran on Sundays and by 3 p.m., Drew was ensconced in a room. With a shower. There was a fast-food place next door, so meals were taken care of too.

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When Connor arrived at the motel after school on Monday, he had a full backpack with him.

“Cleaned most of my stuff out at the group home. I left enough to make it look like I was still there. They don’t keep close tabs on us, mainly ‘cause of the different schools we go to and the various schedules. Tomorrow morning we’ll catch the bus for Lowell.”

“Oooh, that’s exciting,” Drew said.

“I’m gonna stay one more night at the group home and then come here. I’ve used Lyft to get back and forth from here ‘cause the busses only run two hours apart.”

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On Tuesday morning, Drew and Connor began their flight from the Program’s clutches. Drew, wearing dark glasses, her loose unisex clothes, and a baseball cap, together with Connor, boarded a bus to Lowell. When they arrived at the terminal, they stowed their gear in coin lockers and went to a discount store and purchased burner phones and three-month cards for unlimited data and minutes. After retrieving their backpacks, Connor called for a Uber driver and told him

where to go. This was an extended-stay motel which was located close to the storage place.

“I already reserved on line...” he told Drew.

“How...? Don’t you need a credit card?”

“I got a prepaid debit card to use for stuff like that.”

“You know so much... I feel like a little kid.”

“Don’t. Remember, think of everything I had to go through. And years to make plans.”

“Okay. What’s next?”

“We’ll get checked in. Then have lunch. Then to that Wal-Mart over there and we’ll get you a helmet. The riding clothes can wait; I need some too. After that, we’ll go to the storage place. Oh, the only rooms they have are single kings. Will that be a problem for you, Drew?”

She gave Connor a hard look but then chuckled. “I promise that I won’t attack you during the night. But no naked-in-motel program is running here, and no Program sex is scheduled, okay?”

“Very funny. I agree.”

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Connor opened the lock on the storage unit and pulled up the door.

“Wow,” Drew exclaimed. “Nice motorcycle!”

“Yeah. A Honda touring model. See the big trunk and side bags? Plenty of storage.”

“And you learned to ride this at thirteen?”

“Yep. I told you that I was kinda big for my age. Okay, the last times I was here, I was rushed and couldn’t go through all this stuff. But we have lots of time now. The cash is in those sport duffles over there. That bunch of plastic totes; I never looked in them, and haven’t checked that little file cabinet over there. See that duffel with the burn marks? That’s what I escaped the house with.”

Drew came over and laid her hands on his arm.

“And I’m so happy that you did escape, Connor...”

“Thanks...” He looked at her and smiled. “Let’s check those totes first.”

He opened one and they looked in.

“Filled with baggies? What’s that stuff?” Drew asked.

“Damn, looks like weed—marijuana. Mostly legal to have but only in small amounts. Hmm, looks like one-ounce bags. Must be over a hundred here.”

They opened a second tote and it held the same kind of baggies as the first. The third was different, however. It was only partly filled; there were eight gallon-sized plastic baggies filled with small packets, three dozen in total.

“It’s a white powder?” Drew asked

“Holy shit, must be coke. Powdered cocaine. Damn, gotta get rid of this right away. The weed’s kinda okay but not this stuff. Oh, there’s a bathroom at the end of the next row of units. I’m gonna flush this crap. While I’m doing that, why don’t you look at the stuff in that file cabinet?”

“Okay. Be careful.”

“Oh, I will.”

When Connor returned, Drew had some interesting finds to show him.

“Look at this. It’s banking info. Mostly statements. And in the folders with the statements, look—account numbers, web addresses, and I guess passwords! That’s what you wanted, right?”

“Oh wow, yes!” He hugged her. “Let’s see. This is the account that’s paying for the cell phones, mine and Dad’s. He had them under an alias name so that means that the authorities don’t know I have them. Now that I have access to that account, I can find out how much is in it. And this other bank isn’t in the country—it’s in the Cayman Islands. The last statement here shows over 81 thousand dollars! Damn! I wonder if this was all Dad’s or if it was part of a gang’s stash. No one ever came around looking for me to see if I knew about any money—except the cops—so I’m guessing no one knows about that offshore account. I’ll need to rethink my idea of laundering the cash here.”

“And there was this in there too,” Drew opened a box. “Guns.”

Connor closed his eyes and sighed. “Oh shit. SIG Sauer, it says on the grips. I need to read up on them.”

“You’re keeping them, right?”

“Yeah, I am. Is that okay?”

“I think so. My father carries a gun in his truck, so the idea doesn’t scare me.”

“Good. Anything else in there?”

“Just lists of names and contact info…”

“Ah, must be Dad’s customers. Okay, let’s see just how much money is in those bags.”

There was just over 14 thousand dollars in hundreds, the rest, over a thousand, in smaller bills. They separated out the remaining cash, the smaller denomination bills, which went into Connor’s money belt and Drew’s backpack.

Chapter 5 - Riding Double

When they finished searching everything inside the unit, they put what they had opened away. Then Connor got the bike out, started it running, and closed and locked the door.

“Only a small amount of gas. Need to fill it. Okay now. Riding double on a bike isn’t a big deal. You hold onto the driver and kinda move your body with his. Don’t resist the natural movement of your body on the turns, follow what the driver does. Your body will do it naturally. You ride on this seat, called the pillion—or even the ‘bitch seat’ by some people. See, you can lean back against the trunk too. I’ll get on and you hop on behind me—see how it feels. Put your hands on my hips to start so you can feel the proper motion, and later, you can use the handgrips. I’ll ride slow around the area so you get a feel for how we move. Okay? Let’s get your helmet on and secure.”

Nervously, Drew nodded. “It must be noisy when we ride. How do we talk to each other?”

“Don’t have much experience there. But the helmet we bought for you has speakers and a mike built in like mine. We Bluetooth it to the radio and then we can talk to each other.”

Drew nodded and then climbed on.

“See the foot rests where your feet are?”

“Yeah.”

“You gotta keep your feet on them always. That keeps me and the bike stable.”

“Got it.”

“Okay, hold on. Let’s ride a bit.”

After several minutes of slow riding, Connor left the storage place and stopped at a gas station, where he filled the tank. Then they went back to the motel.

“I’m gonna call that guy I told you about. I’ll arrange to meet him at that park we passed a mile back up the road. I’m gonna ask you to do something that you might not want to do. Could you kinda be like a fake guard? Stand in the trees and hold a gun so that he can see you if I call? The pistol won’t be loaded. It’s just for show in case something unexpected happens.”

Drew took on a determined expression and set her jaw.

“I can do that.”

“Great! Let me call him.”

When Connor finally reached his contact, they arranged to meet the following afternoon.

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The following day, Connor prepared for the meeting by bringing several dozen bags of weed and ten hundred-bills with him. The two also cleaned everything out of the storage unit except the cabinet and the list of Connor’s dad’s customers. He got to the meeting site fifteen minutes early and Drew positioned herself in the tree line near the picnic table where Connor was stationed.

The man arrived, alone as Connor had requested.

“Hello, Mr Garcia. I’m Connor Martin, and you haven’t changed much from how I remember you from a couple years ago.”

“Hello, Connor. Very sorry about your dad. Must have been really tough for you.”

“Sure was.”

“You have a few grateful guys who worked with your dad, you know. You could have ratted them out to the cops but you didn’t. Even when they managed to track down Archer. I know that they tried to get you to ID him but you played it cool. He appreciates that. So you said that you have a proposal. Does that mean that you found your dad’s money?”

“Yeah, it does. Listen, I’m a runaway now. Ever hear of this new stupid high-school program where they force the kids to go to school naked?”

“Sure. There must be a news story about it almost every week.”

“Okay, they just started it in my school and I refuse to take part. I plan to find somewhere I can go where they don’t have it...”

“It’s a national law...”

“Right, I know. For public schools. Maybe I’ll try to find some kind of private school but I’ll need money for that and here’s where you can help me—and I can help you too. All Dad’s money that I could lay my hands on is in hundreds and for a teen, I, for sure, can’t do anything with them. What I’d like is to get them into a bank and get a debit card to access the money. But that takes an adult. Second, I found that Dad had a stash of weed.”

Connor opened the bag and showed Garcia the baggies.

“There are 237 one-ounce bags of this stuff. I’m sure it’s high quality. I Googled the name on the cards in the baggies, ‘Chocolope Fem,’ and it’s supposed to be good. I don’t want it and if we can agree, I’ll just give it to you. Here’s what I’d like. I have 14.2 grand in hundreds. I’d like a bank account with card access. In return, I’ll give you four grand of that amount and, hey, how about giving Archer a grand too? I feel sorry that he got tracked down. Or you could keep that grand too. And you get the weed. No idea of its street value.”

“Ah, maybe about three Cs per ounce retail these days. That’s more than 70 grand, son. You sure?”

“Totally. Dad really liked you, said you were a straight shooter. He wanted to get me involved in his business, but I had misgivings. I want to close off that part of my life now and start fresh. Don’t need a fortune in good bud to do that.”

Garcia reached his hand over for a shake.

“You got a deal, son. Thanks for your comments about my honesty; I do try to play fair in my business. But you should be aware that there are banking laws and IRS regulations that come into play when about nine grand in cash is used to open an account.”

“See? That’s why I need an adult. Can you make it work?”

“Sure. I can launder it through my legitimate business, open a subsidiary business banking account, and give you control of that. I can bury any potential tax hit with my business losses. I have an excellent accountant.”

“How about doing this then? First, I’ll get the weed to you. You set up the bank account. When that’s done, contact me and I’ll bring the cash. Then could you electronically transfer the agreed amount to the new account and turn it over to me?”

Garcia thought for several seconds. “Yeah, that should work. Let me tell you where to bring the bud. What’s your ride? Are you even old enough to drive?”

“Dad got me a license and a bike, so I’ll be riding a Honda. It has lots of storage on it.”

Garcia nodded and then gave Connor the address he should go to.

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Two days later, Connor got the call that the account and transfer were ready and he should come to Garcia’s business office. Confirming that the area was safe, he decided to take Drew with him. They could shop for riding gear after he was done with Garcia. When they got there, he had Drew wait at the bike while he went inside.

“Hi. We’re all set,” Garcia said when Connor entered his office. “Have the cash?”

Connor took out the money and Garcia flipped through the strap and the remainder.

“Looks good. Say, Archer was incredibly happy with your gift, and the ‘organization’ [he made air-quotes] was very impressed with that gesture, son. You did him a solid there and the boys appreciated it. Need a shady favor, you got it.”

Connor nodded.

Garcia pointed to the computer screen. “I’m logged in to the site where your money is coming from. Your phone has internet, I assume?”

“Yeah.”

“Go to the bank site now and here’s the login info. Log in now and go to the transactions screen.”

Connor did that.

“See the hundred dollar balance? Need to put money in to open accounts. Okay, it’s transferred. Refresh your screen.”

He did and saw that 9,300 dollars was in the account now.

“I see the deposit.”

Good. Here are two debit cards for the account; you’ll need to activate them and create pins. You can do that later. But you need to change the account’s password to make the account your own. Do that now, okay?”

Connor did.

“Even though this account is linked to my business, it’s fully yours to control, okay?”

“That’s great... thanks so much. We’ll be leaving the area but I’ll try to keep in touch with you. Here’s another gift, the key to Dad’s storage unit. You might be interested in the business records he left there and the contract for it lapses in May. And tell Archer... and the others, that if the cops ask me again about Dad’s associates, that I have no idea who they might be.”

“Very good, son, and good luck in building your new life.”

They shook hands and Connor left.

Back at the bike, as Connor mounted and started it, Drew told Connor, “There’s a seedy-looking guy who’s been surreptitiously watching me or the bike. Don’t look now, but he’s over at the alley to the left... Oh, he’s getting into a car there now. I think he’s gonna follow us.”

“Huh. Is he alone?”

“Yeah.”

“Let’s go to that fast-food place we passed and see what he does.”

Connor pulled into the parking lot of the fast-food restaurant a half-mile away, parked in a slot across from the building, and shut down the bike. The car pulled in a few spots away and the guy jumped out and ran over to them.

“Hey kid, you were at Garcia’s. I think you’re a courier of his. I want your backpack, what you have in your pockets, and what’s in your bike storage.”

“Get lost. I’m not a courier.”

The guy pulled out a pistol. “You’ll do what I say...”

Suddenly he reeled back; he had just gotten hit in the head by a thrown stone.

Connor was on him in an instant, slamming the edge of his hand on the guy’s pistol hand forearm. The pistol dropped to the ground and Connor kicked it away as he drove the heel of his hand into the guy’s nose and followed up with a blow of his elbow to his solar plexus. As he fell back against the car parked behind him. Connor kicked him in the groin. He was wearing riding boots. The guy collapsed onto the ground.

“Come on, let’s go,” he called to Drew as he hopped onto the bike. Neither had even taken off their helmets.

“Drew, wow, that was an awesome shot!” Connor exclaimed as they pulled out of the parking lot.

“Yeah? Well, you were scary yourself. Krav maga? Wow!”

“Nah, just filthy street fighting. Told you before. Don’t give ‘em a chance to get back up.”

“He was bleeding from his nose and mouth, I saw.”

“The palm heel strike. That can cause a facial bone fracture. Breaks blood vessels for sure.”

“Can it kill someone?”

“Not that likely. If bone fragments get shoved into the brain, that might cause enough damage to be lethal. I didn’t hit him with full force, though. But your quick thinking to throw that stone—how the hell did you even have a stone?”

Drew laughed wryly. “When he followed us into the lot, I saw where you were gonna park. The planting border there had all these white landscape stones. I grabbed a two-three-inch one just to have a weapon available. When he pulled the gun out, I kinda waved my arm to distract him for a second so he wasn’t aiming it at you. With the gun not pointing at either of us. I could throw the stone.”

“Shit! You thought of that whole strategy in a second or two?”

“Oh sure. I play soccer. You need to be able to anticipate and strategize instantly and on the fly the whole game. It rules how I think now.”

“Damn, Drew, you’re fuckin’ impressive, you know? Hey, how’d you get so good at rock-throwing... and don’t tell me that’s a soccer skill too.”

She giggled. “One of the ways I amused myself while staying in my hidey-hole was throwing rocks at targets. Got real good at it, too.”

“For sure. Jeez, you’re dangerous too, Drew!”

“We make a good team, don’t we. Hey, back in Garcia’s place...”

“All set. Money’s in our own account and we have debit cards.”

“Sweet!”

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That evening, the two were lounging in their room, watching TV, when the evening news came on.

“...and for the final item in local news, a probable mugging went really wrong for the assailant. Jim Adams was on the scene and has the report.”

“Sure, Andrea. I’m at the Burger Delight restaurant on Clipper Street, where about an hour ago, according to witnesses, a motorcycle drove into the lot, followed by a car. The car’s driver jumped out and pulled a pistol on the cyclist, but the intended victim quickly incapacitated the mugger. John Sweeney was at the restaurant and was a witness to the assault and tells us what he saw. Mr Sweeney?”

“Yeah, it was like seeing a MMA fight, but totally one-sided. The guy with the pistol had no chance. There were two guys on the bike, both tall and husky. As soon as the gun appeared, the guy who was standing further away threw something that hit the gunman, distracted him, and then the other guy just wiped him out. Bam, bam, four strikes and the guy was down and unconscious. All in less than thirty seconds, too.”

“Thanks, John. ‘MMA’ is ‘Mixed Martial Arts,’ a full-contact combat sport. The police tell us that the damage to the suspected mugger was extensive. The intended victims, they told us, were clearly highly trained martial arts experts. Back to you, Andrea.”

“Thank you, Jim. We’ve learned from the hospital that the suspect is in critical condition with brain hemorrhaging caused by broken facial bones getting pushed into the brain. He also has a broken radius—a forearm bone, a ruptured spleen, and crushed testicles. Police officials want to locate the intended victims, but witnesses couldn’t provide any description other than they are two males, about six feet tall, wearing white helmets, dark jeans and hoodies, weighing perhaps 180 to 200 pounds, and riding a dark gray or black motorcycle. If you have any information about these two men, please contact the Lowell Police Department. And that’s it from the local news desk...”

Drew looked at Connor, who looked back at Drew. They pointed a finger at each other and then they both burst out laughing.

“Hi there, mister highly trained martial-arts expert. Pleased to meet’cha,” Drew giggled.

“Nice meeting you, mister six-foot tall, 200-pound ape,” Connor retorted and both began laughing again.

“We don’t have to worry about getting recognized, apparently,” Connor said. “Boy, did they ever get our descriptions wrong.”

“Must be the bike helmets. With their white color, we kinda look like ‘Star Wars’ storm troopers in them. Hey, you really did damage that guy. Think he’ll survive?”

“It’s cold of me, but I don’t really care. He pulled a gun on a teen. I think he made his own karma. Hey, we got what we needed out of this town. Nothing more to keep us here. We just have a few errands tomorrow.”

“Then we can leave Massachusetts behind us?”

“Exactly. We need riding clothes and boots. Gloves too, and wet weather gear. Let me look up cycle shops on the web and we’ll see what’s close or if there’s a sale. Some places might have used gear, too. It’s getting to be end of sport riding season so maybe there’ll be sales.”

“What do we need?”

“Protective clothing. Leathers. Chaps and vests work when it’s warm out; when it gets cold—and I think riding will be cold, we need jackets. Maybe fleeces. Heavy denim jeans. Riding boots. Gloves. And I mentioned wet weather gear. I’ll bet this could cost us a grand each, maybe more.”

“And we can afford it?”

“I saw the bank statement from the Caymans from almost three years ago. The principal grew five grand in the last year on those statements. Oh, I never told you this. I get Social Security too. I forgot all about that. But I think it stops if I’m no longer a full-time high-school student. I need to check into that when we get to Pennsylvania. I’ve been getting about a grand a month but the social worker controls that money.”

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The next day they found a cycle shop with a sale and some used leathers, and they bought riding clothes. Then they spent one final day at the motel. Drew was curious about what was happening back at Memorial High; she asked Connor about calling Lydia.

“I suppose. I’m kinda curious too. So you have her cell?”

“Yeah.”

“Hey. Use my father’s phone. I hardly ever turn it on, so with so little use, it should be safe.”

Drew called, but it went to voice mail. Two minutes later, the phone rang. It was Lydia.

“Hey, hey, where the hell are you, Drew? Unknown numbers go to voice mail.”

“I’m using a borrowed phone, Lydia. I’m gucci, no, I’m great. You heard, I’m sure, that they picked me to do the Program. Well, that was a non-starter. When I saw how they forced everyone and what happened to Rosemary, Wendy too, I knew that they’d try to force me. So I left town and I’m leaving the state too.”

“Shit, girl, really? Running away? You had told me a bit about your family life, so I understand a little, I think. But leaving everything ‘cause you won’t get naked? Isn’t that extreme?”

“It sure is. But I had no other options to get out of being forced.”

“Well, I was in it and hated it but survived. I didn’t let things get out of hand with all the abuse. You could do the same as I did. You’re as strong as I am; I heard how you helped the other gals.”

“That’s where we differ, Lydia. I could help *others*, but when I faced the nudity for myself, I panicked and almost collapsed. I think I told you that I was sexually assaulted.”

“You did. Ah, then it’s a case of PTSD. Learned about that in Psych. It’s post-traumatic stress disorder. Frequently happens after bad experiences like assault. You could get a psych evaluation and exemption, you know.”

“But there’s no time—I was to be in the Program starting last Monday. And my father would never spring for the psych appointments needed.”

“Well, I’ll tell you that even though you were with us for a short time, our team still misses you, Drew.”

“Thank you. How are things at Memorial, anyway?”

“No changes. The clothed kids are still going nuts when they encounter a nudie. The abuses continue. And parents are getting up in arms over the porno classroom demos the school posts on its public website. But they’re powerless to do anything. It’s a stupid idea, the whole school-nudity shit, but it’s continuing with no changes.”

“How about Wendy? Is she okay?”

“Not really. The experience she went through really hurt her bad. She got a nasty infection from all the handling she got in that class, plus an allergic reaction to something. Perhaps a detergent

on someone's clothes that got onto their hands. But she's terribly withdrawn now and Jerry, who's tried to help her cope, says that her parents might need to send her to a psych hospital for more extensive treatment. And they're suing the school for letting that class get out of hand."

"Jeez, how horrible."

"Truth. Oh, you know that boy you were sitting with at lunch? He's disappeared too..."

Drew looked at Connor, who nodded.

"Ah, yeah. He actually tracked me down a few days after I fled the school. As a result of the crap we had both seen during that first week of the Program, he had decided that he didn't want to participate in it either, so we teamed up and left the area together. He thinks that he has a relative in another state and that's where we're headed."

"I'm happy to hear that you're okay then. There have been all kinds of rumors about you. Also some people have heard that there was another runaway kid in Parkside, and another in a different school near Boston. Is there a way for us to keep in touch?"

"Um, okay. Give me your email. I'll shoot you an email addy that I'll use. I don't want anyone to be able to track me using electronics."

"I understand. Can I tell other kids you know that we spoke?"

"Sure. Okay, gotta go now. Need to give this borrowed phone back now."

"Take care and good luck, Drew. Bye."

Drew had tears in her eyes when she disconnected.

"Damn, Connor, they really liked me back there. I never had friends like that before..."

"We'll have plenty of friends where we're headed, Drew. I just feel it."

"I suppose."

"I was thinking... we can lose a year of high school while on the run and for me, that would be two years. So I just checked on line and found an accredited on-line high-school where you can get total full-time credit. Look here, it's an online charter school in Pennsylvania, it's free, and see the info for registration? We could do that."

"Good idea. We can look into getting enrolled during our rest stops as we travel. We can still leave tomorrow?"

"That's the plan."

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The following day was still fairly warm; it was mid-September and summer wasn't *quite* over yet. So the two kids had opted to wear light-weight jeans with their chaps and a light shirt under their leather vests.

"A question," Connor asked after they had checked out and were walking to the bike. "We have a

choice of routes heading southwest. Do we want to just travel hard, like on the interstate, or take the rural highways?"

"How far is it?"

"Just under 400 miles if we take I-84, 91, 95, and 78. That's the most direct but we'd have to go right through the middle of New York City. That's six or seven hours excluding time in traffic."

"Ugh. On a motorcycle? There must be heavy truck traffic there too."

"I'm sure there is. Another interstate option avoids the city and is only about fifteen miles longer. Mostly on I-84 and then I-81. It's twenty minutes longer, but with probably less traffic, maybe it's faster."

"Do we have to take interstates? My father is always complaining how boring those routes are."

"Yep, we can travel the old way, on state and US routes. Lots of small towns but lots of single-lane roads and cross traffic. I remember a trip cross-state with my dad when I was about eleven and he took back roads like that. Let me look at the best route."

Connor did some playing with his phone.

"Okay. Here's a compromise. Mass 2, which is a highway, but a local one, and then Mass 8 and US-7 bring us to the western end of the state. Then a dip into Connecticut and a short run through New York State, including on a parkway that doesn't allow trucks, we'd get to NY-199 and US-209 and then hit Pennsylvania. Taking US-209 into PA and then PA-33 to US-22 and 422 brings us to Hershey. Driving time is about ten and a half hours."

"So only four and a half hours longer? And we'd miss the interstate traffic?"

"Yeah."

"I like that better. I don't think I'll like the high speeds on the interstates while riding so close to the ground. Then we can enjoy the ride and have an overnight stop too. Maybe see some interesting places on the way."

"Sure. We'll do that. Let me put the first part of that route into the app... okay. Let's get these packs settled so the bike's balanced."

They filled the trunk and side compartments and Connor checked how the bike felt.

"Um, need to move some heavier stuff from the left to the right."

They did that and he pronounced the balance okay now. After checking that he could hear the navigation app and could talk to Drew hands-free, they mounted up and set off.

## Chapter 6 - Beginning a Plan

Three hours later, they had reached Pittsfield and decided to stop for lunch. As they slowly rode through the town, they passed a high school and could see kids running on the track next to the football field; and a bunch of them were naked. And there were a number of adults standing near the fence, watching them and taking photos.



*High school track at Pittsfield*

“Look at that, Drew,” Connor said. “Must be Program shit. Giving a show to those voyeurs too. That’s nasty.”

While they were having lunch, Drew was musing about those

kids.

“Connor, after I ran out of the school and decided that I’d have to run away, besides my planning about what I would do to earn money, I was trying to think of some kind of a way to convince people that the Program was bad. Bad socially and psychologically. I came up with some arguments too but I’m not sure how or where to use them.”

“What did you think of?”

“You yourself came up with a few. Exposing kids to sexual and psychological abuse. Making them into sex objects. Trashing their personal body image. Subjecting them to assault, even rape. Making them surrender their personal integrity. Robbing them of their ability to keep their personal limits and moral values.”

“I said all that?”

“Sure you did. Not in the same words, but yeah. I had thought of some of the same things, but also people have the right to personal privacy and the Program denies any privacy to the kids. Then there’s what we saw the first week, like using Program kids to produce kiddie porn in the guise of teaching, not protecting kids from sexual abuse where the clothed kids go overboard with those Requests. Kids who have psych issues get pulled in with no regard for their mental health. There’s personal injuries from abusive treatment, like the guy you stopped with Janet who was gonna rape her with his fingers. The way Wendy’s boobs were bruised. I even saw a girl trying to stick a pencil or something into Scott’s butt....”

“What? Shit! When was that?”

“Um, maybe that Tuesday? Yeah, Tuesday. This girl made him do a butt-up pose and she tried shoving it into his ass but he moved away quick.”

“Ooh, I’m sure he did. Damn.”

“Right, then, um, there were those guys who said they were gonna rape us. Wendy having to take drugs because of her embarrassing, humiliating treatment. So how can that crap be stopped? Even having better safety, the teachers can’t see everything, be everywhere. As if they even care, too. If you turn a kid into a sex object, as you told me back in my hide-out, it’s objectifying her, then she’s no longer a person, and the Program rules basically say that’s how she should be treated. As an object to fondle, grope, perform nasty exposing poses, stuff like that, for the entertainment and gratification of the voyeur kids.”

“Damn, you did think about that a lot.”

“I guess. I wish there was a way to set up some kind of organization to oppose the Program. I think it’s too hard to do that through legal or political channels, but what about from the bottom up? Starting with the kids themselves. Maybe civil disobedience, mass refusals, student strikes—that might even get media attention on the kids’ plight. Publicizing some nasty stories or horrifying stories of bad stuff happening could get people’s attention. And I also thought of this: wouldn’t a teacher—an adult—forcibly stripping a kid be a sexual assault? I don’t think that the government would pass a law allowing people to sexually assault anyone, especially kids. Am I right?”

“Jeez, Drew, those are all good thoughts,” Connor praised her.

“Hey. Here’s another thought. Memorial has a Facebook page and kids can post on it, I think. Why don’t we try something like this... Post anti-Program stuff and a call to resist. Mention my idea about stripping kids being a sexual assault. Tell kids that they don’t have to get naked and can’t be forced. If they don’t graduate, they could do the GED thing.”

Connor shook his head. “Wow, you just amaze me. But you’d need to do that stuff so you couldn’t be traced. I’m sure that a record’s kept of the devices that access Facebook—you’d need an account too and that might need something like a real telephone number.”

“Yeah, my idea needs more thought and careful planning; that’s true.”

“Say, it’s 2:30 p.m. now. How much further should we go before we stop at a motel?”

Drew wrinkled her brow in thought. “Stop at 4:30? Then we have time to check that on-line school and have dinner.”

“Okay. Let me check our route. ... So that would put us near Kingston. Let me check motels. ... Several in our price range. Let me reserve. ... Done. Okay, ready to hit the road?”

“Yeah. Let’s go.”

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They left the Kingston motel at 10 a.m. the following morning and headed south on US-209 and three hours later, they reached the Allentown-Bethlehem area, where they stopped for lunch.

“I was reading about that charter high school, Drew. They have classes on line with other kids at the same time and also independent classes. We need to get computers for it, you know. That was something that the Memorial teachers said that we needed for some classes.”

“Yeah, a small laptop—a notebook?”

“That’s it. Say, I think that Hershey’s maybe like the Lowell area, not a huge number of choices in stores. This seems to be a big commercial area, so maybe we can find a couple of used ones?”

“Suits me.”

After a search on his phone, Connor located two used electronics equipment sellers.

“On their sites it shows that they both have some in stock. Two years old, between \$150 and 175. Ninety-day warranty on one site, six months on the other.”

“Are they close?”

“Well, within ten miles. Wanna check them out?”

“Okay. I like the longer warranty.”

“Only three months longer, but yeah. That place looks closer—we’ll go there first.”

They purchased two notebook computers at that shop and were able to extend the shop’s warranty to a year by paying an additional 15 dollars each. It was 3:10 p.m. now.

“We’re just about a hour-and-a-half away,” Connor told Drew as they returned to his bike.. “I checked for motels and stuff in Hershey but it’s a kinda resort town and the extended-stay prices are high. So I looked at apartments and house rentals in the area and saw that Elizabethtown has a couple rentals. We can look at them tomorrow. That’s located about eight miles south of Hershey. Meanwhile, I got a motel room there. Ready to go?”

“Let’s.”

Traveling on Old US-22 going west, they passed several towns whose names amused Drew.

“See those names?” she giggled to Connor. “Back there, Klutztown? And here are Grimville and Krumsville. Funny.”

He chuckled. “That’s what I thought too. But Mass has some odd ones too: Belchertown, Ware, um, Assonet... ah, and Braggyville. And hey, do you know that Mass has a place with the longest name in the country?”

“No. I’ll bite. What?”

“Can’t pronounce it. It’s got 45 letters and starts ‘Chargo’-something. It’s in Webster so outsiders call it Lake Webster.”

Later Drew looked up the name. It was “Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg.”

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Within the next several days, the couple had located a private house rental in Elizabethtown. It was a tiny, 800-square-foot, two-bedroom, one-bath house, but the rent would be manageable for Connor's funds for a year; they'd have to get some kind of part-time jobs after a year, though. The house was actually just down the block from Elizabethtown's high school and the first thing Drew noticed as they drove past it was that it appeared that the school had at least two soccer pitches.

They also managed to get registered for the charter school using the house rental agreement as residency proof; their registration went through despite their not having their past school records, which they would need to provide within thirty days. They began attending classes while they attempted to get their records from their middle schools. For that, Connor contacted Alphonse Garcia, who pulled some strings (or made some threats, Connor was never sure) and the records were made available, although it took over two weeks to get them. After submitting them, Drew and Connor were both fully enrolled in the on-line high school.

They found several places which offered free wi-fi where they could stay for several hours at a time without being disturbed or bothering the management. These were three coffee shops and the local library. Connor also spent about an hour each day attempting to use the internet to track down every "Martin" he could find, to contact them to ask if they shared his great-grandfather, Christoph Martin. He thought that his grandfather's name was Hans, but he wasn't certain of that. His searching wasn't having much luck.

Several days after they had moved into their little rental house and Drew and Connor were sharing the dinner-fixing duties, Drew sighed and looked at him.

"Connor, I feel like a free-loader, taking advantage of your generosity..."

He tried to stop her but she put up her hand to interrupt what he was about to say.

"No, you've provided everything we needed but the only thing I could contribute was my \$145 and change. It was my idea to run; a really dumb idea, but you just took that idea, turned it into a real plan, and made it work. I..."

"I *will* stop you there, Drew. You know why I did it? Really want to know? Drew, I kinda fell for you that very first day when you literally ran into me. And I had been making these vague plans to leave the area for maybe two years before..."

Drew interrupted, "You ... you *fell for* me? You did? Connor, I thought, oh, I was hoping that you felt something for me... I saw something in your eyes when you looked at me but wasn't sure."

"Stop, Drew. Will you be my girlfriend?"

"Oh hell yes!"

She flew into his arms.

"It's funny... we've shared the same bed several times and now we're finally boy-girlfriend," Connor joked as they broke their first romantic kiss.

“Um, not ready to go that far...” Drew started.

“It’s okay. Let’s see how our thoughts of each other develop as we live here together... can I call you ‘honey’?” Connor asked.

“All terms of endearment are just fine... sweetie.”

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After their on-line school session on a Thursday, a week after they had begun school, as they rode home, Drew noticed a pick-up game at the soccer pitch at the high school.

“Oh, let me grab my soccer gear and go back,” she told Connor as they passed the school.

Drew went back to the pitch and spoke to one of the kids who was standing on the sideline watching.

“Hi, I’m Drew and new here. I played fullback where I used to live. I hope that I can join your group playing?”

“You go to school here?” one guy asked. “Name’s Will.”

“No, home school right now. Does the school have a team? And there are more soccer pitches over there too?”

“Yeah, boys’ and girls’ teams. Those other pitches are on the fairgrounds. Are you any good?”

“Just made my high school team but then had to move away.”

“That sucks.”

“It sure does.”

“What say, Stan?” Will asked another guy watching the conversation. “Put her in after next score?”

Stan looked Drew over.

“She’s got the right build. Drew, right?”

Drew nodded.

“And you played D?”

“Fullback in a 5-3-2 formation. I’m also very fast so on some plays I played stopper, you know, a sweeper who plays in front of the back line. Who are the teams?”

“Some of us are on the high school team, some go to Etown College, and other kids who just like playing,” Stan told her. “We usually don’t have enough kids show up to field all 22 positions, so that’s why this game started out 9-on-9 and we’ve been rotating in players on the goals as more kids showed up. So you played defensive line?”

Drew nodded.

“Okay, when the next goal is scored, the four of us will switch in. That’s Jerry.”

He indicated another boy standing nearby.

“Hey Jerry. Come meet Drew here,” he called, and then introduced them.

Drew joined the game when the next goal was scored, and after meeting the other players, they shuffled the positions to allow Drew to play on the back line. As she played and got into her soccer mind-set, she noticed that several players were quite good, and the best were three girls; two were on the opposing team, playing striker and winger. Drew watched the winger’s play carefully as she handled the ball and picked up a tell when the girl prepared to pass the ball.

Several minutes later, that winger approached the penalty box in a three-person offensive attack and set up to pass to her left as Drew challenged her, but Drew saw the tell and stripped the ball from her, executed a Zidane roulette to break free, dribbled ten yards upfield and sent a long pass crossfield to a streaking teammate, who pulled it in and fired a shot into the opposition’s goal.

After that play, Drew tackled other attacking players twice, stripping the ball; blocked two shots on her team’s goal; and when an errant ball, a cross just outside the penalty box, which was meant for the opposing team’s striker, hit a player in the back and bounced wide, Drew beat everyone else to the ball, kicked it away upfield toward the opponent’s goal, and dashed after it on an all-out run.

One of her team’s wingers was hanging back and saw Drew capture the ball. He dashed upfield, pacing her as she brought the ball toward the goal, and when a defensive player moved to block her, she sent a pass to him, juked around the defender, got the give-and-go back, and dodged a second defender with a scissors move, pulling him away from her line to the goal. She needed to spread the defense more, so she fired a pass to the winger, causing the defender in the left of the penalty box to move toward the winger to reduce his angle on the goal, and then Drew found herself one-on-two against the goalie and their center back. Drew’s winger saw it too and whacked a grass-grazing cross at her as she ran into the right outside corner of the box, and when the ball arrived, she crushed a rocket into the upper left corner of the net.

Her teammates gathered around her to celebrate.

“That was one damned sweet play,” Stan told her. “Just how fast are you, anyway? You just tore out of the backfield and was across the center line before anyone else had a chance to take three steps!”

“Yeah, I react quick and can move fast; that’s why my team used me for mounting unexpected attacks. Good thing Joe started streaking when he saw me get that flubbed pass. He was in a perfect position for those gives-and-goes.”

After the game was over, Drew chatted with the two girls from the opposing team. They introduced themselves.

“That was one nasty move you put on me,” Tommie, the winger, told her. “How were you able to anticipate my pass, anyway? I thought my fake would make you bite.”

Drew told her about the tell she had noticed.

“Well, shit. You’re good. Joan and I play on the Etown College team and we usually dominate

these pick-up games, but your D play is impressive. You must be new at the high school, yes?”

Drew told her that she had only been in the area for a week. “But I’m doing home-school for now...”

Joan interrupted, “Hey, Drew, I think that Coach Watson—the high school boys’ coach—wants to talk to you. He’s coming over now.”

Drew had noticed several adults nearby who had been watching the game. One of them came over to them.

“Miss? Have a minute to talk?”

Drew nodded and the girls called, “Hi, Coach! Bye, Coach! See you next game, Drew!” as they walked away.

“I’m Coach Watson, the boys’ team coach here, as they no doubt told you. You’re really good. What’s your name? I haven’t seen you around before, though.”

“Just got into the area a couple weeks ago. I’m kinda home schooled, so I don’t go to this school. I’m Drew.”

“Huh. Too bad, Drew. I was going to suggest that you see the girls’ team coach, Coach Aberman. A thought... exactly what kind of home schooling are you doing? I ask because in PA, home-schoolers can participate in public school sports if they belong to a public independent study program.”

“Um, it’s Commonwealth Charter Academy.”

“Well, that works, Drew; you could play on the school’s team. I’ll tell Coach Aberman about you; that is if you agree, and you can come by the school next Tuesday at 2:45; we’ll be having team practices starting right about then. Is it okay?”

“You really mean I can get a chance to be on the high school team then?”

“If what I saw out there is any indication of your skills—I saw outstanding defensive work, amazing speed, excellent ball handling, and a good ball sense—I call that a ‘soccer head’; then yes, I’m sure that you’d be able to make the team. We’re actually in the middle of the current year season so it’s possible that you might not be able to play in games this season, though.”

“Thank you, Coach. I’ll be there Tuesday.”

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On Friday, another important encounter happened to Drew and Connor while they were sitting in one of the coffee shops, attending one of their classes on line. A man was seated at a table on the other side of the shop, reading a newspaper. When their class ended and Drew began to talk to Connor, the man got up and came over to them.

“I hope I’m not interrupting you folks, but I have an important question. My name is Pastor William Robertson; I’m the minister at the Lutheran church over on East Street. I’ve noticed both of you in here several times during the past two weeks—shouldn’t you be in school?”

Connor looked at him and the pastor smiled back.

“Actually, sir, we are attending school. The Commonwealth Charter Academy,” he replied. “An on-line high school.”

“Oh, I see, but I sense that there’s something more here, son. May I ask your names?”

“I’m Connor Martin.”

“And I’m Drew Harper, Pastor. What do you mean, ‘something more’?”

“Ah. People normally don’t sign up for an on-line school like you seem to have unless there’s a reason that they can’t attend in person. Yet you are here when you could be in the physical school. Can I be so forward to ask why—is there a problem where I may be able to give assistance?”

Connor looked at Drew and asked a silent question. Drew nodded back; the pastor seemed to be very empathetic.

“We’d really prefer to be in an actual school,” Connor said quietly. “But I don’t see how that would be possible.”

“How do you mean, son?”

“We left our hometown—ran away, really—to escape that new nudity in school program. We can’t or won’t do it, and the school officials were using physical force to strip reluctant kids. So we left. I’ve got no family left back there but I might in this area. I’m trying to locate a relative, a second or third cousin, who supposedly lives somewhere in the Hershey area.”

“Ah, yes. I heard about that school nudity program. Pennsylvania hasn’t adopted it; there’s great opposition to it in the state legislature. We’re an extremely conservative state, especially here in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. So you’re an orphan, Connor?”

“I am. Lived in a group home,” and then Connor told the pastor more about his situation.

“What about your parents, Drew? Do they know where you are and that you’re safe?”

Drew told the pastor about her family life and concluded with her relationship with her father.

“... and my father never really cared about me. He let Grandma take care of me, but after her stroke, he couldn’t care less about what was happening to me. He got a girlfriend and we fought constantly and he never cared; always took her side. He only wanted to be sure that nobody bothered him.”

Drew went on to talk about her sexual assault at the hands of the girlfriend’s son.

“So the nudity crap scared me so much that I panicked and ran out of school when I got picked. The week before that, it was the first week of school, Connor and I saw how much abuse the naked kids were getting and I couldn’t face that. So we ran away together.”

“I see. So you can’t register in school because of no parent or guardian.”

“Exactly.”

“Connor, you mentioned being in the foster-care system.” Connor nodded at him. “You lived in a group home. With your father’s death, you’d get his survivor benefits...”

“I did, but the social worker back there controlled the account where that money went. The payments stop if I’m not full-time in school, so I wanted to keep being in school full time. But even with the money from Social Security and what I have in the bank, it’s not enough to last us unless we can get some kind of jobs too.”

“That’s good thinking, Connor. And you’re fourteen or fifteen and freshmen. Hmm. One of my congregation members is a lawyer and dedicated to social justice. I’m certain you won’t want to get involved with CPS, the Child Protective Services people; they’d likely want to send you back to Massachusetts.”

“No, we’d just run again,” Connor said angrily.

“I’m sure. This lawyer wouldn’t turn you in and he might be able to help you get ‘legal’ here.” He made air quotes with his hands. “He comes to services most Sundays. If you can come—for services or afterward—I’ll tell him about you and then introduce you.”

Drew looked at Connor who nodded back. “Okay, we’ll come. When do you start?”

“Excellent. Worship service begins at 10 a.m. May I ask, were you a member of a faith community where you grew up?”

“Dad’s family was actually Lutheran but he didn’t go to church that I can recall; at least, he never took me. But I found a baptizing record with my birth certificate,” Connor told the pastor, who nodded, smiling.

“My father never mentioned anything about churches, so I have no idea. Grandma wore a tiny cross on a necklace, so I assume my family is Christian,” Drew said.

“Thanks to both of you. The other thing I want to tell you is that I might be able to help you with your relative search. I’m a member of the local council of clergy. Leaders from over a hundred churches in this region generally participate in exchanging information. If you can give me any details that you can recall about your family, Connor; the family name ‘Martin’ is a common one in this area, I’ll put out a request to the council members to ask in their congregations if anyone knows anything of your relatives.”

“That would be wonderful, sir, thanks,” Connor said.

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Following worship services on Sunday, Connor and Drew met the attorney whom Robertson had mentioned.

“Drew, Connor, this is Mr Wayne Gelb, a partner in the Meyer, Geiss, Petermann, and Segrist law firm. They’re a major firm here in the capitol area. Mr Gelb is the managing partner of their local office.”

“Good meeting both of you, and please call me Wayne,” Gelb told them as they shook hands.

“Let’s go to the parsonage to chat,” Robertson said.

The pastor led the three to the little parsonage behind the church and they got settled in the living room as a woman entered.

“This is my wife Ella. You might have seen her seated in the first row at services but she was occupied in the kitchen when we had our light lunch.”

Robertson introduced the youngsters to his wife. Then he brought up the meeting topic.

“So Drew and Connor left their homes under a kind of duress, as I had told you, Wayne,” Robertson began. “They tell me that they were fleeing from being forced into that new school nudity program that our wonderful lawmakers have approved as a federal law.”

He had them both recount their stories.

“All right, as I see it, we have a number of issues here; some more pressing than others,” Gelb said after the teens had told their individual stories. “But first, I’d like to represent you both *pro bono*—no cost to you—my firm strongly believes in social justice and your issues certainly fall into that category. If you agree?”

“Oh yes” ... “Yes, thanks so much.”

Gelb smiled. “It’s a kind of traditional practice to ask the client for a dollar as a retainer.”

Both teens scrambled to get a dollar out and handed the bills over.

“Here’s what I can glean about your immediate situation. Guardianship issues for you both. You’ve got schooling covered temporarily. Establishing legal ownership of your motorcycle and getting it registered here; I assume that the registration is in your father’s name, Connor?”

“Yes.”

“Knowing how much work the social services departments of states have to deal with, I assume that your father’s estate was never legally settled. That needs looking into.”

“The insurance company refused to pay for the destroyed house. They said it was caused by a criminal act and negligence in causing the fire,” Connor said.

“Do you know if there was a will?”

“No...”

“Issues like those need resolution. Now, Drew, you mentioned that your father didn’t show you any parental support?”

“No, even before Grandma’s stroke, the only time he paid any attention to me was to yell at me for bothering him. Like if I had something from school for a parent to sign. Also, after the cops came to talk to him after that assault in the shower that I mentioned, he punished me for getting the police involved.”

“Punished how?”

“Grabbed me and whacked me on my rear several times.”

“Awful... What I see here is that you have an unfit parent—this is when the parent, by their conduct, fails to provide proper guidance, care, or support. I believe that your father’s neglect makes him an unfit parent. A court looks at the child’s welfare and if the parent or parents fail to assume responsibility for the care of a child, or fail to maintain a reasonable degree of concern, interest, or responsibility for the child’s welfare, the parent can lose custody of the child. In your case, the problem would be witnesses to any mistreatment, and passive neglect is difficult to show.”

“Mr... um, Wayne,” Drew began uncertainly, “that man frequently said that he wished that he was no longer responsible for me. When the weather was good, for several years I kept up a campsite in woods near where I lived so I wouldn’t have to stay in that house.”

“It was quite a cool setup she had there, too,” Connor commented.

“That’s dreadful, though. Being so alienated that you didn’t want to live in your own home,” Gelb replied. “Possibly your father would voluntarily relinquish his parental rights then.”

“I think he’d be happy to,” Drew told him.

“All right, returning to you, Connor. Navigating through the morass of social services departments and switching states absent any compelling reasons will be difficult...” Gelb began.

“Um, one sec, Wayne,” Drew interrupted.

“Yes, Drew?”

“Compelling reason. Connor, what about the drugs? Could you say that the gang was after you and you had to run?”

While Connor reached over and hugged her, saying “Thanks, Drew, what a great idea”; Gelb asked “What about drugs?”

“I didn’t go into those details,” Connor told him. “But Drew’s idea is super. I told you that my dad was cooking meth and that blew up and started the fire. He was heavily involved in the local drug scene. I heard from the cops that they found lots of traces of cocaine and meth in the fire remains and they figured that it had all been destroyed. But he had more coke in a storage locker; I only found it after we began to leave the state. I flushed it all. What if we could say that I heard about a threat from the gang about forcing me to tell where Dad had hidden the drugs and money? Only about two months ago, the cops had finally tracked down one of Dad’s associates and had grilled him. Could I say that other gang members, ones I didn’t know, were planning to grab me to force me to tell them where Dad’s stash was? The cops would back up a story like that; the detective told me that if the gang found out where I got sent, someone might try to contact me for getting Dad’s stuff. That’s why I was placed in my last group home and not one in Lowell, by the way. Make it harder to find me.”

“That’s quite a story, Connor, and yes, I think that info is compelling enough to warrant a change of states. Very good thinking, Drew. And Pastor Will told me that he’s contacted the other area clergy to find your relative.”

“I have more news for you two,” Mrs Robertson said at this point. “I mentioned something of your plight to the ladies at lunch today and one of them, she’s a recent widow, lives in a house with a vacant mother-in-law apartment upstairs. She’d like to meet you and if you get along, you could live there. If you do chores around the house, she’ll let you stay with no rent. She’s just fine financially so doesn’t need the money.”

Drew looked at Connor and smiled. “That would relieve a big financial burden, right?”

“Sure would. Our current rental is month-to-month with a month’s notice and it’s 750 dollars a month. Getting free lodging would stretch our finances incredibly, so thank you, Mrs Robertson, for finding that opportunity,” Connor told her.

She chuckled. “She hasn’t made the offer yet, but I believe that she’ll like you. Drew, you remind me somewhat of her younger daughter—she must have looked like you when she was a teen. Oh, her name is Catherine Neumann.”

“Well, it appears that we’re done. Kids—I hope calling you that wasn’t insulting—it was a pleasure meeting you two, although hearing your stories was less than a pleasure. Here’s my business card and I have your current address and phone numbers. Carry on with your current day-to-day activities and I’ll be in touch, but let me know if you do move. It might take me two or three weeks before I have anything to report.”

They all stood up and shook hands as Gelb said, “Good bye for now,” and he left, with Richardson showing him out.

Mrs Richardson asked the teens, “If she’s available, do you want to meet Mrs Neumann now?”

They both agreed and Mrs Richardson made the call.

“We can go right over now, otherwise not till tomorrow,” she told them when she disconnected.

“Is it close?” Connor asked.

“Two blocks east, toward the high school. A quick walk.”

The pastor joined them as they walked to the house and during their walk, he related some of the area’s history and interesting features.

“We call the borough ‘Etown’ for short,” he said as they walked. “The local Pennsylvania Dutch, actually these are people of western German descent, call it ‘*Betzischeddel*’ in their lingo, and the ‘Elizabeth’ name came from an early settler’s wife. The Masonic Village here is famous. We also have our own chocolate factory, Mars Chocolates, where they manufacture their popular Dove brand. And Etown College is a highly regarded school, started in 1899, actually. Ah, here we are.”

They met Mrs Neumann at her door and she invited them into her house.

“Oh, Drew, is it? You so remind me of Rachel when she was your age,” Neumann said when they were introduced.

“That’s what I told her, Catherine,” Mrs Robertson said. “I told you about these kids when we

were fixing the lunch. Such sad stories.”

“So you both up and ran away then?” Neumann asked them.

“We did, ma’am. Did Mrs Robertson tell you about that school nudity program, how kids were being forced to strip naked and had to allow other kids to grope and fondle them?” Drew asked.

“Oh my goodness, no, just that you were trying to escape abusive situations.”

“Indeed, that’s what it was, essentially legalized sexual abuse, organized by the high school,” Connor told her. “The first week of school, we saw abusive, humiliating, and violent treatment of the kids who had been forced to be naked. One boy even attacked Drew, who wasn’t even in the Program; she was just trying to protect another freshman, who was naked.”

“I’m just speechless about such terrible things. Connor, you’re an orphan?”

“Yes ma’am, my mother got divorced and disappeared when I was little; father died in a fire.”

“And I might as well be called an orphan. My father told me many times that he wished I wasn’t in his life,” Drew commented.

Neumann shook her head in dismay. “Terrible. Are you going to school here now?”

Connor explained about the virtual school and then Drew said, “The soccer coach here invited me to try out for the girls’ team, though. He saw me playing in a pick-up game last week. Maybe with that opening and our lawyer’s help, we’ll be able to register.”

“Yeah, we were reluctant to try registering in person ‘cause when the school found out that we were runaways, they’d tell Social Services and we’d be forced to return. But there’s nothing there for us to return to.”

“Well, you both seem to be well mannered teens. Pardon me for asking this, but are you a couple, romantically?”

Connor chuckled softly. “We only just decided last week that we should be boy-girlfriends. We first met at school maybe three or four weeks ago and then got involved with that nudity program. If you’re asking if we do wild stuff together, that answer is no, never. We both are respectful and we’re independent and self-sufficient—given our home situations, we had to be. If we lived here, we’d take good care of the place and could do any chores you needed.”

“Would you like to see the apartment? It’s small.”

“Ma’am? For the past two years, my living space was the size of a large closet that I shared with another boy. And Drew? When the weather permitted, she lived in an outdoor campsite that she had set up in the woods to escape her home situation. An apartment would be paradise for us. We live in 800 square feet now.”

“Goodness—the apartment upstairs is about 1000 square feet,” Neumann exclaimed.

“See? Paradise,” Drew giggled.

The apartment had two bedrooms, one a bit larger than the other, a small kitchen, a sitting room-

cum-living room-cum-dining room area, a full bathroom and a half-bathroom with a washer and dryer. It also had an exterior entrance.

“Mrs Neumann, as Drew said, this is paradise; it’s a lovely apartment. So much nicer than our current place. And you’d offer it for no rent? Just for us helping with your chores?”

“I will. But no parties or disturbances, all right? You two don’t appear to be troublemakers, but if I have any difficulties with either of you, then you will have to leave. Is that understood?”

“Absolutely” ... “It is.”

“All right then. When do you want to move here?”

“Thanks so very much, Mrs Neumann. You’ve made our plans for living here so much more stress free,” Drew sighed. “Now Connor and I won’t feel so pressed to find part-time work, but we still plan to find something that fits our schedules. Connor? Next week is real busy, right? How about Saturday?”

“Yeah, that would be okay for us. Mrs Neumann, is that okay for you?”

“It is. Let’s go back downstairs and I have an agreement for you both to sign. You’re minors, I know, but this is just the formal agreement between us.”

“Sure,” Connor agreed.

On the way back to parsonage, Drew and Connor thanked the Robertsons again.

“May we expect you at services next week?” the pastor asked.

“We’re planning on it, sir. We met a few kids there and spoke together for a few minutes and we’d like to meet more people like them.”

“We have a young adult group that meets monthly; you might want to check it out. First Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m.”

“We’ll try to get to the next meeting then; it sounds interesting,” Connor told him.

They parted and the teens returned to their home.

“Today was—just wow!” Connor enthused. “We have adult friends now, a lawyer who’s gonna help us, and a rent-free home! Just wow!”

Drew just smiled and nodded. *I’ll finally be free of Candy—and my father too.*

Chapter 7 - Soccer Team Redux

On Tuesday afternoon, Drew went to the high school and met Coach Watson there, who introduced her to Coach Aberman.

“Hello, Drew,” Aberman said. “Coach Watson showed me some video he took on his phone of your play last week. He also told me that you’re enrolled in an on-line charter school. Since it’s public, you can be part of a public high school team.”

“I was happy to hear that, Coach. I love soccer and I’ve been playing in community leagues for five years.”

“And what I saw of your play here was quite good. Why couldn’t you just enroll in school here, if I may ask?”

“Kinda legal reasons. Something to do with guardianship issues and my lawyer is working those out. Maybe I can enroll after those are settled.”

“Ah. I understand completely. Listen, after seeing Coach’s clips and talking to him, I don’t think that I need to assess your skills like we do in our late summer team tryouts. How about if I just put you into a scrimmage match after the warmups?”

“Sure, Coach.”

“I’m pushing this a bit because you need to get an athletic physical and I need to register you on the team before you can play.”

“Oh, a physical. Right. I had a sports physical last April for my community soccer league. I have a copy of it with my soccer papers. Will that work?”

“It has a medical history and physical exam report?”

“Yes ma’am. My last high school accepted it when I brought them a copy.”

“Good. I’ll need a copy. Ah, the stragglers are all here now so let me get everyone started with stretching and warmups. Just pick a spot and join. I’ll introduce you when we’re done.”

One of the girls, Melodie, the team captain, Drew learned, led the stretching and a three-lap run around the pitch. The girls returned to the sideline after the run and began introducing themselves. One of the girls came up to Drew.

“Hey Drew, hi. Marjorie, remember?”

Marjorie had been one of the other girls from the Thursday pick-up game. She was a sophomore, a midfielder.

“Yeah, hi. Where’d you disappear to after the game?”

“Had to get home. Hey girls, come meet Drew. She was a fireball on the pitch when she played with our impromptu gang on Thursday. Even got a lit goal—and she was playing D then!”

Everyone crowded around to introduce themselves as the coach called for their attention.

“You’ve all met Drew. She’s strong at D and has some good O skills too, according to Coach Watson, who saw her play. So instead of concentrating on drills today, I want to see how you girls can execute our game plan we worked on last week for the upcoming Palmyra game. Scrimmage, O starters on D starters, and backups in your regular sub slots. And, because she’s fast, I want Drew in as right wing-back. Allison, you’re better as a number 8, so take that position for now. Drew, we play a 5-3-2. The game plan mostly involves the O, so just defend and follow Susan’s lead—she’s the D captain and a center back. Hit it!”

After just forty minutes of play, Drew had established herself as a solid player. Nothing that the O tried on her side could get past her defense—she intercepted three passes; stalled the opposition’s offense four times, allowing other defenders to break up their attacks; and stripped the ball from the opposing winger twice, leading to a breakaway once, where Drew scored in a play eerily similar to the one she had executed on Thursday.

The coach blew her whistle, calling a halt to the scrimmage after that goal.

“Gather ‘round, girls!” When they all jogged over to her, she asked, “What happened to our O out there? Melodie?”

She was a striker in addition to being team captain.

“Um, Drew happened, Coach. She’s faster than anyone we’ve ever played against.”

One of the other girls, April, raised her hand; she was a backup defensive fullback. Aberman pointed to her.

“Yeah, Drew came at me like a race car when she charged me—when she got that give-and-go back, I went to block her but suddenly she wasn’t there, she just nutmegged me, spun around and kept running for the goal. We had three-on-one on her and she still scored.”

Drew raised her hand. “I had great help, That was a super cross that Robin sent me after the give-and-go.”

The coach smiled at Drew. “You blew our offensive game plan to shreds, young lady.” Drew started to apologize but Aberman stopped her. “No, that was good. We’ve never faced a defender as fast as you are with the kind of reflexes you appear to have. I also saw you do three advanced dribbling moves, changing direction against an approaching opponent—the Ronaldo chop, a roulette, and a scissors move—that left the D player flat-footed each time. And you said that you play both full-back and wing-back?”

“Yes, Coach, stopper too in some formations my team used when we faced a team with a strong and balanced D and O. My speed out of the backfield gave our own O more attacking options.”

“I can see that. Your attack came on so fast that the D didn’t have much of a chance to organize an effective formation.”

Another girl raised her hand. “Drew, what was that crazy move you pulled to dribble around Marcie after your first steal?”

“Um, oh, you mean the roulette? I saw some clips of Real Madrid games from the early 2000s

and this guy Zidane, a midfielder, had this cool dodging dribbling play. Using it, you can run past someone marking you as if she's not even there. So I learned how to do it, both turning left or right."

"Yeah, wow, you didn't even slow down when you blew past her. Can you teach how to do that?"

Drew looked at Aberman who nodded. "Well, sure, I could, but you need to have very solid dribbling skills."

Aberman nodded again, grinning now. "Girls, the Zidane roulette, also known as the Don-360 move, is a really advanced skill and I'd prefer if you get secure in your basics first. But if you want to spend your own time on this one, and Drew thinks you're able to learn it, then have at it. Thanks, Drew. You certainly did showcase your abilities today, right, girls?"

They all cheered and Drew blushed. *Damn, getting this acceptance is nice. A little like my old team, but those girls came from well-off families, so off the pitch I was always a pariah.*

"Okay then, skills practice time," the coach declared. "Captains, break down your groups into doing rondos now. Drew, go with Melodie's group. The O could use to learn some better D skills."

After practice, Aberman asked Drew if she could be at the school at 2:30 the next day.

"Bring your sports physical papers and birth certificate, or another proof of age..."

"Um, Coach, I only have a copy of my past middle school records for an age proof. The physical exam paper shows my age too."

"That should work. We'll get you set up in the school's sports program."

"Thanks, Coach!"

When Drew got back to her house, she told Connor about her practice session.

"I have to go in tomorrow to register for the sports participation," she finished.

"Hmm. This might be almost the same as trying to register for the school itself, Drew. No guardian or parent. Let me call Wayne and see how to handle this, okay?"

"Good thought. Glad someone's thinking."

Connor called the lawyer's office and he returned the call after an hour. Connor explained and then put Drew on the call.

"Connor was right in calling, Drew. Normally the school wants a parent or guardian to sign for them, but our state law has provided for children who are what the law terms 'unaccompanied youth,' those students who do not reside with a parent or legal guardian. I can email a document to you tomorrow morning which will formally certify that I can act in your behalf for you to join the school's sports program."

"Thanks so much, Wayne. Any other news?"

“Not yet. We’ve collected some of the items needed but still need at least two more weeks. I’ll let you know.”

On Wednesday afternoon, Drew got registered in the sports program without any fuss, thanks mostly to Gelb’s emailed document. Her medical record papers were accepted and copied and she was told that she was all set. Then she went off to practice.

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The next two weeks went by with nothing of real importance happening. Drew continued practicing with the team; the coach was planning to have her play in games beginning in early November. They moved into the apartment in Mrs Neumann’s house and got it set up to their liking. Neumann’s chores were simple and easy for them; some light housekeeping and yard work were their main responsibilities. At church services, the teens met several kids who went to the school and struck up friendships. It was on the last Saturday of the month that the pastor called Connor with news.

“Connor, are you coming to worship with us tomorrow?” he asked on the call.

“We are, Pastor. You have some news?”

“I might. I’m waiting for one more phone call now. I’ll tell you what I’ve found at lunch then.”

“Sounds good; thanks.”

They couldn’t wait for Sunday.

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After services were over, Connor and Drew went to the social hall for the light lunch which had been set up there and were talking to two of the older teens whom they had met several weeks earlier. They were quizzing their new acquaintances about the high school and the kinds of classes most kids took, when Pastor Richardson entered the room. He walked around the room, stopping at tables and chatting with the people there. Soon he approached Connor’s and Drew’s table.

“Hi there, Connor, Drew, Grace, and Stuart. Peace be with you all, this fine day of the Lord. May I ask how your week was?”

They all replied that their week was good.

“Except for a pop quiz in history on Friday,” Grace complained. “I think I did okay, though.”

Robertson smiled. “I’m sure you did. But Grace and Stuart, I have to talk to Drew and Connor for a bit now...”

“That’s okay, Pastor,” Stuart interrupted. “They told us that they were gonna talk to you after lunch. We need to get going anyway. We liked your sermon, by the way. Probably we’ll be here next week. So goodbye.”

“Bye, Pastor,” Grace said.

“The blessings of our Lord Jesus be on both of you, and be safe.”

“Thanks, Pastor,” they both chimed, waved, said, “Bye, Drew and Connor,” and left.

Drew and Connor waved back.

“May I join you now?” Robertson asked when they were alone.

“Sure. We’re ready,” Connor replied.

The pastor took a few sheets of paper out of his pocket as he sat down.

“Connor, we’ve managed to trace much of your family back to your great-grandfather and the good news is that you do have a second cousin in the area—in fact, right here in the borough.”

“I do? Who?”

“I’ll come to that. First, it isn’t who I think you expected, since you were searching for Martins. Second, let me go over your relatives, as best as my contacts were able to piece together in such a short time.”

“Okay.”

“Your great grandfather Christoph had two children that we know of, a son and a daughter. The son was your grandfather Hans and the daughter, your great aunt, was named Hannah. They’re both deceased; your grandfather died in the Vietnam War just before your father was born and his wife, your grandmother, remarried about five years later. That’s when she moved with her son, your father, to Massachusetts. She passed away, my sources learned, when your dad was nineteen. We couldn’t find any record of her husband, but since your father’s name wasn’t changed, it appears that he never adopted his stepson. That’s the history of your dad’s side, as best as my sources can reconstruct it.”

“Wow...” Connor sighed.

“Christoph’s daughter Hannah had three children, two sons and a daughter. The oldest, Matthew, is deceased; he died about ten years ago, and never married. The middle son, Jacob, moved away to somewhere on the west coast when he was young. He became estranged from the family for some reason and my sources don’t have any further info about him. The daughter, Eva, married one Frantz Ritter. He grew up in Lancaster and went to med school at Penn, then did a residency at Penn State University’s medical school at the Hershey Medical Center and then stayed on as a faculty member. Dr Ritter is also an attending physician with the Hershey Medical Center. Finally, they have a daughter, Jennifer, who’s a freshman in the high school here, and an older and a younger son. Your second cousins. They now live just outside of Elizabethtown, to the south.”

Connor sat back with a sigh. “Oh wow. I never knew any of that. Jeez. I wonder if this changes my status.”

“Not automatically, it doesn’t—I mean, the Ritters wouldn’t automatically be eligible to become your guardian. Those relatives would typically be a grandparent, an aunt, or uncle. But they’d have a clear path to doing so if they chose. Would you like to meet them? I’m sure your existence

would be just as much a surprise to them as it was to you.”

“I don’t want them to feel any obligation, though...” Connor mused.

“Of course. Do you want to think about this?”

“Yeah. Drew?” Connor asked.

“It’s your call. You were looking for a second cousin here and found one. What did you plan then?” she retorted.

“Gee, honey... you know? Somehow I had the image of an adult guy kinda like my dad, I guess, and he could guide me.”

“Connor, that’s why I mentioned to you that who we found wasn’t who I thought you expected,” Robertson commented.

“So I have a cousin who’s my age—um, I mean, same grade as me. So strange...”

Connor sat with a far-away look.

After close to a minute of silence, Drew said, “Pastor, yeah, let’s think about this. It must be a shock, Connor’s world view needs realigning.”

“That was a very astute observation, Drew,” Robertson told her. “Why don’t the two of you digest this info and when you’re ready, let me know. If you want, I can arrange a meeting or simply let them know of your existence and let them take the initiative to make contact. Okay?”

Connor looked back at him. “Yeah. I need time to think. Thanks awfully much for finding this stuff out, Pastor. I need to wrap my head around this new reality.”

“Absolutely, son. God’s blessings on you both. Call me when you can and enjoy the day.”

He rose and laid a hand on a shoulder of each of them and walked out.

Connor heaved a big sigh and looked at Drew.

“This doesn’t change any of your plans, does it, sweetie?” Drew asked.

“Not really. After my unsuccessful searching, I had about given up on the idea that I could find any relatives here,” he replied. “I wonder what they’re like?”

“Hey... how ‘bout this? I could ask at soccer practice if anyone knows Jennifer. There are a few freshmen on the team, and also, we practice with the JV. They’re mostly freshmen. Then you can get to meet her. Wouldn’t that be a better way of easing into them knowing about you?”

“Damn, that’s brilliant, Drew. Wow, I like that idea lots.”

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At Monday’s practice, Drew asked whether anyone knew Jennifer Ritter.

“Oh sure,” several girls replied.

“I went to middle school with her,” April told her. “She’s cool; nice girl. Got rizz. Very social

and popular with the guys too. Oh, and smart.”

Several of the girls there knew her too.

“That’s cool, ‘cause it looks like my boyfriend has something in common with her,” Drew invented.

She didn’t want to divulge any information about Connor being a family member.

“I’m playing in my first game tomorrow...” some of the girls cheered at that “...but we have an off day Wednesday. Could any of you set us up to meet with Jennifer after school then?”

“She takes the bus, but she could get the late bus, I’m sure,” April replied. “I’ll ask her. What should I tell her?”

“My boyfriend’s done some family research and accidentally learned something about the Ritter family. That’s all I know.”

“That sounds mysterious enough to make her interested,” April told her. “I’ll let you know tomorrow.”

Later, Drew told Connor what she had arranged.

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Drew’s first game at the high-school level was an outstanding success. The coach subbed her in at the 25-minute mark, after the opposing team had scored the first goal against them. Since their opponent had a strong offense and defense, she was asked to play stopper, a roving defensive position which she had practiced the prior week.

The first time two opposing offensive players challenged her as they approached the penalty box in their attack, she stole the ball and sent a high lob deep to Melodie, her streaking right winger, who found herself one-on-two plus the goalie. Drew’s pass had completely bypassed the opposing midfielders. Dropping the pass after its first bounce with her chest, Melodie trapped the ball with her foot and fired a screamer into the near side of the net, leveling the score. The play went so quickly that the defense didn’t have time to position themselves to prevent a shot like that—they had never faced an opponent who could make a pass like Drew’s. And Drew got her first high-school assist.

By the end of the game, Drew had managed four steals and broken up six other offensive plays. Their opponents quickly learned that she was a demon in the backfield; if they were to successfully penetrate as far as the penalty box, it couldn’t be anywhere near where Drew was marking someone. Drew’s team won the game, 2-1.

In the locker room, the coach called the team together to review the game. after acknowledging the two goal scoring players and complimenting them, she asked the team about the scoring setup for each.

“What was the key play for the first goal?”

Marjorie raised her hand and Aberman pointed.

“Drew’s steal. She’s sooo fast. Her tackle nutmegged their striker and then Drew got onto that ball in two steps and put a pass practically in Melodie’s pocket... if she had one.” Laughter. “For Melodie, it was a three-touch, chest, trap, and shoot. They had no chance.”

“Exactly. This is how a strong D opens many scoring opportunities. Congrats on your first assist, Drew.”

Cheers and applause.

“I’ll embarrass Drew a little more by pointing out how strong a D player she is; while she was on the pitch, you girls had their O completely shut down. Good work.”

More cheers.

“Now let’s look at the setup for goal two...” Aberman went on and the team discussed that play and other elements of the game which the coach wanted to highlight.

Walking home later, Connor praised her play.

“Shit, honey, you played an awesome game there. You were mostly playing in front of the defensive line, it looked like.”

“Yeah, stopper position. Or ‘destroyer’ some call it ‘cause I stop or destroy any O attacks that come my way. I pick up the O players who come across the midfield and steal the ball or intercept passes and then pass to set up counterattacks.”

“Yeah, you made that nice pass early on, that got that goal.”

“That’s the counterattack idea. Oh, and we’re set to meet Jennifer tomorrow after school.”

“Oh, and I heard a new term, ‘nutmegged.’ What’s that?”

Drew laughed. “Yeah, lots of soccer terms come from the Brits. That’s when a player kicks a ball through the opponent’s legs. My first coach said it’s from Cockney slang. They use rhyming in their slang so it’s leg, meg. You can use your imagination for the ‘nut’ part,” she giggled.

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Jennifer was curious about this meeting but also a bit concerned. What could an unknown guy have found out about her family? And why? So she brought a friend with her; April also told her that she’d come as well. They had arranged to meet at the picnic tables near the tennis courts. Connor and Drew were waiting when April walked up with two other girls. Connor and Drew stood up to introduce themselves.

“Hi, April, you remember Connor; our loudest fan at the last few games,” Drew said. “Who’s Jennifer?”

“Me,” the black-haired girl said. She was about five feet six inches tall and curvy but not buxom. “This is Stacy, my BFF and bodyguard.”

Everyone laughed.

“And I’m Connor Martin, Jennifer and Stacy. Drew and I’ve decided that we’re tight.”

Jennifer looked at Connor hard. “Martin? There were Martins in Mom’s family; I saw it in her old photo albums.”

Connor heaved a great sigh of relief. “Yeah, that’s what I had found out this past weekend. My family history. My great grandfather Christoph had a granddaughter Eva. Is that your mom?”

Jennifer’s hands shot up to her face. “OH! Jeez, yeah...so that makes you my... um...”

“Second cousin, Jennifer. I found my long-lost family,” he said as tears trickled down his cheeks.

He sat down on the bench and looked up at her, she was still somewhat in shock.

“You okay, Jen?” Stacy asked.

“Um, yeah, I am now,” she said. “Just really, really surprised. Connor?”

“Yeah?” he stood back up.

“Let me look at you for a sec, okay? I want to fix this in my brain...”

They stared intently into each other’s eyes for a half-minute and then Jennifer reached out to Connor and they came together in an embrace.

“I feel it,” Jennifer said. “You do feel like family to me; it’s weird but it feels right. I want to know ... ah ... where are you from? One part of Mom’s family, an uncle, is out west somewhere and another uncle died when I was little. She’s told me that she had a cousin but has no idea where.”

“That was my dad. His mom had moved to Massachusetts when he was a baby and that’s where I grew up, not knowing anything about my family except the names of my great grandfather and his son.”

“Oh, this is so exciting! You’d be my only cousin! I really have so few relatives. Dad is an only child and his parents are in a nursing home. You gotta come meet my parents, okay? With your folks? Maybe Saturday, Dad’s off this coming weekend...”

“Woah, Jennifer, slow down,” Connor laughed. “Sure, love to meet them. And I can tell them my whole story. But it’s just me... Me and Drew. My dad’s gone and I have no idea about my mother—she divorced Dad when I was little and Social Services could find no trace of her...”

“Oh! You’re an orphan then?” Jennifer interrupted.

“I am. It’s part of my story.”

“Drew? Where do you fit in—Connor said you’re his girlfriend?”

“I am. It’s part of Connor’s story too, but we came here together from Massachusetts,” Drew told her.

“April says you’re quite a good soccer player too,” Jennifer continued.

“Thanks, April. You’re pretty good as well,” Drew demurred.

“Ha! Not in your class, Drew.”

“Yeah, I heard other kids talking about how good a soccer player the new girl is,” Stacy put in. “But I haven’t seen you around school.”

“Doing on-line school for now but hope to be able to switch to this high school,” Drew responded.

“You too, Connor? You gonna try to switch to the school here too?” Jennifer asked.

“That’s the plan, when some legal stuff is cleared up,” he replied.

“Let’s exchange numbers. I’ll ask my folks about you and Drew coming over on Saturday and I’ll let you know,” Jennifer said. “I got a ride home so I don’t have to wait for the late bus. Don’t wanna keep him waiting.”

“Sure. Wonderful finally meeting a relative,” Connor smiled.

“Likewise,” Jennifer replied and tentatively held her arms up so Connor gave her a light hug.

“Bye; hope you’ll get to come Saturday. Bye, Drew. This was an exciting surprise.”

Jennifer left with Stacy.

April looked at Connor, then Drew. “Wow, just wow,” she said. “That was an honor, to get to see long-lost family members find each other.”

“It was kinda emotional too,” Drew added. “But rewarding.”

“Rewarding is the right word,” Connor said. “Thanks, April, for being a good facilitator. And you, Drew, for the idea. Can I hug you both?”

Connor got two warm hugs.

When they returned home, Connor contacted Robertson to tell him about making contact with Jennifer.

“And she’s gonna ask her folks to meet me Saturday,” Connor concluded.

“That was an excellent idea, going through the daughter.”

“It was. That was Drew’s idea.”

“Tell her she did well.”

“Oh, I did. I’m gonna call Wayne now too. Maybe this info will help him with his part.”

“I’m sure it will. Blessings on you, son, and keep me informed,” the pastor said.

Connor called the law offices and left a message for Wayne. That evening, Jennifer called Connor.

“Mom and Dad are excited to meet you and Drew,” she exclaimed. “They were amazed at how you located us, actually.”

“I had wonderful help, Jennifer. The Lutheran pastor here had his clergy group canvassing their church membership. Some of the older folks apparently remember our grandparents and the

ministers and pastors were able to put the parts together.”

“Nice. Anyway, can you come for dinner? Come at five and we’ll eat a bit after we get the intros all done. Maybe two hours later.”

Connor laughed and Jennifer joined in.

“Oh and Connor? You can call me Jen; all my friends do.”

“Sure thing, Jen. See you Saturday.”

The next day at classes, Connor’s phone buzzed; it was Gelb.

He picked up the call. “I’m in class now, when’s a good time? ... Two hours. ... Yeah. Can do. Bye.”

“When can you talk?” Drew asked.

“He’s got time at one p.m.”

“Okay. Damn, I really don’t like this e-class much. It’s so, um, static. I much prefer being active and being in a classroom with others. I hope we can get to do that soon.”

“Me too, honey.”

After Connor had spoken to Gelb, he told Drew about their conversation.

“He was very pleased that I had found relatives and told me that if they were to agree, getting my guardianship assigned to them would be almost trivial. The hardest part would be the switching states and that’s ‘cause of, guess what, the money involved. Apparently the state gives stipends to guardians. That’s how my group home was run—the operator got money for each kid there.”

“What’s the other option for you?” Drew asked.

“Long shot was emancipation but he said that would be very hard. I have some money but no real income source, and a somewhat shaky residence situation, since Mrs Neumann could decide not to continue our free rent. He was looking at other options too.”

“Huh, wonder what he’s found for me so far.”

“That’s still a question but he said not to be concerned.”

“Okay. Still, I wonder.”

“Hey, want to call Lydia? See about what’s been happening back there?”

“Somehow that seems not so important now, sweetie. New life here and new friends. I’m having a blast with the team, too. Yeah, I’ll call her this evening, I guess.”

Drew had a quick call to Lydia that evening and learned that there hadn’t been many changes at Drew’s former school, Program-wise.

“Lots more kids are refusing to take part when they get called,” Lydia told her. “Oh, they get stripped and all, but they try to group up with friends for protection so they avoid the worst of

those Requests. Know what they do? Your friend, um, Connor, invented it. They get a harmless Request from their friends so when someone asks them to do a nasty, they say that they're already doing a Request. The school officials aren't real happy about that but haven't come up with anything to stop it."

"Sweet. I'll tell Connor. He'll be glad to hear that."

"How 'bout you? Are you still okay?"

"I am. Got onto the team here and had my first game this week. Got an assist too."

"Way to go, girl! I wish you coulda stayed here; you would have been great for the team."

"Yeah, Lydia, in some ways I wish too, but I'm better off not being there."

"I know, but it makes me sad, though."

"Thanks for that. Okay, gotta go, and it's been nice catching up."

"Yeah, till next time, Drew. Be safe."

Connor was pleased to hear that his "Request dodge" tactic was still being used.

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Drew played in two additional games that week, Thursday and Saturday, and she scored a goal in one and had two assists in the other. Her coach decided that her stopper position was a natural for her because it put her in a great position to either initiate or perform strong counterattacks. Drew was so mobile in front of the defensive line that attacking players had a difficult time to organize effective attacks—they had just a single chance to attack, if they could get the ball to a player who wasn't near Drew, because of her ability to intercept any pass that wasn't a scorcher.

Chapter 8 - Meeting a Family

Late Saturday afternoon, the teens got on Connor's bike and rode to the Ritters' home. They would get to meet the parents and Jennifer's younger brother. She had a sixteen-year-old brother too, almost seventeen, Michael, but he wouldn't be home when they arrived; he would be there later. Michael was a junior. The Ritters' home was just to the south of the town in a very nice little enclave with homes on one-acre lots. As they pulled up at the house, they saw that the Ritters had an in-ground pool. When they stopped at the end of the long driveway, Jennifer ran out of the house and greeted them.

"I'm so glad you guys could come! Oh Drew, Stacy and I saw your Thursday game and your goal and that was amazing. I can't believe how fast you are—you left those other players in the dust when you grabbed the ball away and then just took off like that!"

"Yeah, both my wingers were being marked close so I didn't have someone to pass to. So I just took the ball upfield myself."

"But how you got around those players who tried blocking you—you spun around them like they weren't really there. Then you faked that kick with your right foot and the goalie jumped that way and you used your left to kick it in. So, so dope. Um, you said 'being marked.' What's that?"

"It's defense. Marking is when the defender stays close to an opponent to challenge them or to apply pressure and try to keep someone from passing the ball to them."

"Like guarding in basketball, then."

"Sure. Same idea."

"Let's go in and meet my family," Jennifer said, and grabbed Connor's hand to pull him toward the house.

Drew shot Connor a grin and he smiled back at her, shrugging.

"*Such enthusiasm*," he mouthed to her and she stifled a giggle.

Enthusiastic was the word to describe the greeting Connor got from Jennifer's parents. Her father, Frantz, shook both of their hands warmly and her mother, Eva, really made a fuss over Connor and then she turned to Drew.

"We're not ignoring you, Drew, but meeting a relative we didn't know we had is an exciting event," she explained.

"Oh, I can see that," Drew smiled.

Jennifer's younger brother came in and got introduced. Timmy was eleven years old and was more excited about the motorcycle in the driveway than in meeting its riders.

"Can I get a ride on it? Please, can I?" he asked his dad.

"You'd need a helmet, first," Connor told him. "If your folks permit it, and you have something for your head—a bike helmet would work—we could do a really slow ride around the block."

“But not just now, young man,” Frantz told him. “Today, we want to meet Connor and Drew and get to know them.” He turned to them. “Jennifer tells us that you come as a matched pair,” he smiled.

“Yes sir, we do,” Connor said, smiling back. “We’ve been through a lot together and we’re kinda close now.”

“Let’s go sit down in the living room and chat a bit,” Frantz said. “Timmy, this’ll be adult talk so you might get bored. You can go play if you want.”

“Sure, Dad, I will.”

“We’ll call you for dinner when it’s time,” Eva told him.

He ran off and they got settled in the living room after Jennifer brought in a tray with some beverage selections.

“Michael had a club meeting of some kind, so you’ll get to meet him after dinner. Now I have a question. How were you able to locate us, Connor? Jennifer could only tell us a little,” Frantz asked.

Connor told them of Pastor Richardson’s efforts after Connor’s failed.

“I just knew some names that Dad had mentioned when I was younger and he said that he originally came from this area. So that’s why we came here when we left Massachusetts.”

“And that’s where the true story lies, isn’t that so? You’re an orphan, Jennifer tells us. And you came here. With Drew too. What happened at your home back there to make you leave?”

“I’ll answer that, Dr Ritter, since I’m the real reason we came here,” Drew answered. “I’ll explain.”

Both of the Ritters looked at her with curiosity.

“So I’ll start with my parents. My father never wanted children, according to my grandma, who raised me, but my mother got pregnant anyway. But my mother had an undiagnosed birth defect and her pregnancy made it worse, something to do with her heart. She died because of that when I was maybe four and I really don’t remember her at all. My father always blamed me for her dying; he never forgave me for it happening. He always ignored me when he was home. That is, when he wasn’t yelling at me for some imagined infraction. Oh, he was an over-the-road driver and his trips would take him away for weeks at a time. My grandma would take care of me when he was traveling.

“When I was eleven, he met this witch at the local truck stop and she became his live-in girlfriend. She hated me too, but since she’d go with him on his trips, that kept her away from the house. Whenever she was home, we’d fight like cats and dogs...”

“Oh, what a terrible story... I...” Eva began and Drew raised her hand to interrupt her.

“Wait, it gets worse.” The others shook their heads. “Once, when they were away, the girlfriend’s son—he lived in her apartment elsewhere ‘cause my father didn’t want him in his house—came

into my house when I was in the shower and attacked me. I kicked him and hit him with a toilet plunger thing and got away and locked my room's door. Grandma reported it but the kid had an alibi. But my father blamed me for causing trouble when the cops questioned him—he even whacked me a few times on my rear, saying that I must have enticed the son. Then when I was not quite thirteen, Grandma had a stroke and went to a nursing home. She doesn't recognize anyone any more, either. So my father had to switch jobs to local driving because of me and he blamed me for that too."

The others were looking at Drew in shock now and Connor broke in.

"That's about when you set up your little campsite, right?" he prompted.

"Yeah. To get out of the house and avoid Candy, the girlfriend, I had found a hidden spot in some woods in a park about a mile from the house. When the weather wasn't too cold, I'd stay there. I set up a little hide-away and eventually had a full campsite there, and for entertainment I had books to read since there was nothing else to do."

"It was really set up very well and completely hidden. You could get as close as ten feet away and not know that it was there," Connor explained.

"Awful... the father drove her away from her own home," Eva sighed.

"Actually that wasn't the reason," Drew continued. "That's the background. I left 'cause of another reason. That moronic, stupid naked program that the high school began when I started there this fall as a freshman."

"You got involved in that?" Frantz exclaimed. "Our state government is trying to fend off the federal government over that wacky law; so far the state's refused to let schools implement it here."

"That's good 'cause its effect on the kids is awful, from Drew's and my experience in seeing the kids having to go through that trauma," Connor told them.

"Did you have to be in it?" Jennifer asked. "It sounds terrible, forced to be naked and have kids grope you like that."

"No, I wasn't in it. But it's why I ran away. I'll tell you what happened with me," Drew said.

"It's an insane idea, both for the kids' mental and physical health," Frantz interrupted her. "My specialty is in pediatric and adolescent medicine and endocrinology and I've seen reports in the literature of all sorts of genital injuries involving those children forced to be in the Program. And the psychological damage it causes is alarming. Adolescence is a tough time for kids, particularly psychologically, and forcing this nudity on them becomes too much for lots of them to cope with. The potential for suicides becomes very high too."

"Well, it caused me to run away," Drew said. "They forcibly stripped the kids who tried refusing. They did that on the auditorium stage in front of the whole school and I panicked when I saw that. It made the horrible memories of my attack return."

"PTSD," Frantz said and then explained it to the others. "Seeing things which evoke memories of

past events, plus the kinds of stress over her family life that Drew experienced, is a typical trigger.”

“And that’s when I met Connor. He calmed me down and helped me recover when I ran out of the auditorium. Anyway, soon after we met, Connor came to the rescue of two of the naked girls who got sent into the hallway right after they got stripped; they were being molested by some kids. That’s ‘cause part of the Program requires that the naked kids allow others to fondle, grope, or molest them in any ways that they want. I even saw one girl try to shove a pencil into a boy’s rear...”

Eva and Jennifer gasped and Frantz shook his head.

“... and I even tried protecting a naked girl I was walking with when some boys wanted her to do oral sex on them. When I did, one of them tried attacking me; he tore my top open but I stopped him. See, we kinda befriended the first group of naked kids ‘cause of Connor’s helping those first two girls. So I was with this naked girl and these three guys jumped us. When the girl refused the oral sex request, one of the boys told us that unless we did oral on them, they’d rape us. And that was even though I was clothed and not in the Program. So he started to rip my top off and push my head down to his crotch. I head-butted him and then kicked him, he screamed, and that brought help.”

“So truly terrible...” Eva moaned.

“It *is* terrible, both for the kids who have to be naked and for those who are embarrassed for them.” Drew agreed. “You know, we kept hearing these claims from the teachers that this stupid program encourages respect for our bodies from others and reduces your body-shyness. That was a total crock. The naked kids are actually shown zero respect. In fact, what Connor and I saw was that any naked kid was treated like nothing more than a sex toy. When we went out in the halls during class changes, it was open season on those poor kids; they had to allow anybody who asked to grope them or worse. Some kids never even asked—they just grabbed who and where they wanted. There was this rule that said you couldn’t refuse that groping, so that made it easy for everyone to do whatever they wanted to you. So what do you think stuff like that teaches us? It doesn’t teach respect or build self-esteem; it destroys it. In that single week, Connor and I witnessed verbal abuse, physical attacks, and kids being deliberately dragged.”

“Ah, ‘dragged’?” Eva wondered.

“It’s teen slang. Means ‘humiliated.’ Yeah, I totally agree,” Connor put in. “Those assaults—a number of naked kids were roughed up—were really bad, but the humiliation that’s forced on the kids is huge. And that’s done by the teachers. For example...”

He went on to describe the Biology class demonstration sessions which they had witnessed.

“And the girl was so traumatized by them, that she had to go on anxiety meds and was like a zombie the rest of the week too,” he concluded.

“And that was just what we saw happen during the first week,” Drew picked up her story. “The following week, I got called to the office where I was told that they had picked me as that week’s naked victim...”

“No!” both Jennifer and Eva exclaimed.

“But I yelled at the principal that I refused to do it and then ran out of the school. Since the principal had told me that the Program was a law and I would be forced to get naked, I realized that I’d need to run away to escape being forced. And that’s when Connor found my hideout; he had decided that he’d never be in the Program either, and he offered to help me run away. He told me that he had been thinking of running away too, so I’ll let him tell you what happened to him. Connor, it’s your turn.”

“No, wait. First, so you left your home and ran away? And your father has no idea where you are?” Frantz asked.

“Sir, I spoke to Drew’s father that evening, after she ran out of the school. Went to his house to see if he knew where she was. What a cold man. He didn’t seem to care at all about her; he was angry that the cops had been to his house to question him about her whereabouts. He basically said that he wished that he could get rid of her.”

Again, Jennifer and Eva gasped.

“I see. Well...”

“One thing more. Drew and I got hooked up with a lawyer here and he said that Drew’s father would be legally called an ‘unfit parent.’”

“That’s exactly right; that’s how it sounds,” Frantz agreed.

“So I knew that I couldn’t deal with being forced to go through what I saw happening to those naked kids,” Drew elaborated. “And there was nothing to keep me living in a hostile home situation. So I made this rash decision to run away, with only sketchy plans about how to support myself.”

“That’s how lots of runaway kids get into terrible trouble, as I’m sure you must realize,” Frantz said gently.

“Sure. But my mind was clouded by that panicked feeling and I wasn’t thinking straight. That’s when Connor rescued me and brought my thinking back to reality.”

“I guess that’s my cue,” Connor spoke up. “You’ve already heard a bit about my past. Drew’s family life was appalling, but mine was quite a bit better, at least until my father started with the drug scene. He had lost his job and then he got into dealing, then manufacturing, drugs.”

The Ritters were shocked at that news.

“He was an okay father, though. Took care of me. But then he had an accident in making some meth and it blew up, killed him, and the fire destroyed the house. I got put into the foster-care system.” He looked at the others’ shocked faces. “Yeah, pretty bad, I know. I never touched that crap, you know. I hated what Dad was doing. Anyway, I got away from the fire but knew where Dad had stashed some money. I kept that as a secret ‘cause living in group homes is the pits and I planned to try to run away myself at some point. Nothing definite, ‘cause of inertia; I just survived day-to-day.

“Then the Program came to my school, I ran into Drew, literally—in her panic, she ran right into me when she dashed out of the auditorium—and we became friends. She told you about that first week we spent experiencing all that Program garbage and that’s when I decided that, like Drew, I would refuse to participate. In her case, she told you that she ran away when they picked her. In my case, I knew that if someone tried to strip me, like they did with several kids who refused, I’d fight back. If I did, I could really hurt someone bad and I’d wind up in legal trouble for that. So when I found where Drew was hiding out—her little campsite—that made up my mind, and I offered to go with her. I had enough money and the bike for transportation and had two years of planning a getaway behind me.”

Drew glanced at Frantz as Connor was speaking, expecting to see disapproval on his face. Instead, his face showed something different, an almost admiring expression.

“And another reason to run, as I told our lawyer, was that I was afraid that some of Dad’s more unsavory contacts would find where the county had moved me to, and they would come looking for me to tell them where Dad’s money and drugs were hidden...”

“Oh, dear!” Eva exclaimed. “You poor children! What terrible things for so young.”

Jennifer was sitting there, stony-faced; her eyes were wet with unshed tears.

“Goodness! Dinner!” Eva said suddenly when she heard a timer ding. “Jennifer, honey, please come to help.”

They got up and went to the kitchen.

“Those are some of the most heart-breaking tales I’ve heard, and in my job, I’ve heard plenty,” Frantz said when they were alone. “You both look like clean-cut, intelligent young adults, older than fourteen though...”

“Sir, I’m actually fifteen,” Connor said. “Lost a year in the system while the county was shuttling me around to different short-term homes. But I’ve always looked older.”

“Drew, you do look older than fourteen. Must be your height and build. But your face still shows signs of a preadolescent. This is my professional curiosity speaking now. Could you stand up, please?”

She stood.

Frantz took a hard look at Drew and then asked her to stand straighter.

“Drew, if you don’t mind, can I ask you some personal questions? As a doctor?”

“Um, I guess.”

“Connor, can we have some privacy for a minute? You can go...” Frantz started, but Drew stopped him.

“If it’s about my body, it’s okay if he’s here. We don’t keep anything from each other,” Drew said.

“It’s about your physical development, Drew. Won’t answering questions about that be

embarrassing?”

“You mean my boobless chest and boyish look? We’ve sorta discussed that, so my talking about it now won’t be embarrassing.”

“Okay, then. Yes, you have no chest development, but with the light top you’re wearing, I see good muscular development there. Strong legs too. Are you athletic? Ah, sure you are. Jennifer mentioned that you play soccer.”

Drew chuckled. “Yeah, been playing soccer since I was nine. Fall, spring and summer programs.”

Connor interjected, “Your running too.”

“Right, I run at least five miles four or five times a week.”

“How long have you done the running?” Frantz asked.

“Started when I was eleven and built up to what I do now.”

“Do you menstruate yet, Drew?”

“Periods? No—oh, they asked me about that stuff at my last physical, so I’ll tell you about all that and what I learned then. I haven’t started puberty yet, at least, no hair on my genitals or under my arms. No periods yet. But I think my breasts might be starting to grow a bit since the nipples are getting puffy and they’re itchy sometimes. The nurse who did my physical told me that my puberty was delayed, probably ‘cause of my sports.”

“That’s likely correct. Have you had a good, balanced diet?”

“Um, that’s been a kinda problem a lot for me. I told you how I stayed away from my house lots to get away from my father’s girlfriend, so I had little food options at my campsite, where I cooked on a campfire.”

“Oh, my. That’s appalling. Well, here’s what I believe is happening with you. When youngsters engage intensively in competitive sports during their childhood and early adolescence, it may affect their pubertal development. There are plenty of variables involved, such as training intensity and frequency, nutritional status, and psychological stress. What you told me of your living conditions before and now tells me that you’ve been under extreme stress. I also can tell that your body seems to have minimal body fat, and low amounts of body fat can be another cause of delayed puberty in girls. Have you been able to improve your diet lately?”

“Oh yeah. I’m finally getting decent meals all the time now.”

“Excellent. I believe that you do show the signs of delayed puberty resulting from intensive exercise plus metabolic and psychologic stress. Basically your body is favoring the activation of your adrenal glands, resulting in the elevation of stress hormones—which will cause muscle mobilization and thus their development, in place of activating your ovaries, which is delaying the production of your sex hormones. A good diet and reduction of stress should allow pubertal development to begin. In fact, female athletes who don’t begin secondary sexual development by the age of fourteen should get a full workup, but in your case, since your BMI appears to be in

the normal range—high, but normal for an elite athlete, I'd say you could wait a year; your development should be fine in a year."

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Meanwhile, in the kitchen, Jennifer was talking with her mother.

"Mom, is there a way we can do something for them? Those were awful stories, just awful. And they're such nice kids. I like Connor; he's really cool, and Drew's such a sweet girl. You know, Drew's on April's team and April and the other girls say how nice she is. And Connor's..."

"You're getting all wound up again, dear. Yes, I agree, they need some kind of help. That lawyer they mentioned, I wonder what kind of help he's giving them."

"Connor's my second cousin then, right?"

"And my first cousin once removed. At least I think that's right; never quite got how that works. I'll talk to your dad later. But we need to find out about their current situation—where they're living and how they're supporting themselves."

"April told me that they're attending high school on this state on-line program but Drew said that she'd rather go to regular school."

"All right, everything's ready. Go call your brother and I'll get our guests."

When everyone was seated, Frantz had everyone hold hands as he began to say grace; then explained, "While our family doesn't attend church often, we're still a spiritual family, and I believe that the Lord has brought Drew and Connor here to our family to better their lives and ours as well. So let's give thanks to God for His benevolence and for the blessings He's bestowed on us. Amen."

The others responded "Amen."

During the meal, the Ritters asked Drew and Connor about their current living situation.

"Pastor Robertson and wife were fantastic, sir. He found a lawyer for us who'd work for free and found someone who's letting us live in an apartment in her house, again, free," Connor explained. "We attend this on-line charter school but we'd prefer going to a real school. The lawyer is looking into guardianship solutions for both of us 'cause eventually, someone might let social services know about us and that our status isn't exactly kosher. We can stretch the money I got from my dad's stash—it's in a bank that we can access—but soon we'll need to find part-time jobs."

"Who's your attorney?" Frantz asked.

"His name's Wayne Gelb..."

"Hmm. Heard of him. Said to be good. Know his firm?"

Connor took out Gelb's card and looked at it.

"Meyer, Geiss, Petermann, and Segrist," he read.

“Ah. Excellent group. Highly regarded. Of course, we doctors are justifiably wary of lawyers—you know, malpractice issues and all that...”

Laughter.

Then the discussion turned to Drew’s soccer and Jennifer regaled them with an enthusiastic and detailed description of the game she had seen.

“Jen, you make it sound like I had wings and could fly or something,” Drew smiled at her.

“Well, you are fast,” she retorted. “That’s like flying, okay?”

They all laughed.

Then Timmy asked about getting his motorcycle ride.

“Well, do you have a bike helmet?” Connor asked. “And your legs need to reach the footrests. If your folks agree, we could do a slow ride around the block.” Connor looked at Eva. “I’ll go no more than fifteen, it’s like riding his bike, if you agree.”

“You’ll be very careful, right?”

“Oh, absolutely. When Drew and I came here, we used secondary roads ‘cause I could ride at 30 to 45 max. On the interstates, I’d have to go 65 and didn’t want that. Or the traffic either.”

Timmy climbed onto the bike and confirmed that he could reach the footrests. Then he ran to grab his bike helmet and Connor took him for his ride. When they returned, his enthusiasm was infectious. He hugged Connor in his glee and began inspecting the bike with a new interest.

Frantz laughed, “Connor, you’ve not only made a friend, you’ve made a conquest of a new biker.”

Jennifer’s older brother Michael arrived at the house just then and the teens were introduced. Michael examined the bike and pronounced it “awesome,” while Timmy regaled him with the story of his ride. They all spent several minutes conversing and then Frantz told them that he was heading inside.

“You kids come back to visit us,” he said. “It was great meeting you.”

“Yes, you’re welcome here anytime; just call to see if we’re home,” Eva told them. “Or you can let Jennifer know when you can visit again. Oh, and by the way, please drop the doctor and missus honorifics—we’re family. I’m Eva and that’s Frantz.”

Connor chuckled, “Or how about just ‘Cuz,’ for cousin? Yeah, sounds good. It’s been so wonderful meeting you; a dream fulfilled.”

They all hugged and Drew and Connor mounted up and drove away.

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Two weeks passed. Drew played in a number of more games before the soccer season ended and did very well in those games, but the team’s record, before she had joined them, precluded their being in the after-season playoffs. Even though they weren’t attending the high school, through

Jennifer, Stacy, and April, Drew and Connor were drawn into the school's social life and frequently were invited to parties or just to hang out.

They went to one of the church's young adult meetings, but the people who typically showed up, they found, tended to be college age and older.

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In early December, Gelb called Connor and Drew. He finally had some information for them and asked them to meet at his office.

"I have good news all around," he opened after their greetings.

Drew and Connor smiled at hearing that.

"Drew, your father has surrendered his parental rights..."

"Ohmygod! YES!"

"...ah, subject to some Massachusetts and Pennsylvania laws and requirements. I'll get back to what that means in a minute. It turned out that he never reported your being missing to authorities; it took the school to get the police informed about a missing student. So it was fairly simple to have him designated as an unfit parent. And Connor, the Ritters have offered to be your guardian if you accept..."

Drew flung herself into Connor's arms, crying, as Connor gasped, his eyes also filling with tears.

"I never expected that... we got on great whenever I visited, but they never let on what they planned..."

"You made an excellent impression, son. And they've been cleared by the authorities to be your guardian. There are still some reports to be filed; you'll need to be interviewed by a social services caseworker; and when that's done, we need to get a date with the probate court. We've gotten all the Massachusetts foster-care reports from your caseworker there and they were all just fine. That is, until you skipped town. The department had no problem with your moving after they looked into the risk you had from your father's associates; the police confirmed your story. Although they did wonder why you fled rather than contact them, they could see how you viewed your own risk. I assume that you'll accept the Ritters' guardianship offer?"

"Oh, wow, for sure... thanks so much for what you did, Wayne."

"I'm glad that it worked out, but you also did a lot to ensure my success, Connor."

Connor nodded gratefully.

"Now back to you, Drew. This might come as a huge surprise, but the Ritters have also petitioned to be your guardian..."

She was stunned and sat there totally speechless, just staring at Gelb for fifteen seconds before she broke down. Connor gathered her in his arms.

"Darling, what wonderful news. You okay?" he murmured to her.

She looked up at him. “Overwhelmed. They barely know us... and will take that responsibility?”

Gelb heard her. “Drew, they were appalled when you told your story and they like you, a whole lot. Also, they could see how close you and Connor are and don’t want something to happen that separates you two. Now, this is no reflection on you, but the court will only allow the first year to be a temporary guardianship, because of the situation with your father. He could petition to have his parental rights restored. Unlikely, but it is what it is. After the year, the guardianship could be made permanent.”

“Oh. I understand. Is there any difference?”

“None. They’d have the identical rights and responsibilities. To move things along, we’ll need to set you up with a video interview with a Massachusetts caseworker and then your case can be released to a Pennsylvania caseworker, you’ll get another interview, and then have an appearance before a family court judge. Since you ran away as a result of having an unfit parent and also being terrified by being put into that Naked in School Program—with its poor reputation in this state—your stories of your experience in your former high school should get your case quick approval.”

“Thanks so much! How long does this legal stuff take?”

“Several more weeks, but with the holiday season approaching, it all most likely won’t be settled until the end of January. And that brings up something else. You’ll have clearance to transfer schools from on-line to Etown High for the spring term...”

Shouts of joy.

He smiled. “...and you showed me the curriculum you were following. It fits right into your new school’s, so they’ll just need your transcript, since that charter school is state-approved. I trust your grades are satisfactory?”

“We’re both pulling ‘A’s in everything, Wayne,” Connor told him. “Wow, another dream is realized.”

Gelb smiled. “Good. I spoke to the high school’s admin people. You both can register there for the spring term even if the guardianship hadn’t been formalized yet.”

“Oh, wonderful,” Drew sighed.

“Okay, you both, that’s what I have for your guardianship status. Drew, as part of your father’s giving up his rights, he’s being required to pay for part of your support. Those payments will go to Pennsylvania and the state will use it to pay the guardianship stipend to the Ritters.”

“And he agreed to that?”

“He did. The social worker who interviewed him noted how happy he was to sign over his rights.”

“That’s so disgusting,” Connor commented.

“I fully agree,” Gelb replied. “Now, Connor, your father did have a will and it’s being probated.

You are his sole heir; there's no mention of his wife. We learned that he has a safe-deposit box but that's sealed until probate is complete. My firm has contacted the insurance company over the denied fire claim. We pointed out the policy's reasons for denial and their denial didn't conform. They maintain the denial was proper so we filed a notice to bring suit. We learned that the bank holding the mortgage has also filed; if our claim is successful, as I expect we will be, we will take 30 percent of the proceeds as our fee, as is our standard practice."

"That's just fine, sir. I was getting zero."

"And your Social Security survivorship benefit payment was the last part. The custodial account in Massachusetts is being transferred here and the monthly payments will continue."

"Jeez. You did get lots done," Connor told him.

"We've got good, efficient people working here. I'm so glad everything's worked out well. I'll let you know when you'll need to come in for those interviews."

"Okay... Oh, a thought," Connor said. "Where do we live? With the Ritters?"

"Oh, that matter did come up. That's an issue for you to discuss, but I can tell you that the Ritters did speak with both Pastor Richardson and Mrs Neumann about your apartment in her house. She really appreciates the help you two are giving her and I think that, since you've shown such maturity and independence, the Ritters wouldn't object if you wanted to continue to live there. Of course, they told me that they enjoy your visits there—and that their younger son expects getting more motorcycle rides."

They all laughed.

"There is the matter of your fake-real license, though, son. I checked it out and it's actually real, so your father must have had something on that motor-vehicles employee. So until your sixteenth birthday, please don't get into traffic infraction trouble, okay?"

"For sure. I'm so, so careful when I ride."

"Good. Then we can get you a current state license. That's all I have for you right now. I know that the Ritters are expecting that you'll be calling them very soon."

"Oh yeah. Right away," Drew smiled. "Thanks for everything you've done for us; we'll wait for your call about those interviews."

"Yeah, good bye, and thanks, Wayne."

They shook hands and left, and when they reached the street, they turned to each other and embraced.

"It's a whole new life for us, sweetie," Connor sighed as Drew wiped her eyes.

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They went out to the Ritters' home that afternoon.

Jennifer was home with her mother when they planned to arrive. Eva had waited until now to tell

Jennifer about the guardianships and she was gushing with delight and happiness.

“Does that make them my brother and sister?” she wondered after she thanked her mom profusely.

Eva chuckled, “Ah, not really; not even a step-sibling. Only if they were adopted... now stop!”

Jennifer had gotten a wild eye at the word ‘adopted.’

“Dad and I are NOT adopting them, hear? They’re both independent enough not to need that...ah, here they come. We offered to be their guardians to give them legal status. Now go meet your friends.”

Jennifer ran out to meet them. “Mom just told me! Isn’t it just awesome? That means that you can go to my school now, right? I hope that you can be in my classes. Do you think? Aren’t my parents the best?”

“Well, hello to you too, Jennifer,” Connor laughed. “Absolutely, they are the best. Drew and I never expected what they did in a thousand years. Let’s go in, we’d like to thank your mom. When’s your dad get home?”

“Today, um, around six. Mom says you should stay for dinner. She made lasagna, two big dishes. Wait till you taste her lasagna—she makes it the German way...”

“Wait, isn’t that a contradiction?” Drew laughed.

“Oh, no, it’s not. She makes it with kielbasa, chicken soup, and sauerkraut. Plus the flat noodles and mozzarella cheese.”

“Hey, sounds real good. I love German food; there’s a small German population in the Lowell-Lawrence-Andover area where I grew up,” Connor told her.

“That’s right, our families on both sides have German ancestors,” Jennifer remarked.

They had walked into the house and Eva came over to greet them.

Connor went to her and hugged her. “Thanks so very much to you and your husband for such a generous action, taking Drew and me into your family. I can’t express how grateful we are. You gave us a brand new life here.”

Drew hugged her too and told her what their guardianship meant to her. “And you gave me a real family too. I’ve never had a family and was so envious of my friends.”

Eva held Drew at arm’s length and looked into her eyes. Her own eyes were full of tears, matching Drew’s.

“I’m really glad that Frantz and I were able to help both of you. When he gets home, we’ll discuss how you want this guardianship to work for you two.”

After dinner, which they all enjoyed greatly, the two teens went to the living room to discuss how their relationship would work.

“As I told Mr Gelb, you two are quite self-sufficient and independent. You’ve basically been on

your own for years, so Eva and I don't want to come in and dictate your lives. You're welcome to live here; we have the room—there's almost a complete apartment downstairs. But in my discussions with the pastor and Mrs Neumann, Eva and I get the sense that you'd like to continue to live there. Are we correct?"

"Yes, sir, you are," Drew answered. "And we like helping Mrs Neumann; she's such a nice person. And her son and daughter are nice too—her daughter is a real hoot! Mrs Neumann says that I remind her of her daughter and I can see it too."

"Not to mention that the house is only two blocks from the school and two from the church," Connor added. "Sorry, Jen, but I can't see us riding the school bus with you."

"Too bad... I can't think of a better way to waste an hour and a half each day... on the bus," she joked. "When I can't beg a ride from Michael."

"All right then, if you stay at your apartment, we'll have a few simple rules. Mrs Neumann says that you're quiet and respectful and keep very reasonable hours. We will continue to expect that. If you plan to leave the town for any distance or time—on your own, not a school activity, please let us know. Of course, this home is always available to you, so if you wanted, for example, to spend a weekend here, you can. Also, feel free to come here for dinners—just let Eva know. Now, how are you set for money? You never told Mr Gelb about your resources."

"Um, it never came up and he didn't ask," Connor answered. "We have what Dad had stashed. It wouldn't go far if we had to pay for food and lodging plus other day-to-day expenses. Let's see. I have three bank accounts plus the one where my Social Security payments go—I assume you might become the custodian for that account. One account that my father had set up paid for his cell phones and some other stuff he had on direct withdrawal. I stopped everything except the cell phone account and added Drew's phone to it. There's about eight grand left there. He also set up an overseas account in the Caymans. I haven't touched that; it has about 89 grand now and gets about four to five grand in interest annually."

"My goodness, Connor. No wonder you felt you could strike out on your own," Eva said.

"Yeah, but I discovered that Cayman account only after we had already left home. The third account was set up with the money I found with Dad's drug stash. I destroyed the drugs. There's about seven grand there now; we've been living on that money."

"So you ran away with only about an eight-grand cushion?" Frantz asked.

"No... there was sixteen in the stash. Mostly hundreds. I had to pay someone to set up the bank account and deposit those hundreds in a way that the money wouldn't get flagged and I needed a local bank account anyway to access the overseas money. Getting that done cost me five. And we had to outfit ourselves with proper riding clothes. Then there were the travel expenses, including the motels and the house rent before Mrs Neumann's apartment."

"Damn. I don't know of any kids who would be so resourceful and creative to get all of that done," Frantz mused.

"I planned it for two years, sir. I just *knew* I had to get away from there, so I found out what I

needed to do. The opportunity came when I met Drew and she had her own difficulties. We had just clicked when we met, so I knew I would have a reliable and capable partner. She's certainly both of those; you know what she did? Let me tell you something."

Connor then related the story of how she had thrown a stone at their gun-wielding assailant. He edited it heavily to skip the drug connection and made it seem like it was a random mugging attempt.

"Ohmygod, you did that, Drew? Weren't you frightened, seeing him pull a gun?" Eva asked, shocked at the story.

"No, ma'am, I was too intent on my game plan. I saw the stones in the planting bed when Connor parked the bike so I knew I had a weapon to back him up."

Jennifer was looking at her in unabashed awe.

"Jen, please, please, don't talk about that to anyone, okay?" Drew pleaded.

"She's right, Jennifer, don't. Drew and Connor don't need that kind of attention," Frantz told her.

"Yes, Dad. Yes, Drew."

"See what I mean about us, sir?" Connor continued. "And Drew protected that naked girl at school too, risking her own safety. I knew that if we teamed up, we could make our way here, and then make our own opportunities. And then we met you guys and here we are."

Eva was openly crying now and Frantz stood and grasped Connor's hand. "You're an impressive young man, son—both of you are impressive, really—and I'm so glad we're able to help you two."

Drew got up and hugged him and then it turned into a five-way hugging session.

When they sat down again, Frantz returned to his topic.

"So it appears that you have reasonable resources available, and if you're careful, your money can last for some time."

"That's the plan, but Drew and I want to supplement it with jobs that don't interfere with school."

Frantz nodded. "That's fine. Perhaps summer jobs."

"Sure. Maybe we can find something that has shorter hours during the school year too. But Drew plans on joining the community soccer league for their summer play, so we'd need to fit that in."

Chapter 9 - Registering

When the winter holiday break began, Drew and Connor decided to spend at least several days staying in the Ritters' home. Jennifer had some of her friends come for several afternoon get-togethers and that's when the two met more of Jennifer's close friends.

Two of her friends were unique—doubly unique. They were identical twin boys named Justin and Jason, who were so identical that it was almost impossible to tell them apart. They were sophomores but were great friends of Jennifer's; she had known them since she was in kindergarten and had dated both of them.

When Jennifer was alone with Drew, Drew asked about the twins.

"You know, how do you tell them apart? Even their voices are alike."

Jennifer laughed. "Yeah, it's funny. The twins can even fool their own parents sometimes. You know what those jokesters do sometimes? They think that they're being cute."

"What?"

"They've switched around on the gals sometimes; they said it's just for fun, but we don't know if we're with Jason or Justin."

"That's not very nice," Drew commented.

"Yeah, but us girls got a secret about that—you can't ever tell them, okay?"

Drew made a zipping gesture at her mouth. "Lips are sealed."

"We found out that we could tell them apart, except how we do it isn't very socially acceptable. See, Justin's erection bends a bit to the right while Jason's bends left," Jennifer giggled.

"Shit, you and your friends know that? I won't ask how. Or maybe I will."

Jennifer laughed. "Hand jobs. And some girls do oral... I haven't done that yet, though. Soon, maybe."

Drew sighed. "Yeah, so I'm not shocked at all, after what I saw in the Program during that first school week. Those hand jobs were so ... embarrassing to watch—seeing the BJs was worse. And humiliating for the kid to have it done in front of everyone. Our biology teacher had that done to a naked kid twice, and then had kids take turns giving him a blow job."

"Shit. That was in front of the whole class, you said, right?"

"Yeah. And the teacher tried to get the girl to jill off for the class; she couldn't, so she had the naked boy do oral on her to try to get her to cum. She was soooo humiliated and scared that she didn't respond."

"Oh fuck. That really happened in a classroom?"

"Oh yeah, sure. The crap I saw... disgusting. For me, um, you know, I haven't really started puberty yet and my, um, it's called libido, right? Know the word?"

“Uh huh, I do.”

“So I didn’t get horny when I saw that crap. That girl too, the teacher said that she wasn’t stimulated ‘cause of a low libido. That made the poor girl cringe even more.”

“Damn. You went through torture, Drew.”

“If it was bad for me, think of those naked girls, how it was for them. Big fuckin’ yikes.”

“I can’t even imagine.”

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The end of the holidays arrived and several events immediately involved Connor and Drew. The first was getting registered in Etown High. They had assembled their charter school transcripts plus the copies of their middle school records for the high school. Connor’s caseworker in Massachusetts had obtained his records and had forwarded them and the high school had received Drew’s records too. They were now duly registered in the school.

Second, the social services interviews for both had been scheduled, and when they were completed, their court dates were set up. On the third Monday of the month, Drew and Connor, their attorney, their caseworkers, and the Ritters, attended the two hearings for the guardianship decrees. The judge’s gavel taps sounded and the decisions were official.

They celebrated with the Ritters and Gelb at a local restaurant that evening.

Going to school “in person” felt wonderful to the two kids. They were making friends left and right... literally. There was a real dichotomy with the students who attended the school. About half of the students were socially sort-of liberal—the left, while a slightly greater number were socially and religiously conservative—the right. Of course, as the two of them learned, as this was central Pennsylvania, the meaning of “liberal” and “left” was only relative. The most liberal of the kids they became friendly with were just somewhat less conservative than the rest.

In early February, Connor had asked Justin about what he had noticed about the various groups of kids.

“Justin, I’ve noticed some small differences in the way lots of kids dress here. I was used to seeing kids wearing flashy clothes and girls challenging the dress-code hem lengths back at my old school. I don’t see that here.”

Justin laughed. “Yeah, this is Lancaster County. York, Berks, and Lebanon Counties are next door too, it’s all part of Pennsylvania Dutch Country here. I’m sure you know about the Amish?”

“The buggies and old-style farmers? Sure.”

“So this whole area has German Reformed, Moravian, and other German Christian sects, plus a huge concentration of Anabaptists, Protestant sects that started in Switzerland, I think, or maybe southern Germany. The Amish are one of those sects and they’re very insular, keep to themselves, educate their own kids, and don’t use modern tech like phones or even cars, That’s the reason for the buggies.

“There are other Anabaptist sects too and there’s a huge number who live in the Etown area. They’re the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Charity church. They’re all mostly very religiously and socially conservative and are supposed to dress modestly, at least the adults do. They allow the kids a bit more clothing freedom but the kids still dress like you see. Solid colored shirts with collars and front-buttoned, plain-colored pants. Black or brown shoes. That what you mean?”

“Yeah. Girls’ clothing too...”

“Right. Follows the Bible, be modest in dress and behavior. No flashy clothes. Never call attention to how you look. That’s how they usually dress...”

Stacy and Drew had joined them and Stacy picked up on Justin’s comments.

“Yeah, my Mennonite friends do prefer plain clothes,” Stacy said. “It represents humility, they say. They’re taught to avoid signs of personal vanity and loud colors or patterns call attention to the person and should be avoided. They follow the Bible literally and the Bible says that righteous people are modest.”

“That does sound familiar,” Connor told them. “I’m a Lutheran and my pastor does frequently preach about modesty and humility. Nothing about clothes, though.”

“Yeah, but Connor? See how he and his wife dress?” Drew reminded him.

“Jeez, you’re right. Mrs Neumann too.”

“Sure, the Lutherans are kinda like the Mennonites in that way,” Justin said. “Social justice, service to community, accepting the literal truth of the Bible’s words; there are quite a few things that are similar.”

“Hey Justin, how’d you get to be such an expert?” Stacy laughed.

“Our pastor. We’re Baptists and the pastor gave our Bible class an intro to the area’s religions.”

“So how many of the kids in school do you think come from religious families?” Drew asked.

“Stacy? What do you think? A little more than half?” Justin asked.

“Um. That seems right. Lots go to church regularly, too.”

“To our church also,” Connor told them. “I met maybe about twenty who are at services at least twice a month—mostly upperclassmen, for some reason. So this is a conservative area. I never paid it much attention, but it does seem different somehow from the Boston region where Drew and I came from.”

“Boston? Super liberal there,” Justin said.

“Maybe. The working-class exurbs to the north were much more right-wing, I think,” Drew answered. “My father was always ranting about ‘those f-ing liberals’ in Boston.”

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In late April, the first sign of bad news for the kids in the high school appeared. The Supreme Court’s hearing of a challenge to the “Social Awareness Act,” the law which had authorised the

Naked in School Program, took place, and from the justices' questioning of the attorneys presenting their arguments, virtually all of the media commentators predicted that the Court would uphold the law. The justices seemed to believe that the Fifth Amendment's right of privacy only extended to adults, not children.

Then in May, TV news stories began appearing, reporting on the federal government's warnings that unless Pennsylvania immediately began running the Program in its schools, federal educational assistance payments would cease.

This news brought consternation to the kids at Etown High School and Connor and Drew were dismayed at hearing that news.

"I suppose we saw that coming, sweetie. After all, it *was* a national law," Connor told her.

"You're right. But... well...we can prepare to resist it, right? Let's talk to Wayne and see what we can do legally."

"You always have great ideas, honey."

They set up a meeting with Gelb to discuss their options.

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"From your stories about your Program experience, Connor and Drew, I'm taking a wild guess that you'd object to participating if you're selected," Gelb observed when they met.

"Funny man," Connor retorted. "We want to know about any legal objections we can make."

"I've seen the materials that the feds have provided to the state Education Department. Our firm's main offices are in Harrisburg, as you know, and we have lots of contacts in state government. It appears that the state legislature is poised to allow it to start in schools this fall. You could switch back to that charter school; I don't see how it's possible for an on-line school which serves all ages can run a nudity program."

"I suppose we could do that, but Drew and I decided that we wouldn't run away again."

"That's good. Do you have any specific questions?"

"Yeah. One is force. Can someone—an adult—actually grab a kid and pull off their clothes? Legally?"

"That's something being discussed all over the legal community, including among law enforcement officials and prosecutors too. That's sexual battery by definition and for a minor, it's child sexual abuse. Legally, sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexual contact or behavior, or even threats to do so, which occurs absent the explicit consent of the victim. But in the case of a child, they cannot give legal consent, so any contact would automatically be illegal. The felony of child sexual abuse includes pressuring—or even requesting—a child to engage in sexual activities, which can include making a child strip or stripping them by force."

"Then how do the school people get away with it?" Drew asked. "Since it's a felony."

"What I've read is that the state AGs—attorneys general—have followed the guidance of the

U.S. attorney general in that they won't prosecute because the nudity is defined as a school-approved educational activity and so long as excessive force is not used, no one would be arrested. The major problem with that guidance is that 'excessive force' isn't defined. And the student can be asked to strip and be helped if they're nervous or reluctantly willing—'coerced' is the proper term."

"Wow, that's such a load of BS," Connor exclaimed. "Okay though, if I'm touched by an adult and don't want to be touched, then I can resist by moving away? Then I assume if the adult comes after me and tries grabbing me, that's excessive force and I can fight the person off?"

"You have the right to protect yourself against a citizen. You can't against a sworn law enforcement officer."

"Yeah. I know that. But they wouldn't have cops in the schools stripping kids, I'm guessing."

Drew broke in. "I hate violence and wouldn't want to use it unless I'm forced. When I ran out of the school, I couldn't think of a way to resist 'cause of the panic I felt. I knew that I couldn't return because they'd just force me if I refused. And the principal threatened me with legal consequences, so I assumed that he meant that they'd get the police involved. At the first Program assembly, a police car did come to the school, and I had assumed that it was to back up the stripping. I found out later that it was because of the fighting. So I've had lots of time to think about what I could have done if I knew about it beforehand, and thought of ways to oppose taking part. But it would need a group of kids to oppose it, something like doing civil disobedience. I told Connor about what I thought of while we were traveling here; it was some way of organizing the kids to oppose the Program.

"I couldn't think of how to set something up like that till now, and I got this thought. You remember how our pastor found the family that became our guardians? That could be the way to organize to help us resist. Pastor Will is a member of this area's council of clergy and it includes all of the ultra-conservative churches like the Mennonites and Brethren. Their groups, also the Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, all of them, preach modesty. I can ask Pastor to get the word out to all the churches about how the Program damages kids and destroys any modesty, and maybe their leaders' sermons can talk about the importance of modesty and encourage all their kids to resist taking part. When the kids get called, they just stay away from where they'd get stripped and, yeah, they can claim it's their religions freedom, right? The Supreme Court's gonna say that the Fifth Amendment doesn't apply to kids 'cause its language mentions property and kids can't own property. But everyone, kids too, have religious freedom."

"Wow, Drew, you did it again!" Connor exclaimed. "What a great idea!"

"I totally agree," Gelb commented. "I'm sure that the local clergy will be very able to mobilize their youth. Their parents too."

"Yeah, and for the other kids who don't have the church background to say that their religious beliefs demand personal modesty, maybe my idea of civil disobedience might work. Organizing student strikes and mass refusals to cooperate, maybe. Possibly it could be organized on the social media channels that most kids follow. And maybe doing that could even get TV or newspaper attention on the terrors that kids in the Program have to experience."

“More excellent ideas, Drew. Did you really need me? It appears that you’ve come up with an effective anti-Program strategy on your own,” Gelb chuckled.

“Yeah, Drew’s got an impressive mind,” Connor said as he gave her a one-armed hug. “She keeps coming up with these good ideas. But what can we do about the graduating threat? At our last school, the principal told us that if you failed to participate, you wouldn’t graduate high school.”

“I didn’t see anything in the federal law that addresses student graduation. The law only requires that schools establish and run the Program. It doesn’t get into details; the OSA, the Office of Social Awareness, writes the Program regs. They get published in the *Federal Register* for a period of public comment and then they can become effective. But a federal agency cannot dictate a rule that interferes with a state law unless interstate commerce is involved, and our state education law specifies the sole requirements for graduation.”

“So the not graduating was a threat to further compel the kids to comply—oh, and it would make their parents more likely tell the kids to obey.”

“That’s right, Connor, I think that you’ve figured that out pretty well. Okay, good. So everything else is going well for you?” Gelb asked.

“All good,” Connor said. “Thanks for the info about that assault stuff. I suppose the best way to respond to demands to strip is to ignore them and walk.”

“Exactly. Try to avoid any physical confrontation. So are we done?”

“Sure. And thanks again,” Connor said as Drew nodded, smiling.

As they walked back to the bike, Drew sighed. “Damn, things were going so well and it starts up again. But this time we have forewarning. Let’s see, we need some ammunition, some really nasty descriptions of Program abuse. We just have our own stories so far. Maybe I’ll call Lydia and see if she has any other nasty stories.”

“For social media?” Connor asked.

“Yeah, and to use to tell the other pastors what bad stuff happens to the kids. Stoke some outrage and scare parents—and kids too. Kids tend to obey authority, even if they do it reluctantly. If the kids know that their folks will back them, then they’ll be likely to be willing to resist compulsion by the school, right?”

“Sounds right. You’ve got the idea, what’s the next step?”

“We can’t do this alone, I think. Maybe some of our friends will help. And we can ask Jen and Mike too. First, I’ll call Lydia this evening and see if she’s seen any abuses we can put in our list.”

“Drew’s campaign begins. World, watch out.”

Drew laughed.

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Drew, with Connor's help, began preparing for her anti-Program effort. She called Lydia that evening and explained what she was planning.

"Damn... we could have used that kind of organizing here, Drew," Lydia exclaimed when she heard the plan.

"Yeah, well, I had no warning, remember? And I only thought of resisting after I saw all those abuses. So can you tell me about any other bad stuff you've seen?"

"Sure. But it's toned down a lot here now. The teachers finally have reined in some of the worst kids. Several are in juvie now with assault convictions. Okay, um, there are several examples which immediately come to mind..."

She told Drew about the abuses that she had witnessed or heard about as Drew took notes.

"Jeez, that stuff is for the shits," Drew sighed. "How depressing."

"Yeah, well, good luck on your campaign. Maybe we'll get some spillover up here in Mass," Lydia said.

That weekend, Drew and Connor were at the Ritters' home, where they planned to talk to them and to get Jennifer's and Michael's help in opposing the Program.

"We wanted to let you know what we planned so you wouldn't be surprised if someone connected Drew and me to the opposition and then contacted you about it," Connor told them.

"We've already spoken to Mr Gelb and he basically told us we could go for it. Speech is legally protected, even when it opposes the government."

"What do you plan to do, exactly?" Frantz asked.

"I thought of several stages," Drew answered. "Getting the abuse information out, recruiting for kids who'd agree to resist, and then work out response tactics."

"Sounds very much like a military campaign."

"I guess. I modeled the ideas after soccer game planning. Getting info about the opponent, assigning D and O roles based on the opponent's strengths, and then practicing the tactics to use in the game."

"Very clever," Eva complimented her and Frantz nodded with a smile.

"Well, I think that you've come up with a sound strategy, Drew," Frantz told her.

"But obviously don't take risks and do something that gets you into trouble," Eva cautioned.

"There's something we planned to ask you today, too."

Then she looked at her husband and he nodded back to her. An unspoken message had been passed. Then she looked over at Michael and at Jennifer, who was hopping impatiently in her seat.

"Now? You gonna ask them now?" Jennifer asked, leaning forward expectantly.

"Yes," Eva told her and then she looked at the couple. "Drew and Connor, we haven't told you

one aspect of our family life as yet. You see, with your terrible experiences at your former high school, we were very reluctant to mention that our family engages in an activity which we enjoy; we feel it's very rewarding and relaxing. We thought that when you learned of it, you might be put off or reject us; but we've learned over the past months that our fears were misplaced."

Drew and Connor were looking at her, mystified.

"I know, what am I getting at?" Eva asked. "Let me explain, but first, I've learned that both of you are not ashamed of your bodies. Jennifer's mentioned to me that you, Drew, don't hide out in the locker room like a lot of body-shy girls do. And we've heard the same about you, Connor. Why have we spied on you like that? Simple. Our family practices social nudism..."

Drew gasped, her hand went to her mouth in surprise.

"Does that upset you at all? I hope that you're not annoyed at what we did."

"Upset? Annoyed? Um, not really, but it's kinda weird you did that..." Connor began.

Jennifer interrupted. "Connor, my folks needed to know what to do when we went away on vacation, so that's why I told them about you. Warm weather's just about here and we'll be going on visits to our PA nudist campgrounds soon. We didn't want you to find out from our other friends who go there too and think badly of us for not telling you. That's why I snooped with Drew and why I asked Justin about whether you're shy in the locker room, Connor, and..."

"What Jennifer is getting at, Connor, is that we needed to know if your experience with the Program has made you, well, afraid of exposing yourselves to others," Frantz explained. "This is a common reaction in children who have been sexually abused, and I'm treating your school experience as abuse."

Drew nodded, "Thank you for that; it's exactly how I felt it was, back in my old school when they told me to strip. Now? I don't have body issues, despite my lack of development. I've been showering with girls for years. One of my concerns, when I first learned about the Program, was how random kids, especially boys, would react to my boyish body if I were naked in an uncontrolled situation—like I saw in the school hallways when the Program was running. The other, of course, was the almost-rape when I was younger."

"It's good that you appear to have put those experiences mostly to rest, Drew. Outwardly, anyway. But those experiences still bother you, I'm guessing, right?"

"They do," Drew agreed.

"But it should improve with the passage of more time. Okay, kids, we'll let you guys talk more about our family's vacation hobby, now that we know you don't think that we're terrible people," Frantz grinned at them.

"We'd never think that. Connor and I are okay with your weird hobby. Mostly."

Both adults chuckled as they walked out.

Drew looked at the siblings. "I don't know anything about ... your mom called it, um, nudityism?"

“Nudism. Social nudism,” Michael spoke for the first time. “It’s really dope. Ever go skinny-dipping?”

Both shook their heads.

“Swimming without suits is the greatest feeling. And we have lots of cool activities to do, but the nicest is just hanging with friends. The friendships we make are, ah, so much more intense, somehow. Going nude outside like that is the GOAT.”

“Huh?” Drew asked.

“Oh, you haven’t heard that one? Means ‘greatest of all time,’ which it is.”

“Yeah, it is,” Jennifer added. “We go some weekends to a campground near Reading, maybe an hour from here. Then we take a three-week vacation and go to a resort in Maryland. A number of our friends at school here go there with us. Justin and Jason go; you know Christie? Short girl, freshman, with blond hair? She and her brother Randy, a big guy, a junior, he’s a fullback, they usually go too—we’ve gone to the resort with their families for years. Would you guys wanna go with us this summer? We have pictures of some of the stuff we do there.”

“Um. it’s not really something I’d care to do,” Drew told her. “Besides, I’m gonna be in the summer soccer league and those games start mid-June and go through early August. Then the high school team practices begin around August 20 or so.”

“And I think that I’ve lined up a summer job,” Connor said. “Got one more interview but it looks good.”

“So you couldn’t even do a weekend?” Michael asked. “We go some weekends in June to that PA campground.”

“Games are on every weekend and Connor’s job has weekends scheduled too,” Drew told him.

“Too bad; would be nice to have you come along. The kids who go are really great,” Jennifer sighed. “Oh yeah. Dad’s opening the pool next weekend so you’re always invited to come and use it. Um, yeah... you realize that we swim nude, right? When our friends come over, they swim nude too. You could wear your suits, you know...”

“Um... I’m really not sure how I feel about doing that, Jen,” Drew told her and looked at Connor; a silent message flashed between them. “I’ll talk with Connor about that. Okay, can we talk about the anti-Program stuff now? Let me tell you how you guys could help since you know way more kids that we do, and know the local school customs too.”

They agreed and Drew began laying out her ideas.

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Also in mid-May, Gelb contacted Connor to tell him that the probate process was complete; Connor was declared to be his father’s heir and the bank safety deposit box was unsealed.

“We have an arrangement with a Boston firm that has offices in the New England area,” Gelb told him. “They represented your interests in the probate process and have checked the safety

deposit box. It has the title for your motorcycle and your dad's car, some insurance papers, birth certificates for you and your dad, his divorce decree, several stock certificates, and some U.S. EE savings bonds issued in 1991. We've entered a claim on the vehicle loss—apparently that was never done—and are having the stock valued. The savings bonds are close to maturity and were issued in your grandmother's name with your father as beneficiary. Their value now is close to 4,000 dollars."

"Wow, I didn't think that Dad would have had stock," Connor said. "So what happens to those papers and stuff?"

"They're being sent to my office. You can decide what you want to do with them then; we'll meet to discuss it. Will that be okay?"

"Sure. And thanks."

They disconnected.

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At the end of May, the state legislature reluctantly passed a bill which instructed the education department to start preparing the state public high schools to begin the Naked in School Program in the fall. And now, Drew had much of her strategy organized. The Ritter kids and their friends had introduced Drew and Connor to a number of their friends and acquaintances, while Drew also had recruited her soccer teammates and their own network of friends. She met with groups of these kids in several gatherings and told them about what she had seen during the week she had spent in her former school with the Program running and what she had recently learned from Lydia. She explained the ideas which she had come up with to oppose the Program and that she had discussed her ideas with a lawyer. By this date, anyway, much information and rumors about the Program had spread, and most of the kids who met with her had heard a few details about it.

After Drew told the kids about her experience, she said, "That's what Connor and I saw. That trashy Program is an open invitation for sexual abuse, even rape. And the humiliation that the teachers put the kids through is also nasty. We need to come up with ideas to stop all that crap when it starts here and I'm open to any and all suggestions."

One of the kids asked, "What if your parents say you're not allowed to do it?"

Drew shook her head. "I mentioned to you that Connor and I have a lawyer and he's helped us with some personal things. We asked him about Program stuff like that and here's what he told us. He's got contacts with state officials and gotten copies of the Program plans and rules. He's gone over most of the recent Program stuff the state was given. First, there doesn't appear to be any parental exemption. Every kid is supposed to be in the Program at some point while in high school. No one can get out of it, unless you're not a U.S. citizen—like a foreign diplomat's kid. He told us that it appears to him that there won't even be any 'routine' medical exemptions given, based on what he read in the *Federal Register* about the rationale for some of the rules. So parents can't opt their kids out or get a doctor to request a medical exemption. All medical requests are sent to the national office and they decide whether to grant them.

"Let me tell you some things I had thought of," Drew said. "Ways we could resist. When they

started the Program in my old school, they had an assembly where the principal called kids to the stage and some teachers stripped them if the kids wouldn't undress themselves. So, you can be absent that day—or just for the morning's assembly. Your parents should back you up for that, like, to arrange to get an appointment of some kind. Another possible thing. A student strike. Nobody goes to class. Maybe picket the school. Another way to resist is to just refuse—when your name is called on a Monday when they start each week off, just don't go...periodt."

"But won't they force you?" someone interrupted. "You said the teachers stripped the kids."

"My lawyer said that they can *ask* you to strip. They can warn you that if you don't strip, you'll get punished. They can also *help* you strip, but if you resist or struggle somehow, like if a teacher somehow restrains you to allow another person to get you undressed, then that's a sexual assault and you can fight back. So just don't go to where you'll be alone with school officials. But my lawyer says that the school's limited in the punishments they can give for refusing, like maybe they can give detentions. He said that they can't suspend or expel a kid; the education law limits what those punishments can be given for. One last thing; I think that another way to resist might be religious.

"If you've watched the news, you've seen the commentators all talk about how the Supreme Court will most likely uphold the Program law to be constitutional and not a Fifth Amendment privacy violation. But if you read the Bible, it says in it that people have to be modest and, in many places, it says how being naked is sinful. And more than half the kids who go here are religiously conservative; just see how lots of them dress. So you can claim religious reasons for not participating. I'm meeting with my pastor soon to ask him for help there."

"Those are some great ideas, Drew," another kid told her. "So you want us to spread the word?"

"That's right. If only a handful of kids actively resist, then we'll get nowhere. But if more than half of the kids in the school refuse—like if all of the religious kids refuse—and many of the rest of us join in, then the officials can't retaliate."

"What about graduating? I heard they won't let you graduate."

"My lawyer also said that rule isn't in the federal law or in any state rule for the Program. He thinks it's a recommended rule for the school to adopt and it's meant to get parents to make their kids comply. If you've completed all the state graduation requirements, then you'll graduate. Oh yeah, almost forgot. Another thing I'd like to do is to put the word out on social media about how bad the Program is. I've searched the web and found only about two dozen schools have started it, mostly in New England and a few in the southeast, but there could be more. There are posts on social media from kids in those schools about their experiences, so look at those posts and repost them. But Connor thought that nobody should use their regular account 'cause it's possible that someone in the school or a Program official may retaliate."

The kids asked several more questions and then the gathering broke up as everyone there promised to spread the word through their personal contacts and social media.

Chapter 10 - Beginning the Campaign

Drew had her annual physical at the end of May, and Frantz had her go to his Penn State clinic to have it done there. Several days following her physical, when the lab results were available, Frantz met with her to discuss what her exam and labs showed.

“First, Drew, you’re quite healthy—almost too healthy. You have very low body fat, however, since you’re what we’d term an elite athlete. I told you this last year, that females with low body fat often do not make enough sex hormones to begin menarche or have regular periods. But your physical signs suggested that you might have an elevated testosterone levels too, so we tested for that. You had delayed menarche—your periods only began two months ago, you told my PA—physician’s assistant. Also, your physical shows a small breast size, above average muscle mass for your age, a slightly above average amount of body hair, and—please don’t be embarrassed—a larger-than-average clitoris. These are some of the signs of an elevated testosterone level.

“Here’s some facts about the sex hormones. Women *do* have low levels of androgens—the male sex hormones—normally, those hormones are required for proper sexual development in women as well as men. But females have only about a tenth of the lowest normal male levels of testosterone. Your lab work showed a testosterone level of 92 nanograms per deciliter and the normal for women is 15 to 70. This isn’t a problem and it isn’t elevated enough for me to want to look for a cause like PCOS—sorry, that’s polycystic ovary syndrome, or another possibility is congenital adrenal hyperplasia. You don’t have the signs of an excessively elevated testosterone level, so I’m not concerned about any pathology. But your height—the long legs—and muscle mass, which give you your strength and speed, is a result of your elevated male hormone levels. You also told the PA that your breasts had finally started growing in earnest about five months ago.”

“Yeah, I’m an ‘A’ cup now. After my first period, it seemed like they just started growing fast. It’s super to finally have boobs. Sometimes the itching and tenderness is distracting though.”

“That’s very common but I wouldn’t know that from personal experience,” Frantz joked and they laughed. “Okay, Drew, your sports physical is done and you’re cleared to play till next year.”

“Thanks so much, Frantz. Connor and I plan to stay at your house this weekend, okay?”

“Sure, Drew. Anytime.”

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The following Sunday, Drew and Connor met with Pastor Robertson. She had written up the incidents she had seen, and those related by Lydia, to give to him.

When they went into his study, they greeted each other warmly.

“Hello, my friends,” the pastor said. “We haven’t spoken in detail for months, since you began going to Etown High. Even though you’ve been attending church pretty regularly, you dash off after services.”

“Most Sundays are busy, Pastor,” Connor told him. “Sorry that we needed to run off.”

“It’s fine. How has your school and family life been? All good?”

“Oh yes, the Ritters are wonderful; God blessed us with His favor when we arrived here and you found Connor’s family,” Drew said.

Robertson beamed a smile at her. “My dear, are you becoming more spiritual through your worship?”

“Pastor, I’ve always been spiritual. I lived for extended periods in my campsite in the woods and would appreciate the peacefulness of nature. I had my mom’s Bible and would look for verses to comfort and reassure me. I would pray to God to let me experience some of nature’s peacefulness in my own life, and my prayers have been granted. And the Ritters are a spiritual family too. Connor and I are blessed by their becoming our guardians.”

“What lovely words, my daughter; they make my heart glad. And how are you both doing in school, if I may ask?”

“Drew and I are both doing very well, Pastor,” Connor answered. “It was wonderful to be going to a real school again; our interaction with, and the companionship of others our age, are very rewarding. I really like our school but there are clouds on the horizon. It’s because of that nemesis that’s followed us here.”

The pastor sighed. “Of course you refer to the Naked in School Program. I’ve followed the news of its adoption with real concern.”

“You’re so right in being concerned, Pastor,” Drew commented. “Connor and I have been planning a kind of civil disobedience that we’ve discussed with Mr Gelb to be sure that we’d not break any laws. And you and your pastors’ association can help us and other kids tremendously, we think.”

“How could we be of assistance? The legislature has already approved the schools to begin the Program in the fall and my colleagues have decided mostly on a reactive approach.”

“I thought of mobilizing the religious families. I’ve got a few pages written up that describe what typically happens in a school running the Program, all from my former school, so these are eyewitness descriptions. I’ve already told you about the stuff that Connor and I saw personally. Those are the molestations, assaults, and classroom humiliations we saw and that stuff happened just in the first week. Recently I spoke to a friend there, Lydia, and she told me that even though about nine months have gone by, the abuses continue to happen.

“Although the people running the Program are saying that its purpose is to help teens to mature and to expand their personal and sexual horizons, it doesn’t do that at all. Lydia told me her opinion of what the Program did for her. She told me that instead of the experience helping her, it turned her into a sex object and exposed her body to every sex-obsessed boy in the high school. And she said that its rules denied her—and everyone else who had to be naked too—the ability to refuse the kinds of touching that they found unacceptable and there was no respect given to them as people—they were treated as just sex toys to play with. They became targets. They had to do things that they’d normally totally refuse. That was Lydia’s opinion and mine too, based on my seeing just one Program week.”

“This sounds simply awful, Drew. So far, we Lutheran pastors have received very little guidance from the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA about how to respond to the Program, only to say that public nudity is a sin and that we should follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our teachings to our congregations.”

“Okay, maybe seeing more details about how abusive the kids and teachers can get will give you some ideas of how to respond. Here are some pages that describe some Program abuses. The first few list those that Connor and I saw; we told you about those before. Then I listed the ones that Lydia told me about. The abuses come in a few different areas: Sexual assaults, deliberate and unnecessary humiliation by teachers, and degrading treatment by the kids. The first few pages repeat the incidents that we told you about when we first met. The rest are events from our former school from mid-September to mid-April. Those start on the third page. You should start there.”

Robertson began to read the third page.

“The Program requires that naked kids use the locker rooms and showers of the opposite sex. A sophomore girl participant in gym was delayed by her teacher in going to the locker room because she was slow in running some punishment laps, so she was kept behind to finish them. When she went into the boys’ locker room, there were just three boys remaining there. They grabbed her, threw her down on a bench, and one of the boys tried to rape her. She was screaming for help and managed to twist herself away while kicking and biting the boy, so she was only slightly penetrated, not enough to completely tear her hymen. Her attacker came all over the girl’s crotch. When the second boy began to try to rape her, a gym teacher happened on the attack and he pulled him off the girl.

“The teachers were supposed to monitor the locker room but they didn’t. An investigation into the attack found that there was a detailed plot by a group of boys. Some would wait in the locker room for a vulnerable girl, while the others would provide a distracting diversion to keep the supervising teacher out of the locker room.

“The girl hadn’t received the school’s required quarterly birth-control/STD shot because she had gotten a serious allergic reaction to the first shot; she developed vision problems, dizziness and loss of coordination, and severe headaches. Those side effects were uncommon but well known to occur; 8 to 10 percent of women have some degree of allergy to the shot. The worst part of the affair is that the girl became pregnant; enough semen had gotten into her vagina, even though her hymen was mostly intact. The legal fallout from the attack has just begun.”

Robertson looked up from the pages, his face ashen. “This is terrible...” he began but Drew pointed to the sheets, so he returned to reading.

“Teachers are told by the Program officials to use the naked kids in their classes for demonstrations, as the above description of a three-session biology demo on page 2 shows. The demo in this case was in an art class. The teacher had decided to use a casting material to make a model of the interior of a girl’s vagina. After the casting had set, the girl experienced terrible pain as it was withdrawn. Not only did she wind up with

abrasions in her vagina, she had a severe allergic reaction to the material and developed a urinary tract infection too. After her experience, the girl involved now refuses to go back to the school.”

“Another dreadful case,” the pastor murmured as he read that section. He went on to the next item.

“In the same class, the teacher attempted to make a casting of a boy’s erect penis. The boy was unable to get a sufficiently hard erection, so the teacher made him accept having oral sex and the boy was extremely humiliated by the difficulty he had in becoming erect. When he finally got erect, however, and the casting material was applied, he immediately lost the erection, and the teacher got angry and told the boy that he’d have to repeat his Program week. That boy now refuses to return to the school; the major probable reason is because the other kids began mocking him, calling him ‘Limp-dick, the boy who can’t get it up.’”

“And things like these really happen?” the pastor asked Drew in shock.

“Absolutely. You didn’t even read the next description, the one about the Reasonable Request, where two boys ganged up on a girl; one restrained her and the other finger-raped her. And Lydia, my friend from there, told me that the teachers aren’t letting girls with large bosoms wear a supporting bra when they run. She told me that running unsupported not only hurts, but it damages the breasts too... I wouldn’t know, being just an A cup,” Drew smiled. “And they don’t allow boys to wear protective cups and she saw a boy get hit down there by an errant volleyball. They had to carry him to the nurse’s office; he couldn’t walk. Those examples are all listed on those pages.”

“I cannot imagine...” the pastor’s words trailed off.

“Yeah, it’s bad, right?” Connor asked. “That’s why we need to oppose it, even though there’s that law. Drew thought of civil disobedience, kinda like the anti-war demonstrators of the 60s and 70s. Churches played a big role in those, right? Preachers would condemn the war from their pulpits and mobilize their congregations for the protests.”

“Yes, I see, and that’s an excellent idea. Yes, I believe we can help, that is, my fellow ministers would assuredly preach against the Program. Ah, let me see... yes, here’s what I can do. I’ll prepare a few sermons condemning the Program and share them with the clergy group, together with copies of the Program abuses you’ve given to me. I’ll have my first sermon ready for the middle of June and preach variations of it on alternate weeks until school begins in the fall.”

“Oh, that’ll be wonderful, Pastor,” Drew smiled. “We wanted to reach the kids and their parents in the local churches, so your idea is perfect.”

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The spring term had ended now and Connor began his job, a high-school internship at the chocolate factory and Drew, at hers. She had gotten a job at the local frozen-custard shop. Since the shop was a supporter of the community sports program, she could schedule her hours to allow her to go to practices and games.

Two weeks later, they were in church, listening to Pastor Robertson's sermon.

"My brothers and sisters in Christ, I have a solemn message this morning for you all. This week we all learned, to our very great dismay, that our country's Supreme Court has upheld the vile law which permits schools to force our children to parade naked in its classrooms, hallways, sports fields, and in addition, our streets and shops. Our country is stripping our children not only of their clothes, but of their modesty, privacy, and morality.

"With this so-called 'Social Awareness' law, our government is perpetrating evil on our youth and on our families and community too. It requires our high schools to introduce an abomination of a school requirement called the 'Naked in School Program.' This very controversial social program—and controversial it certainly is turning out to be—is supposed to cure our youth—and I use 'cure' in a negative sense—to cure them of what the law claims is the 'excessive modesty' of teenagers. Well, my people, modesty is one of the cornerstones of living a righteous life, following biblical precepts. By forcing our youth into this program, the government is trying to separate our youth from their families and indeed, from their religious morality, and force them to commit one of the more egregious sins we are warned against by the Apostle Paul. I will return to that thought in a minute.

"The Program forces our children to strip off their clothes and walk around the school naked all week—they may only get dressed when they leave the school grounds but are exhorted to be naked outside the school as well. Children are forced to strip publically, in front of their peers, and if they attempt to resist, they are stripped by a teacher. My friends, I tell you that the Bible unfailingly speaks of clothing in terms of righteousness, while nakedness represents sin and its corresponding shame. In Revelation 19:8, we are told that the upright are clothed in fine linen, while the sinful are depicted in shame and in various states of undress. We additionally learn this lesson, for instance, from Revelation 3:17, '...buy... white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen,' and Ezekiel 16:37, where we read, 'I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.' Unquote. I could cite many verses which teach us much the same thing.

"I mentioned modesty when I began this lesson. Modesty is a major and vital biblical precept and we can find God's demand for us to be modest throughout Holy Scriptures. As we learn from 1 Corinthians 12:23, which states this precept very precisely and forthrightly, I quote, 'And on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty.' Unquote. This idea is also expressed very well by Revelation 16:15, 'Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed.'

"God's message is made clear. Our view of being clothed versus nakedness affirms humankind's closeness to God and informs us of the proper way of godly living. Since

the Program will force our youth to be publically stripped, this very action of forcing nakedness upon them exposes our children, families, and community to a path which falls away from God as far possible and continues that fall into great sin.

“The image of clothing as a symbol of God’s mercy and redemption can be seen throughout the Old and New Testaments, and the first appearance of this symbol is taught to us at the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 3:21: ‘Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin and clothed them.’ This clearly shows that God, in His mercy, intends that His people be clothed. The interpretation of this verse is that clothing is designed to serve as an expression of God’s love and a sign of His mercy, protection, and grace.

“Genesis chapters 1 and 2 reveal God’s relationship with human beings. When we read these chapters, they clearly instruct us that God created human beings whose lives intimately join the spiritual and physical together: Spiritual, in that we have the capacity to worship, and physical, in that we bear God’s image. From the story of Adam and Eve, we learn that humans are not designed to live in isolation but are meant to form relationships with others. The relationship of the first couple also emphasizes the idea of companionship and mutual support, which is a fundamental aspect of human nature.

“According to Romans 12–13 and Ephesians 5–6, God created human beings as part of His entire creation, intending that we live actively in the world in trusting cooperation with each other. Trust is the essence of interpersonal relationships and becomes absolutely essential in sexual relationships. Sexual activity, without the trust, cooperation, and commitment of the partners involved, is sinful, because it’s destructive for everyone: the individuals involved, their relationships, and the entire community too. And when the sexual activity involves promiscuity, as the Naked in School Program requires, the children involved are inevitably and invariably drawn into sin.

“In Galatians 5:19–21, Apostle Paul preached, and this is just six of the vices he names, I quote, ‘The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality ... fornication, licentiousness, orgies, and things like these. Now I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.’ Unquote. These vices Paul lists are the sins of the flesh, and our government officials not only plan to perpetrate them on our youth, they also plan to force our youth into performing them on others.

“The result of forcing our children into committing these sins is that the bonds of trust between those committed to a righteous life and other less-observant community members are severed, wreaking havoc on the fabric of the community, on the children’s families, and of course on the affected children as well. I tell you, my friends, that there’s no such thing as being ‘faithful’ to God or to one’s moral principles in a regime of forced sex.

“There’s nothing wrong with sexuality, but it has its proper place in our lives. It’s integral to those couples who have committed to a life with each other, to share in their physical contact, and to share in giving and receiving love. But sexuality also has its dark side,

since its manifestations are so complex. Sexuality can result in either a joyful or a terrible experience. On the positive side, a couple's joy in sharing their love can serve God by fulfilling his command to be fruitful, as we read in Genesis 1:28, and it will also serve the community at large by assuring stable familial relationships. So we see that in essence, sexuality expresses its powers at the polar, opposite ends of human experience; for the good in devotion, love, and security, or conversely for the evil in lust, exploitation, and callousness.

"Through the lessons of Genesis chapter 1, we infer that sexuality is God's loving gift to humanity, but we all realize, with sorrow, that sin is present in all human endeavors and sexuality is no exception. When sexuality is expressed in an irresponsible or careless manner, or it's deliberately intended to be forced or coercive, as is the design of the Naked in School Program, then this can lead the children, who are unwillingly conscripted, to immense harm. The Program actively promotes lust and self-gratification among those who are not themselves currently naked, loosening their morals and encouraging them to sin. As we learn from 1 John 2:16, I quote, 'For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.' Unquote. The 'world' here is the profane world, the world where sin exists.

"Expressions of lust and self-gratification cause great damage to the trust between neighbors—the children—and damage the children involved and their community—the school—too. Matthew teaches this very succinctly in his verse 5:28, quoting, 'But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' Unquote. Adultery isn't applicable to children, of course, but Matthew's message is clear despite that. Let me emphasize this point: where sexuality is concerned, there are no interpersonal relationships which can thrive, let alone survive, in the absence of trust. No relationship can flourish without both parties' assurance of the trustworthiness and depth of their personal commitments.

"Finally, let me say this. Our children represent our future and you parents have a strong imperative to ensure their safety and well-being. And their safety outside the home is extremely important, not only because their physical well-being is of concern, but also because the psychological damage done to our youth if they're sexually abused or molested can be terribly deep and long-lasting.

"Please take this message to heart and counsel your youth about their proper response when the Program arrives. There are sheets with the necessary information at the back of the chapel; share this information with your children and your friends, who may not heard my words. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

After services were over, the pastor was so busy talking with all the worshipers that Drew and Connor couldn't even get near him. When the crowd finally thinned out, Robertson suggested to the remaining people that they go to the social hall to continue to talk while they shared in a modest lunch. That's when Drew had a chance to talk to him.

"Pastor, your sermon was wonderful!" Drew enthused. "It was perfect and hearing it, I felt the

shock and outrage of people sitting near me.”

“Thank you, Drew. The folks who spoke to me afterwards said much the same thing. Most of my colleagues will have preached a similar sermon today; many of the thoughts in mine come from ideas we shared in the group.”

“Connor and I liked the handout you prepared too. How you summarized the abuse examples and then had the stuff about how the Bible says public nudity’s a sin, with all the quotes. And at the end, that being forced to be naked or even to see public nudity, violates a person’s religious freedom.”

“Yes, that flyer was also a product of our group. I gather that you have additional organizing plans, Drew?”

“Uh huh. We want to see if we can organize a strike. But first, Connor thinks that we should wait to see what the school does when they start the Program. If they just have kids who volunteer to get naked and no one’s forced, then we need to rethink how to respond to that.”

“Can the school do that?” Robertson asked.

“Theoretically,” Connor answered. “See, the law just says that the schools have to run it, not how to pick kids. Our lawyer saw the most recent copy of the Program rules that was sent to the state ed department and he told us that there’s nothing in them about how schools are to select participants. So if they only select volunteers—and he said that parents can volunteer their kids too—then the school’s following the law.”

“You told me back in May that there aren’t a lot of schools with the Program.”

“Yeah, maybe two dozen back then. Mr Gelb said there are a lot more now, all starting up in the fall. And there’s a bunch of schools that have been running it on a pilot basis in their states and he said many more states are starting pilots too. Some schools plan to choose kids randomly and some will use a committee to pick kids using, um, certain criteria that the officials decide on, he told us. And there’s something new—the feds will be assigning Program, ah, coordinators or something, to schools as schools adopt it.”

“I wonder what that’s about,” the pastor mused.

Drew answered. “Mr Gelb said it’s ‘cause a lot of school districts so far have complained that selecting kids, keeping track of Program activities the way the regulations require, handling complaints, and tracking compliance, adds too much to teachers’ and administrators’ work. So the feds are assigning people to schools to do that. But he doesn’t know if those people are licensed as teachers—all school jobs with student supervisory contact have to be licenced, Mr Gelb told us.”

“Okay, I understand,” Robertson said. “Oh, my counterparts in other churches have told me that they will preach similar sermons several times during the summer to be sure that as many people hear our message as possible. All right then; it’s been good talking with you both. I hope to see you next week. God bless you.”

“Bye, Pastor,” the two chorused.

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When Connor and Drew visited the Ritters in mid-July, after dinner, Eva told them that they'd be going on their vacation soon.

"Starting next weekend, we'll be gone for three weeks. We'll be about two hours' travel away, near Baltimore. I can't imagine that you'd need us, but if something does come up, you can call."

"We should be good," Connor told her. "Nothing exciting should be happening until school starts."

They all chuckled.

Drew went to talk to Jennifer while Michael went with Connor to look at Connor's bike. He was trying to get parents to buy him a street mini and wanted Connor to tell him about bike riding.

"So you're gonna be near Baltimore?" Drew asked. "I thought you guys went to a place near, um, Reading?"

"We go there for weekend trips. That place is an hour away but it's a campground and kinda rustic. The one in Maryland is a total resort and there's a whole group of us who go. I wish you guys could come with us."

"Well..." Drew began.

"Oh, I know. Your soccer and the jobs too. And I get that the nudity you saw in school gave you a bad impression. I assure you that these resorts are totally nothing like what happened at your old school."

"Even so... I kinda agree with what the Bible says about nudity," Drew said quietly. "So the twins go there too?"

"And Christie and Randy. And we know some kids in York who go there too."

Drew giggled. "I suppose that's how you learned to tell the twins apart? Seeing them naked? What you told me about their... um..."

"You can say it, 'cocks.' Yeah, gave them hand jobs. Maybe this summer I'll go further and try blow jobs," Jennifer laughed.

"Eew," Drew made a face. "Saw a lot of that crap in front of my classes. I can't understand the appeal to a girl."

"I think it's sexy to do that. The boys go apeshit for it and then they'll do just anything for you. And when you're alone with a boy at the resort, it's easy to do, since there aren't any clothes in the way," she laughed.

"Even so, ugh. You know, being a nudist, I'm surprised that you're still so opposed to the Program," Drew wondered.

"Oh. Very simple. At the resort, everyone's nude. There's no forcing anyone, no humiliating. Everyone's respectful. No forced touching or public sex, like you told us happens. My friends

there, when we're together, well, I feel so close to them all, like a big family."

"Wow, that sure is different than the school. So the boys don't hit on you?"

"Resorts are the totally safest places ever. Under eighteen, you need to get in with a parent. Or guardian, or adult with a notarized permission from a parent. Any annoying or suggestive sexual behavior gets you kicked out and banned. If a guy springs a boner, he has to cover up or he'll get in trouble. So, no, there are no overt advances or even leering. Make a gal uncomfortable, you're gone. It's a totally different culture in those places, Drew."

"I guess there is. Well, even so, I don't think that 'hobby' is for me," she laughed as she made finger quotes. "School starts August 27. When do you get back?"

"Middle of the week before. Either the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>. I guess that'll be about when you'll get the texting tree going?"

Drew and her friends had decided to divide the resistance group, which now numbered over two hundred loosely committed kids, into divisions and teams. The divisions were by class and the teams had about ten students in each. The group had organized the divisions so that any member only needed to send their message to about ten people to reach everyone in the entire group.

Several kids had suggested using a group messaging platform but Connor had cautioned them that if the authorities learned of their communication plan, they could potentially cause trouble.

"The text tree?" Drew replied. "Yeah. We should have an idea about what the school's doing by then. And I might even know then about what the conservative kids, you know, the Mennonites, Brethren, Pentecostal, and those really conservative Baptist kids, plan to do."

While they were talking, Connor and Michael came in and their conversation turned to other topics.

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Connor's and Drew's summer was uneventful. She enjoyed playing in the soccer league; many of her teammates were members of the high school varsity and junior varsity teams, and some middle-school kids were good enough to play on her U17 team.

Then on August 10, Connor and Drew received mailings from the school. Since they had listed their apartment as their official address, the mailings, even though addressed to the Ritters, came to them. In each envelope was a letter from the principal, information sheets, a copy of the Program booklet, and several forms to be completed by the parent/guardian.

"Let's text Frantz after supper in case he's busy and can't talk till then," Connor suggested.

He sent a text saying there was nothing urgent, but the mail had brought forms for which the school wanted to be returned before the Ritters would be back home. They could call him and Drew that evening or the following evening.

An hour later, Frantz called back and they could hear Eva on the call too.

"What was in the mailing, Connor?" Frantz asked after they greeted each other and briefly

socialized about their respective days.

“A boilerplate letter from the principal talking about a new year and how the school expects that parents will support the school as they introduce the naked Program. He asks that the enclosed forms be filled out and signed and they want the forms returned before the 17th. So that’s why I texted you. There’s a copy of the Program booklet too—it has the rules kids need to follow.”

“What are the forms?”

“You won’t like this. I’ll read them. First, there’s a form for the parents to give an informed consent that the school will require their child to participate in the Program, acknowledging that no exemptions from participating will be permitted; another form is a parents’ acknowledgment that the parents/guardians—now I’ll paraphrase—are hereby informed that my child will be selected to be naked in school and will be required to engage in supervised and unsupervised sexual activities. I/we acknowledge that by signing below that I/we accept any and all risks of these activities, and my/our signatures serve as my/our agreement to indemnify the high school and its officials, staff, and faculty, the school district and its staff, and the board of directors of the school district, individually and collectively, of any and all liability on their part in supporting and promoting the mandated Naked in School activities in the name of a required federal education program. That one has an entire page of legal jargon before the section I read to you and it’s worded in the most convoluted way possible.”

Frantz snorted. “No way will we give the school such a blanket waiver. What’s to fill out on those forms?”

“Just student name, birth date, parents’ names, and signatures,” Connor responded.

“Here’s what you do. Fill out the names and stuff and on all the signature lines, write ‘guardian rejects giving this release.’ On Drew’s too. I’ll contact the school and tell them that we will not sign those forms and since we’re out of state and our mail is being held, we’ll return Michael’s and Jennifer’s forms when we return. Anything else there?”

“Two more things. I’ll let Drew tell you about them.”

“Yeah, two more things. One’s a page of FAQs for parents. It goes over administrative stuff, and the most important things it says are that there will be no exemptions for students, medical or otherwise; students can volunteer to participate in place of being chosen if they want to partner with a specific person; parents can volunteer their student in place of their student being chosen randomly; participants will be chosen randomly; there will be two boys and two girls chosen from each grade to participate during each full five-day school week; and the student’s participation includes the two-day weekend following their participation week. There will be a Program assembly to begin the Program on the Monday following Labor Day. The FAQs cover other stuff but those are the most important.”

“Okay; from what you’ve told us that you heard from Mr Gelb, there are no surprises there. What’s the other enclosure?”

“It’s a form that you need to submit for girls. It asks for the date of administration of the pregnancy shot and if none, gives permission for the school to do it. Remember, my docs back in

Mass, and you too, said that I mustn't take those hormones before my puberty gets going for real."

"That's true. Here's what you do for that. I'll text my office when we disconnect. Tomorrow, bring the form to the clinic—you can go there tomorrow?"

"Yeah."

"Give the receptionist the form. I'll have them respond with a letter to the school explaining that the shot is contraindicated for you; you must not be given those hormones. They'll mail that letter to the school and send you a copy."

"Thanks. That's all from the packet," Drew replied.

"Good. Any other news? We're not quite isolated here; in fact, we're not far from Annapolis and D.C., so we're keeping up with the national news. And the area's state news too. Maryland is still resisting adopting the Program, from what I can tell, but Virginia is starting it in some schools. People here are predicting that Maryland will cave in before the year's over, though."

"Figures that all the states will eventually have to start it," Drew replied. "Oh well. Nothing important is happening here. Except I think that our religious anti-Program planning is coming along nicely. Connor told you that our jobs are going great; we may even be able to get some hours in when school starts. And that's all I can think of. Connor?"

"Same here. We'll get those forms sent in tomorrow. Take care, and say hi to the kids. We miss seeing them and you."

"You both take care too; see you in two weeks," Frantz said and ended the call.

After they disconnected, Drew got a couple of bottles of water and gave one to Connor. After taking a drink, she put her arms around him.

"You know, sweetie, that seeing those forms and knowing what's coming have jacked up my anxiety feelings a lot," Drew sighed. "I thought I had gotten over that crap."

He leaned down and kissed her.

"But now you're in control, right, honey? You know how to respond now and have plenty of support here."

"True. I do know that. And you're the biggest part of that support too. I don't say it enough, darling, but I love you so very much..."

"It was my lucky day when you ran into me—hard," Connor chuckled. "Love you too."

They sank down on the sofa in an embrace and began kissing.

"Connor..." Drew gasped as she caught her breath, "I'm sorry that I don't have much of any interest on top..."

"Oh, darling, stop that," he scolded. "Your top is just perfect; just like you. I wasn't attracted to you only because your body is so awesome—and it is, even though I haven't seen it all..."

“We can fix that...”

“Shush. We just clicked, right? I fell in love with the inner Drew. The outer package is just an added benefit. Jeez, your body’s just so hard...”

He was running his hands over her back, shoulders, and arms.

“Shit, I just love this hard-body you got,” Connor groaned.

Drew pulled back from their embrace and took hold of both of Connor’s hands.

“I’ve never felt this way until we began spending time with each other, Connor,” she sighed.

“Growing up, I never felt love, or any kind of an attachment to someone else. Grandma took care of me, but I never felt any kind of emotion with her. I think that she must have died inside when her daughter died. Then when we met, at first I thought you were a really interesting guy and I felt very trusting toward you, which was a completely unfamiliar feeling for me. In that first week—shit, what a week that was!—I grew to really like you. And now, it feels like love—or what I think love should be. Do you really love the insecure, emotionally damaged, under-endowed me?”

“No way are you insecure! And your boobs certainly aren’t under-endowed anymore! We’ll have to work on the emotion part so you will know that you’ve healed, okay?”

“Thank you, darling; you always know what to say. Um, your hand... you know what it’s doing?”

“Just giving the lie to your claim about being under-endowed. Jeez, it’s so firm! Is this okay?”

“You mean rubbing and stroking my tit? *Ahhh...* you can stop... anytime after a week or two... *ahhh*, feels nice... oh! I feel... is that feeling being horny?”

“This is nice, doll. I like that you don’t wear a bra; it shows your sexy shape. Horny? Are you getting aroused?”

“Unh, ah, do the other one... never felt this way before, shit, my pussy’s soaking... oh, hee hee... that’s funny...”

“What you think of?” Connor asked as he slipped his hand under the hem of her top and started to caress her bare nipple as Drew moaned and pulled his hand in tighter.

“Bio class... Wendy... Steward asking if she was lubricating... and now I am... I guess... *don’t stop...* my libido’s found where I live... *ahhh...* do the other one...”

Then Drew suddenly sat back and with a concerned look, pulled her top off. Then she looked at Connor expectantly. He stared at her for a long five seconds and then pulled her into another embrace.

“Jeez, holy shit, they look just fantastic. On you, your boobs are perfect; I love the shape and how the nipples point up a bit like that. Oh, I gotta...”

He leaned forward and took the right nipple into his mouth and began sucking and licking as Drew’s moans increased in volume.

As Drew was pushing her chest up toward Connor's face, her hand brushed across his lap and she gasped.

Pushing back a little, she asked, "Is that ALL you? Connor, what are you hiding?"

His trousers didn't have a belt, she noted, just a button in front and a zipper. Opening the button and pulling the zipper down, she ordered him, "Raise your butt. I want your pants off! Want to see that thing hiding in there."

In a few seconds, Drew had almost exposed her prize and she gasped when Connor's erect cock slapped up as she pulled down his underpants.

"Holy fuck!" she exclaimed. "I saw Jerry—um, Scott and Simpson too—erect, um, two other kids too. Nobody was even close to what you have there. Just how big are you? I'm sure you..."

"Yeah, yeah. Said I was always big for my age, darling. The package is too. But if you think I'm big, well, Randy Clawson puts me to shame..."

Drew laughed, "Oh god, yeah, Jen told me. Sees him naked at their resort and said that he's maybe nine inches soft, it goes halfway down his thigh, and thick too."

"Right. That's Randy. I'm a big guy but he's huge. Um, what are you..."

Connor's erection had flagged a bit while they were talking, but suddenly Drew dipped her head down to his crotch and began licking the crown of his penis and he gasped as it jerked.

"Jen says... *lick, slurp*... that this is fun... *glurg, slobber* ... to do..." she engulfed the organ with her mouth and sucked, then pulled off with a *pop*... "and she's right..." and dove back down on it.

Drew worked on the iron-hard object of her attention for perhaps a minute when Connor gasped, "Dr... Drew... *agh* ... sweetie... gonna... *unh*... CUMMING!" and he shot a gob of cum into her mouth as she pulled off.

That was followed by two more huge volleys of cum which landed between her breasts, and then, to Connor's utter surprise, she took him back into her mouth again and sucked and stroked until he stopped her since he had grown too sensitive.

Drew reached over to the side table where she had left her water bottle and took a long drink.

"Hum. I guess that's an acquired taste," she muttered.

Connor's breathing was returning to normal and he embraced her again.

"That was unbelievable, darling. Guess the Program wasn't a complete failure if you learned to do that from our Bio class demos."

They both laughed.

"Sweetie? I need to see that awesome body you have," Drew asked. "It's a Reasonable Request pose, so get the tee-shirt off too and stand up, then turn around for me."

When he did, she whistled.

“Damn, what a fine body. Look at those shoulders and pecs.” She stood up and grabbed an arm. “Your biceps are almost as big as my thighs! And the six-pack on your belly, holy shit, these muscles are rock hard,” she wondered aloud as she ran her hands over his abdomen, then down to his hips and around to his rear. She stroked it and squeezed.

“Oh god, what a fine butt this is... it’s rock hard... oops, something else is getting hard again...”

Connor grabbed her into another embrace, pressing his body into hers. His hands drifted down to her rear and he kneaded her cheeks.

“You’ve got a rock-hard butt too, lover,” he breathed into her mouth. “Can I?”

He took hold of her pants waistband and tugged a bit.

“Okay...but we can’t... no protection...” Drew panted.

“S’okay. Want to love you up down there, if you’re good for it.”

Drew wiggled her hips in assent and Connor pulled her pants and panties down together. He moved back a bit and looked at her, now standing there nude.

“Jeez, lover, you’re like an Amazon queen—damn, is that a six-pack? It is! Holy shit! And your thighs...” He ran his hands over them. “I feel how hard the muscles are and don’t believe it. You look simply amazing, darling; your boobs are just adorable, sitting so high on your chest like that. Damn, you’re just gorgeous.”

Drew flew back into his arms and they kissed again as Connor lowered her onto the couch and kneeled on the floor in front of her.

“Um, you aren’t...” Drew started.

“Oh, but I am... fuck, you’re just soaked here,” he said as he ran a finger over her vulva and then between her labia as she gasped.

Connor lifted Drew’s legs widely apart and set her thighs on his shoulders, then began kissing her mons. Very soon he moved down to her vulva, where he started licking, nibbling, and sucking on her labia, pulling on them with his own lips. With his fingers, he pulled apart her labia and paused.

“Jeez, look at that... like a tiny cock,” he muttered.

Drew gasped as he touched her clit in wonder.

“*Ahhh*, yeah... Frantz said my clit... is bigger than average... got elevated male hormone levels,” Drew managed to say between gasps.

“Ooh, wow... this would have made Steward’s day—no, entire year—if she had gotten you naked in her class.”

“No shit... OH! *OHMYGOD!*”

Connor had leaned into her vulva and began to rapidly flick his tongue across and around her erect clit. He continued sucking and licking all over her vulva, returning to her clit to lash it with

his tongue while he ran his fingers gently through her labia, pressing in and wiggling them to increase her stimulation.

Drew was squirming, panting, moaning, and clutching Connor's head to try to guide him to the best places, but he had figured that surprising her would ramp up her excitement much faster. He briefly glanced at the opening to her vagina and didn't see any obstruction there, so he decided to try putting his finger in. He did and felt no resistance.

"Did you ... *pant* ... put a finger ... *pant* ... in? Lost cherry ... *pant* ...from stretching and rough tackles..."

Connor began to slowly move his finger in and out of her while he continued to lick around her clit with the tip of his tongue. Recalling what he had learned about the clitoris and its internal G-spot, he used his finger to try to find the sensitive patch of skin on the vaginal wall behind the glans of the clit. When he thought he had found it, he sucked her little projecting organ between his pursed lips as he flicked his tongue across its tip and wiggled his finger on her G-spot area.

With an ear-splitting howl, Drew came and clamped her legs hard on Connor's head. She began bucking her hips up and down, then her legs shot straight out and her whole body went rigid. She screeched again and then her entire body became stiffly stretched out as it was wracked by one spasm after another. Connor tried to hold onto her through her spasms while continuing to stimulate her G-spot, and after a minute, her violent jerking and shuddering subsided to shaking and quivering.

Drew was exhausted but elated after that experience.

"Looks like my libido did finally find its way home, lover," she sighed as Connor held her gently, softly kissing her forehead. "I'm totally exhausted... gonna go to bed. But the playground's closed for now, sweetie. I'm kinda feeling real sensitive down there."

"I'm sure it must be. You had a monster of an orgasm, darling. Go to bed and I'll clean up the dinner stuff."

Later he joined her in bed and was delighted when Drew slid over to him in her sleep and put her arm over him.

Chapter 11 - Battle Stations

The following week, the school's soccer team practices began with the first two days being the team tryouts. Some JV members were attempting to move up into the varsity and a dozen incoming freshmen showed up; all of them had played in the summer league and Drew thought that several were quite good. After warmups and stretching, and a mile run on the track, the coach had some of the experienced players do a skills check on the team hopefuls. The coach had Drew work with a group of four on ball handling, passing, and shooting. By the end of the week, the JV and varsity team rosters were almost set.

After practice, two of the team's seniors, Robin and Marcie, pulled Drew aside to talk. They were among the initial group of resistance planners and therefore, sort of leaders of the senior division.

"I heard that the school district's officials got wind of the resistance movement," Marcie told Drew. "Not our group's part, but the church kids—how they will be objecting to their religious freedom being violated."

"That's right," Robin said. "There were some fiery sermons about the Program in lots of churches in the area this summer. A lot of those parents have been calling the school to tell them that they're forbidding their kids from taking part. My aunt's a secretary in the school district office and she said lots of parents have refused to sign the liability waiver forms the school sent out."

"Oh, that's good news," Drew said. "I wonder how many kids consider themselves to be conservatives?"

"Yeah, my aunt told me a little about that. This fall, the high school's registered right around 1185 kids. So that means there's roughly 300 per grade. She told me that based on area demographics and where the families live, about 650 kids come from religiously conservative families."

"Wow, more than half the school," Drew replied. "So those kids will probably all refuse to strip."

"Yeah, and so will our resistance recruits," Marcie said. "We have more than 200, I think... oh, there's Allison. And Will. Hey Allison!" she called. "Need to give you both some info."

Allison came over. "About the 'movement'?" she made finger quotes.

"Sure," Marcie answered. "Hi, Will."

"Yeah, how's it goin'?"

"Good so far."

William Bennett was a junior on the boy's soccer team. Drew had first met him at the soccer pick-up game where she had attracted the attention of the boys' coach. He was one of the resistance leaders for the junior class.

Marcie continued, "We're talking about the religious kids and how they're most likely gonna refuse to strip when they get picked. And what we should do too. From the mailing that Dr Slater sent to the parents, it looks like they planned to pick kids randomly, but that won't work, from

what Robin found out. She heard that the religious kids will probably refuse, so if they call kids to the stage, and more than half refuse to go up there, Slater will have a big problem, right? Drew told us about the fighting that happened at her old high school, and we read those Instagram posts where kids mentioned physically resisting being stripped at their school's starting assembly."

"I think that they'll hand-pick the kids for stripping at the assembly," Robin said. "Slater's very careful; he hates controversy, so I'm betting that he'll try to avoid a showdown."

"Okay, we'll assume a very hostile audience," Drew told them. "My pastor gave several sermons about how bad the Program is for kids and he told me that other preachers gave sermons that were almost a call-to-arms to parents—and their kids—to support having the kids resist participating. So the kids will be primed, and if fighting breaks out, it could turn into a riot. We don't want that."

The others agreed.

"So we need to figure out what to put out on the text message tree," Drew continued. "Everyone knows about the 'no excessive force' in the assault law? The info about that was one of the first things we all discussed."

Robin nodded. "Yeah, everyone was happy to hear that forced stripping, where someone restrains you and pulls your clothes off, then that's illegal. But if you don't actively resist them doing it, a teacher can undress you. So should we put a text out that says if your name is called, you should ignore the call and just stay put?"

"That's what I think," Drew answered. "Hey, let me do this, in case Slater doesn't know that he can't use force. I'll ask my lawyer to send a message to him and the school board that quotes that part of the assault law. Maybe he can even say that violations could be charged as a felonious sexual assault on a minor. He also told Connor and me that if they do try to use physical force, then kids can fight back. If they do, then the school *will* risk a riot. So maybe this will put Slater on notice that physical force can't be used. He can threaten, like the graduation threat, or maybe give detention or kick someone off a team or club, but he can't suspend a kid for refusing, my lawyer told us."

"Hey, if a whole lot of us refuse, there'd be no room in the detention room, right?" Allison laughed.

"Okay then," Robin said. "We'll put out a text that says to refuse if you get picked and reminds them that forcing to get stripped isn't allowed. Is that okay with everyone?"

It was.

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The Ritter family returned from their vacation at the end of the third week of August and Drew and Connor brought them up to date on the resistance planning.

"We hear that the kids from the more religious families—the church kids—are mostly not going to be at that first assembly," Connor told them.

“What about the others?” Michael asked. “You talk to any of the upperclassmen?”

“Oh yeah, absolutely,” Drew answered. “Robin and Marcie from my team—seniors—have taken a lot of the lead on organizing, such as it is. You get those texts?”

“We did,” Jennifer said. “So nothing new since then?”

“Not really,” Drew replied. “Myself, I suppose I’ll go to that damn assembly, despite what happened when I went to that first one in my old school. I panicked and ran out ‘cause seeing a girl get stripped like that brought back all those memories. Now that I know that I won’t get forced, I guess I can handle it. Also, I know that I can fight back if anyone tries grabbing me.”

“What are the others doing?” Jennifer continued.

“They said they’ll do the same as Connor and me.”

“I’m gonna check with the twins to see what their plans are,” Jennifer said. “Jeez, we’re away for several weeks and all that stuff happened.”

“A lot of it was with Drew’s teammates,” Connor said. “You should call Randy and see what the guys on the football team plan on doing.”

“Yeah, good idea,” Jennifer agreed.

She did and Randy told her that the team members were planning to protect kids who were actively resisting if a school official tried using physical force.

Later, Jennifer told that to Drew. “And Randy said that his teammates know to use the least force. They plan to just get the resisting kid away. They saw the warning in the text not to cause a riot.”

Drew nodded, “Good.”

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Since the Monday before Labor Day was a late school registration day, that Tuesday was the first day of classes, but it was spent mostly for administrative topics like locker assignments and issuing textbooks. The teachers used their class times to talk about expectations and to go over the term’s curriculum.

During the day, Drew got to talk to some of the kids whom she knew were Mennonites; it wasn’t from their clothes since they were dressed like most other kids, but modestly. She had previously learned about their church affiliation when talking to them back in the spring.

“Johan, what are you guys doing about that Program crap?” Drew asked when she walked up to the group that he was with.

He was talking with Sarah, Henry, and Katherine.

“Hi, Drew. We were just talking about that. Say, our pastor gave some great sermons over the summer and said your pastor had provided a lot of the info for them. Did your pastor deliver anti-Program sermons too?”

“Oh, you bet he did,” Drew replied. “Did you get a handout too? Where the Program abuses were listed?”

“Yeah and they were shocking, awful,” Sarah answered. “You mentioned last spring that you were in a school where things like that happened.”

“Right, and those stories were from me and a friend who still goes there. Do you know what you guys—members of the Anabaptist churches—are gonna do in two weeks, when they start the thing?”

“We know kids from two other churches pretty well; one’s a Brethren church. They say that they’re gonna boycott the assembly. Others we know, but not well, will probably skip it also. We probably are too, our parents will back us for sure,” Johan answered.

“Good,” Drew replied. “If a large number of kids resist, then their punishment options get fewer. Say, I wonder how many of us come from religious families? I count myself in one since I go to a Lutheran church. It’s not in the more conservative synod but most of our members are very socially conservative.”

“I was curious about that last year,” Henry said. “When I started high school, I wondered how many kids here shared my convictions, so I did a little checking. I’m guessing that about 170 to 180 sophs go to a conservative church that preaches following biblical precepts closely.”

“That’s more than half of the class size, right, Johan?” Katherine asked. “You were the freshman council rep, so you’d know.”

“It *is* more than half. There should be 289 sophomores,” he replied. “Not counting for new kids or people moving away.”

Henry was looking thoughtful and he then spoke. “Um, seventeen kids that I know of in home room are religious, too. Out of thirty-two.”

“Wow, okay then. Even if only half of the religious-family kids refuse, then that’s still about a quarter of the school,” Drew said. “And I know that about two hundred of the rest—let’s call them the ‘unenlightened ones’...”

The others laughed.

“Yeah, those, they’re gonna resist too. And friends of friends on the football squad told me that they’ll rescue any kids if a teacher tries using physical force. But they can’t help anyone who goes to the office if they get called on a Monday.”

“They’d help us kids too? Not only their friends?” Katherine asked.

“They said everyone,” Drew affirmed. “Hey, if you guys want, we’ve set up a text alert tree. I can add one of you to my messaging group for you to get our Program alerts; then you can add whoever to your own contacts. If everyone gets the messages, we can more than double the coverage.”

“That sounds like a cool idea, Drew. I’ll be happy to be your contact,” Johan said.

They exchanged phone numbers.

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Drew was quite happy that nothing seemed to have interfered with the beginning of the school's soccer season. She was now a starter, slotted to play defense at the fullback or stopper positions, depending on the game plan. Their first league game was scheduled for after school on Thursday.

Several of the girls had a question for Coach Aberman and Georgette, their spokesman, asked it.

"Coach, when the Program starts, are we going to have to play naked?"

"I got that settled late this summer," the coach said. "The legal uniform rules are very clear and they're set based on national and state high school athletic commission regulations. Those organizations have emphatically refused to change the uniform regs, which say that uniforms must be *uniform*—everyone wears the identical outfit, goalies excepted, and the uniforms for the home team must be dark colors, while the visitors must wear a solid white. Illegal uniforms may result in the ejection of the player or even a team forfeit. So there will be no naked players in soccer, despite what the school administration wants or expects."

The girls smiled and cheered at hearing that news.

In her Thursday game, Drew scored her first high school goal of the season. Like her first assist from the prior season, the goal started from a defensive tackle—not hers, but one of the back line players, and Drew was the first to get to the ball before it crossed the touchline. She trapped the ball and then kicked a short lob over the head of the three opposing players approaching her; juked her way through them and gathered in the bouncing ball. From there she had a clear path almost through the midfield. With her speed, she was outracing everyone except Natalie, her striker, who was dashing upfield, and three defenders who were angling back toward the penalty box to prevent a long-distance shot. After a single give-and-go with Natalie, Drew charged straight at the fullback, who was coming out to defend against her, but got momentarily frozen at the sight of this tall, muscular apparition running hard and straight at her. About five yards in front of the penalty box, Drew zipped around the defender with her roulette, leaving that player flat-footed. The other defenders were trying to get into position between Drew and the goal but first, they didn't know which side Drew would go toward and second, they weren't fast enough, as Drew faked the goalie left but smashed a shot into the right upper corner of the net. That proved to be the winning goal as her team won the game, 2-1.

The short week following Labor Day brought two more games and Drew's team won both, with wider margins than their first one. Her team was proving to have an extremely strong defense, one that opponents were having a difficult time solving. Obviously, Coach Aberman was highly pleased with Drew's playing.

Then the weekend arrived and Drew's and Connor's thoughts turned to what Monday's events would bring. They both exchanged a number of texts with the other members of their little planning group, but those were mostly to reassure those in the group.

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It was Monday morning. The day of the Program assembly.

When the starting bell rang to begin the home room period, Drew saw that there were eleven kids absent out of 32 in the classroom.

“A third of the class isn’t here today!” she whispered to Connor. “Sweet!”

The teacher asked the class if anyone knew why so many were absent today and most of the kids in the room growled back at her, “Program!”

When the bell sounded to end home room, Connor and Drew began to walk from their home room classroom to the auditorium. As they went, they noticed that six more of who they thought of as the “observant” kids, those whom they knew from their home room, were sneaking away to the various school exit doors; they weren’t going toward the auditorium at all. Since their classroom was fairly distant from the auditorium, they were among the last group to enter, and when the remaining kids arrived, Drew saw that more than half of the seats were empty. She pointed that out to Connor and he chuckled. When the bell rang, the principal went to the podium and looked out into the hall.

“Where is everyone?” he turned and repeated the question to someone on the stage behind him.

The conversation on the stage was almost inaudible but the microphone picked up a little of the voice; Drew could hear someone say that they were checking with the office.

“Stand by, students,” Dr Slater said into the mic. “We’re checking on the attendance here.”

Two minutes later, he announced, “More than half of the student body isn’t here...”

He was drowned out by applause and cheering.

“All students were told in the August mailing that attendance at this assembly was mandatory. We will not tolerate this kind of disregard of school rules; I’m fully aware of the unpopularity of the Naked in School Program, but students must not miss important meetings like this one. We will begin the Program this morning as planned. You’ve all received the Program booklet, but I’ll cover the important points now.

“The federal government has decided that in order to foster social and sexual awareness among our teenagers, Congress has passed a law called the ‘Social Awareness Act.’ That act has created the Naked in School Program, or the Program for short. In my early August letter to your parents, I wrote about how the Program is designed to help you teens to become more comfortable with your bodies and with your sexuality overall. The Program is designed to accomplish this by having each of you, when your own turn comes, to spend one full week attending classes and all school functions while completely naked.”

Widespread grumbling and hisses sounded in the room but Slater ignored it and went on.

“The intent of the Program is to expose you to the opposite sex as much as possible during your week to free you of any personal modesty or shyness. As a Program participant, you are not allowed to cover any part of your body using your hands, backpack, hair, or whatever. The only total nudity exception is footwear and socks; also, for safety reasons, the wearing of aprons in

labs and shop classes will be allowed. In P.E. classes and sports activities, the coaches may allow jockstraps and cups; or for girls who provide medical documentation, sports bras may be permitted. The complete rules about protective equipment can be found in the Program booklets mailed to your parents.

“If you attempt to avoid any of the rules and requirements of the Program, such as covering yourself, or not complying with teachers’ or other students’ Program requests, you can expect appropriate punishments to be given. This may be detention, spending additional time in the Program, or not being allowed to graduate. Let me remind you all that this is a national Program; it soon will be running in all high schools in the country, so you cannot move to avoid it. You must spend your week in the Program in order to graduate.”

The murmuring and hisses had increased in volume now so Slater paused.

“Stop that rudeness. I know that you are displeased with having the Program forced on you, but since it’s federal law, we all must comply even though we dislike it. Now let me go over the basic Program requirements to summarize them. Each week we will be selecting four students from each grade, senior to freshman, two boys and two girls. For their full participation week, these sixteen students will be naked while attending all classes and any school-related activities, whether on campus or off. We will encourage these students to partner up to help and support each other, but we won’t assign partners. Every Monday morning we will name the students selected for that week; those selections will be randomly made from the student body.

“Those selected students will be summoned to the assistant principal’s office during the home room period every Monday morning; any further instructions will be given to them at that time, and then they will be required to strip and place their clothes in the boxes we’ll provide. After Monday morning, participants will be required to undress in front of the school, or in the lobby when the weather doesn’t permit outdoor nudity, and place their clothes into those boxes. After school is over for the day, the boxes will be made available for the students to retrieve their garments.

“We encourage selected students to form partnerships. If you do decide to partner with a fellow participant, you can benefit from the mutual support of the arrangement, since it’s likely that each of you will have challenging moments during your week. Talking to your partner can help you in getting through those times.”

Sighs from the audience; the reality of what they were hearing was becoming apparent.

“I will cover your personal responsibilities in the Program now. First, to ensure that each of you teens are conditioned to lose your modesty, you will be required to comply with the requests of your peers. This is called ‘Reasonable Requests’ in the Program rules. Requests such as posing and touching your body will be considered reasonable by definition; however, such touching is limited to the body’s exterior. That means that nothing is to be inserted into you unless you agree, and the word ‘nothing’ includes fingers. However, you may not decline any Request for posing, no matter how humiliating you think the pose might be, since the Program is to get you over any excessive modesty. In the same vein, you cannot decline being touched by others.”

Grumbling could be heard again.

“Requests are only permitted before and after school and during hall passing. Not in classrooms or during the first half of the lunch period. Since the term ‘Reasonable Requests’ includes the word ‘reasonable,’ I’ll explain what that means. The reasonableness of any Request is partly up to you, the participant. But use caution in deciding whether or not to deny a Request. If there is any dispute about the Request’s reasonableness, and if a complaint is made about your denial, then the matter will be decided by myself or one of the other faculty or staff. If we believe that the denial was for frivolous reasons, we will assess an appropriate punishment.

“Your next responsibility as a participant will be to assist your teachers in their lessons. This assistance may go beyond the normal Reasonable Request rules, in that teachers will be given wider leeway in using your bodies as training aids. However, any penetration of your body by a teacher’s action will still require your permission.

“All Program participants are required to use the restrooms of the opposite sex. In your P.E. classes, you will use the locker rooms and showers of the opposite sex. To limit the use of the restrooms for hiding from receiving Requests, you will be limited to a maximum of three five-minute trips per day. We don’t plan on counting everyone’s rest-room trips, but if we become aware of your hiding from other students, we will take corrective measures.

“We expect that with the constant nudity and exposure to others, plus the genital fondling that the Program encourages during the Reasonable Requests of hall passing, that you will become aroused by the natural sexual tension that this will produce. To alleviate that tension, during the first five minutes of each class, you may elect to obtain release from your sexual arousal. We call that ‘Relief,’ and you can elect to masturbate or have assistance in obtaining an orgasm. Relief will be taken at the front of the classroom where everyone can watch, and if you choose to have assistance, the teacher will select your helper for you. You must not be embarrassed at requesting Relief, since sexual arousal is a totally natural state, and seeing the release from this arousal will be enlightening for your class.”

Now the audience sounds were chiefly gasps and other sounds of shock.

“Finally, in many communities where the high schools have been running the Program, the Program rules require a certain amount of community ‘Outreach,’ where the participant is required to be naked at home, on local streets, and in community shops. However, given that this region is fairly religiously conservative, the local government has refused to relax the indecent exposure and public nuisance laws, while community shops have contacted the school to inform us that no naked person will be allowed. And law enforcement officials have contacted us to tell us that those laws will be strictly enforced. So we cannot require community outreach. We also found out that we cannot allow naked students on our sports fields, since the police told us that those areas are public too. The football field might be sufficiently private since the field can’t be seen from the street. Our administration is still in discussions with the authorities so perhaps those rulings might change.”

That comment was received with sighs of relieved approval. Being seen naked by random strangers was terrifying to most of the students.

“For any other details concerning the Program rules, please consult the Program booklet or

contact myself or a staff member for clarification. To that end, I'd like to introduce you to Ms Sylvia Overmeyer, our federally appointed Program coordinator, who will oversee the Program operation at our school. Ms Overmeyer, if you please."

"Thank you, Principal Slater. I wish to second his comments about your Program responsibilities and I want you all to know that when you are selected to participate, I will expect your full cooperation and obedience. I'm dismayed at the attendance here this morning, and if this is any indication of the lack of respect for authority at your school, you will all have a very difficult time with me. I expect your full cooperation; if I don't get it, you will repeat your Program week until I am satisfied. Nobody will be allowed to graduate without my approval.

"We will begin the naming of this week's Program participants now. When your name is called, you will come up to the stage and when all sixteen are up here, you will be required to strip naked. I will start with the four seniors."

She had to call six names. One student wasn't present and a second ran out of the auditorium, going out the stage door, when he got onto the stage.

"Teachers, please station yourselves at the doors," Overmeyer commanded. "I don't want anyone else to be permitted to leave."

The next fifteen minutes were spent in total confusion and disarray as Overmeyer ran out of names to call. Many students who were called did manage to get out of the hall despite the teachers trying to guard the doors; they were also occupied trying to get kids from their seats to the stage too. Finally, twelve kids were on the stage, shivering with fright, and several girls were crying.

Slater went to Overmeyer and whispered something to her.

She went to the podium and spoke. "This was a disgusting display of disobedience, but your principal has told me to stop at this point. He's very concerned that continuing may cause a riot. We will get the four additional needed participants afterwards. I want those on the stage to strip now and place your garments in those provided boxes."

The kids reluctantly began getting undressed; however, four, three girls and a boy, didn't move. Overmeyer looked at them and then warned, "If you don't remove your clothes, we will forcibly remove them, so do it now!"

Two teachers moved to grab a girl and she began screaming, twisting away from them.

From the audience, a loud male voice shouted, "Forced stripping's a sexual assault felony! We'll video any teacher forcing a student and then have the student file sexual assault charges!"

Slater spoke to Overmeyer again and she could be seen shaking her head. The mic picked up some of their exchanges.

"...don't care ... federal law supercedes ... a letter from an attorney? ... need to strip ... teachers won't ... "

Meanwhile, several teachers had assisted two of the girls to get undressed; they had been

paralyzed with fear and were too distressed to actively resist. The remaining boy grabbed the only dressed girl left on the stage by her hand and they dashed out, dodging a teacher who tried to stop them.



Program assembly after remaining participants were stripped

At that point, everyone in the auditorium came to a silent consensus that the circus was over and students began pouring out of the hall, despite Overmeyer's harangue about the disrespect that everyone was exhibiting. And eventually, during the rest of the day, sixteen participants

had finally been collected from among the dozens who had refused and were somehow coerced to become naked.

One of Jason's acquaintances, Diane, was a volunteer student working in the school office and she had told Jason and his friends how the first group of kids had been selected.

"I overheard some of the planning," Diane said. "Those first names called in the auditorium weren't random. Slater thought that he'd have real problems if they called any of the kids from the religious families, so they picked from the students whose parents had signed those consent forms that were mailed. Even so, you saw what happened. There was so much resistance!"

On Tuesday, the students who had missed the assembly were back in school, each bearing a parent's note. The notes were all very similar, and said, in essence, that the students were absent in order to observe their religious freedom. They continued, saying that their child had a deeply held religious belief that public nudity was a great sin; that the Bible states this in many places, and forcing their child to be naked or to see public nudity violated their right to observe their religious beliefs unimpeded. Therefore, their child must not be chosen as a participant and must be allowed to be absent from classes where nudity exists.

Of course this caused great consternation and anger on Overmeyer's part, especially when dozens of students, during the first three days, left classrooms where naked students were present. During those first several days, the school was in a turmoil and Slater had his hands full trying to restore order.

"You know, the naked kids are actually benefitting from this turmoil," Connor mentioned on Thursday. "There's so much random confusion going on that I haven't seen a single Reasonable Request yet. But then again, I rarely see a naked kid in the halls. Just Jena in our classes; she told

us how she gets around with her friends running interference and she avoids being seen.”

“The twins have some participants in their classes that got Relief and so does Jen. She saw one nasty relief session, she told me. Say, did you read that the Program booklet says that Relief is supposed to be required?” Drew asked. “But Jena hasn’t asked. She said that she’s so scared that there’s no way that she’d do that.”

“I read that—how could they force someone to masturbate? They could just fake it, I suppose.”

By Friday, mostly all of the turmoil had ended in an uneasy truce. The kids who objected to having to see nudity were allowed to delay five minutes before coming into those classes where a naked student was present, and they could sit in the front of the classrooms where the teachers would hold seats open for them. That was the decision of the school board after an emergency meeting with a very large number of enraged parents, held that Wednesday evening, where the parents threatened to organize a student strike, which would pull half of the students out of school, unless appropriate concessions were made.

On the following Monday, the turmoil threatened to start up again when student names were called in home rooms. Most of those students refused to go to the office, even when the principal, the AP—assistant principal—or Overmeyer, went to find them. Some students were too scared to resist, however, and did go to the office when they were called. They spent the week naked in the Program. But this week, the school officials could only get nine to participate.

Drew and Jennifer spoke to one sophomore girl, Amy, who had bravely gone to the office to begin her naked participation. She was sitting with several other naked kids at lunch and when Drew and Connor came into the room, Amy noticed them and waved for them to come over.

“Hi Drew, Connor. As you can see, I chickened out on the resistance...” Amy began but Drew interrupted.

“Chicken nothing,” Drew replied. *Amy getting ready for a Reasonable Request*

“You’re way braver than me. Hey, there’s the twins. Can they join us here?”

“Um, sure,” Amy said. “Why not get another couple of boys to stare at me?”

“Is it that bad?” Drew asked as she waved at the twins, who came over.

“It’s bad but not terrible, so far,” Amy responded.

“Hi, Amy. Awful getting picked,” Justin told her. “How many did they get to be naked this



week?”

“Only seven came to the office voluntarily. Two more were brought in by the AP and a teacher. That was an awful scene. You know that they don’t forcibly strip anyone?”

“Yeah, I know about that,” Justin answered and the others nodded.

“So one of those girls, her name’s Susan and she’s a freshman, she was crying so hard she could hardly stand up. She wouldn’t undress when we were told to do it, so the teacher in the room with us took off Susan’s clothes and the poor thing didn’t do anything to resist. Then when we were all told to go out to class, Susan wouldn’t leave the room, so the AP pulled her out to the outer office where she just slumped down onto the floor and wouldn’t get up. Me and another girl got her off the floor and onto one of the chairs in the corner of the office where she just curled up, huddled in that chair and was crying, trying to hide herself. We couldn’t do anything for her, and Overmeyer was looking daggers at us, so we went out to face the kids in the hallway. And it wasn’t too bad. They were all very sympathetic, in fact.”

“Yeah, I heard about that happening from one of the juniors who got called in your group today,” Justin said. “I also saw what happened with her after you guys left the office. At the beginning of the first period, I had to take the attendance report to the office, and when I got there, I saw the girl—Susan, you said—huddled up in a chair and crying, trying to hide her boobs, while one of the school counselors was crouched next to her and talking to her. It sounded like he was trying to get her to come out of the office and go to class, but she didn’t move from there while I was waiting for the secretary to finish entering the report.”

“Did you have to do any class demos for a teacher?” Jason asked Amy.

“No. Thank god I don’t have classes like biology or health or something like that. I think that most of my teachers aren’t really sure just how to use naked kids in their classes yet. Like a demo in English? Please.”

After school was over for the day, Drew went to the soccer pitch for practice and was stopped by Marianne, one of her freshman teammates, who had been talking to April and Leila, another freshman.

“Hey Drew, since you’re active with the resistors, you may have heard what happened to my friend Susan—she was one of the freshies they called this morning.”

“Oh sure, I did hear about what happened from a soph, Amy, who was in the room when Susan got stripped,” Drew told them.

“You know why she was so terrified? She’s afraid of her own shadow. She told me this summer that she was terrified of the Program since her stepbrother had been raping her since she turned eleven up until he got caught when she was thirteen. That was last spring. After this morning, I’m certain that she won’t be returning to school.”

April sighed, “Terrible. That’s almost like what happened to you, Drew,” she said.

“Yeah. I ran away from my school, house, and state, rather than face the Program,” and then Drew told the others briefly what had happened to her.



Over the next two weeks, the school's atmosphere settled into a routine closer to that of a school running the Program. That is, the students who got coerced or intimidated into participating found themselves being subjected to humiliating Reasonable Requests, as the thoughtless and insensitive kids worked up their courage to bully the naked ones. Also, some of the teachers were acquiring reputations of being unnecessarily cruel in their use of students for classroom demonstrations. The two teens continued to witness Program abuses and teachers' excesses in humiliating Program participants.

Connor and Drew were at the Ritters' home the first weekend in December, right after the Thanksgiving break, when Frantz asked the kids if the Program had become more acceptable as time went on and additional kids were being drawn into participating.

"I ask that because I'm assuming that it's becoming less frightening to the kids as they get used to seeing the nudity."

"Actually, Dad, just the opposite," Jennifer told him. "Two weeks ago, this one girl just ran out of the school instead of going to the office when her name was called and she hasn't returned. Her friends say that she was scared to death about it and won't return, so her parents are looking for a private school of some kind."

"I know of another case like that," Michael told them. "A senior girl. She was date-raped last summer and is in intensive counseling and is very fragile, according to her friends. Her docs wrote letters trying to get her exempt but the school isn't giving any exemptions, even medical ones, so her parents went to court to get an injunction or something to keep the school from making her participate. There'll be a big legal fight about that soon, I think. If she *is* picked before her case is settled, her friends say that she'd definitely refuse to participate like the religious kids do. I'm happy that I'm eighteen now, so I can refuse as an adult."

"But we're nudists," Frantz pointed out. "I would think that the nudity wouldn't bother you."

"Jeez, Dad. Okay, lecture time," Jennifer said, sounding irritated. "Why does a nudist kid hate the Program? Simple, it's not nudism, it's actually sexual abuse and objectifying that's masquerading as a social program. Kids in the Program are required to submit to having their genitals fondled or are forced to assume poses that can be terribly humiliating. They have to obey the requests of any random kids to do all kinds of objectionable things, regardless of whether or not those Requests are quote reasonable unquote. Then the naked kid is supposed to decide what's reasonable and the rules we got said that making them do oral sex, having any penetration into their body, being physically restrained, um... that's all, I think, aren't reasonable and requests like those can be refused. Posing requests must always be obeyed—the rules define them as reasonable, and kids can ask to fondle a Program kid's sex organs too but then that gets into disputed areas. Like what kind of groping is reasonable, anyway?"

"I think it's none, but that's only what *I* think. I constantly saw lots of boys ask the Program girls to let them touch their boobs and the girls basically had to allow that, but the boys usually didn't know what they were doing and were rough with them, like they were squeezing a sack of potatoes or something. And plenty of boys asked to touch inside girls' crotches too. None of the

Program girls I saw allowed that. Jeez, who knows where those fingers had been? Another thing, the boys like to travel in little packs to harass the girls with their Requests too. Now tell me, how is those kinds of situations anything like social nudism?”

Frantz just shook his head. “I can see why you guys are so against it.”

Michael broke in. “Sure, everyone was told to be respectful to the naked participants; they told us that the Program was supposed to help us with our sexuality—that’s what I think the Program booklet says. Well, those so-called Reasonable Requests only help the voyeurs and abusers.”

“Yeah, the whole idea of those Requests gives me the creepy-crawlies,” Drew added. “There’s more bad stuff that goes on too. The teachers try to force kids into doing public solo and two-person masturbation in front of the entire class. That means making girls give the naked boys hand-jobs or even oral sex—yeah, I’ll say it—blow jobs.”

Jennifer spoke up then. “Girls would get oral sex done on them too. Right during the first week, a guy licked a girl’s pussy in front of my class. In front of everyone. Not in private. Jeez, I’d never do that. That garbage mostly happened during the first three or four weeks and not that many kids went overboard like that. Some of that crap started to settle down just before the Thanksgiving break, but there always seems to be those kids who get off on doing outrageous things.”

“And the teachers don’t keep that under control?” Eva asked.

“The teachers? Ha! Based on almost all of the teachers in classes with Program kids in them, they all seemed perverted, how they enjoyed humiliating and tormenting the kids,” Jennifer told her.

“Let me tell you what I heard from Justin about that,” Connor said. “He told us about a class demo he and Jason witnessed. It was an anatomy unit in their junior biology class and they had a Program boy and girl in the class. The teacher told the girl to sit on his desk facing the class and lean back on it and she didn’t want to do it. The girl—he told me that she was a very shy kid—began crying so hard that she couldn’t stand and had just sunk to the floor, wailing. Some girls wanted to help her, he said, and he wanted to interfere to stop that flagrant humiliation, but their class had been warned not to get involved with interrupting any class demos; if they did, they would find themselves put on the Program for up to a month.”

“What happened to her?” Eva asked breathlessly.

“Justin said that the teacher was totally heartless; he lifted her up, pushed her onto the desk, and leaned her back on her elbows and told her to stay that way. Then Justin said that he pulled her feet up onto the desk with her heels near her butt and spread her knees wide apart, exposing her pussy. And the poor kid kept crying while he was posing her like that.

“Next, the teacher made the boy duplicate her pose, and placed him lying back alongside her, side by side. Justin said it was obscene how everyone could see how his junk was just hanging out there, all exposed like that. Then the teacher handed out worksheets, line drawings of male and female bodies, and they were totally blank in the crotch. He said that the teacher then made the class come up to the front of the room, several kids at a time, and they were supposed to look at the two kids there and sketch in the missing anatomical parts on their sheets.”

“Oh, how humiliating,” Eva moaned.

“Yeah, and the teacher made it even worse. He made her pull her lips apart and told the class to draw the insides that they could see there. And for the boy, the teacher made him get a hard-on and they were told to draw that too.”

“Damn, there was zero educational value in that,” Frantz stated.

“Justin would agree with you there. He said that their homework was to label everything on their worksheets. He told me that they could have done the exact same thing using plastic models. That experience was awful for the two kids, and totally unnecessary, he told me. They were total wrecks after that class and apparently the girl hasn’t come back to school after that, since Justin hasn’t seen her in classes and it’s been two weeks now. Hell, I wonder how many kids become emotionally scarred after experiences like that. The Program is supposed to make kids comfortable with their sexuality but instead, it’s turning many into emotional or psychological wrecks.”

“That seems to be happening,” Frantz remarked. “My clinic has begun seeing a number of teens with anxiety disorders, some quite severe.”

“So tell me how that dumb Program is supposed to help kids?” Drew challenged. “They’re scared to go to school, some are dosed up with drugs to keep them from panicking, they’re so hyped up on sex that they can’t concentrate in class, and the teachers spend as much time as possible trying to use the naked kids to demonstrate stuff. All in the name of making them comfortable with their sexuality. But what happened to learning?”

“Damn, Drew, that little speech should be given to the fools in Congress,” Michael praised her.

“I agree,” Frantz smiled. “Oh, this discussion put it out of my mind, Drew, but I want to congratulate you on a great soccer season. Too bad you guys didn’t make it to the state level. That last conference game loss was a heartbreaker.”

“She had a great season, Dad,” Jennifer praised her. “Six goals and twelve assists. And you guys had three shut-outs too, right?”

Drew nodded, smiling. “I like playing in that stopper position where I can roam around between the midfielders and the back line. That gives me great opportunities to contribute on both D and O.”

“Well, it’s exciting to watch you play,” Jennifer said.

Then the family discussed their plans for the winter holiday break

Chapter 12 - New Year Changes

Within two weeks of their return to school in January, Drew and Connor noticed a number of subtle, not so subtle, and important changes in the Program's operation and one major change. The major change was that the national office had notified the school that by not forcing religious objectors to participate, the school was effectively giving exemptions and no exemptions were permitted. The feds demanded that the practice be stopped.

But that was easy for the feds to demand but difficult for the school to implement. Drew and Connor noticed that far fewer kids were being successfully coerced to participate. On the first two school Mondays in January, when a student was named in the P.A. announcements, he or she would tell the teacher that they were claiming their right to religious freedom, and being forced to be naked violated their religious beliefs.

The subtle changes involved the naked kids in the halls and classrooms.

As Connor observed, when he was talking to the twins about what he was seeing, "You know, the first several months of the Program was when lots of kids just acted crazy-like about all the groping and stuff in the hallways. There's less of that now the past weeks, you think?"

Justin answered, "Yeah, well, there seem to be fewer participating kids too. They still call sixteen names to participate but they never seem to get all sixteen. Slater changed how the kids are selected; he's concentrating on the seniors now. Even if they get sixteen seniors naked every week, it would still take fifteen or sixteen weeks to get every senior through the Program. With the holidays and breaks, that's a tough job to get everyone. But I'm guessing that only one out of sixteen kids will participate anyway."

"Many seniors are eighteen now and they're adults legally. They have their Fifth Amendment privacy rights and can't be forced to be in the Program," Jason responded. "The Supreme Court ruled that minors don't have that right. I think that 30 to 40 percent of seniors are eighteen by now and they can claim that as adults, they can't be forced into the Program. They enjoy their constitutional rights to privacy."

"But there's another amendment that can be used and it applies to everyone—the First," Connor remarked. "It includes freedom of religion and we learned in Civics that the Supreme Court has decided that religious freedom takes precedence over the other freedoms. The feds and states aren't permitted to pass a law that denies anyone the right to practice their religion freely. And that's happening in school right now with lots of kids resisting, refusing to do the Program."

"Yeah, we're seeing more of that in our junior classes," Justin commented. "The kids from religious families simply haven't been going to the office when they're called, and during the past two weeks, even some kids who aren't from religious families are pretending that they are. There's lots of grumbling that the Program selection situation is so unfair, that by the end of the term, I'm sure that the school won't be able to get *anyone* to participate."

School officials were now making a real effort to coerce the students to agree to be in the Program, but most of the kids were emboldened now. There were two instances where force was used to try to coerce or strip a girl who had been selected for a particular Monday. In one case,

which occurred in a classroom when the girl refused to leave with a teacher to be stripped, her classmates came to her rescue and pummeled the teacher who was attempting to pull the girl out of the room.

The second instance occurred in the gym. The AP must have assumed that if the girl was wearing P.E. apparel, it would be a simple matter to force her to strip. He didn't know that the girl had taken a personal defense class. He came up to her and demanded that she strip right then, and when she refused and walked away, he grabbed her, pulled her arm to turn her to face him, and then tried pulling off her top. She reacted according to her training, with the result that the AP left the school in an ambulance with severe facial scratches and a dislocated shoulder. The girl became an instant hero.

By mid-February, school officials were unable to coerce any student to participate in the Program. And soon, Drew and Connor learned about another attack on the school's ability to run the Program—this attack coming from an unexpected source. After services on a Sunday in late February, the pastor asked to talk with them.

"I've got some interesting news for the two of you," Robertson told them.

They spoke while enjoying the light Sunday lunch in the church's social hall.

"You do know that as of January, all of the high schools in the state have started running the naked Program?" Robertson asked.

"Yeah, we did know that," Connor answered.

"Okay, then. From the members of my regional clergy council, I've been hearing that the conservative Christian students in the region's schools are making a huge outcry not only about being forced to participate in the Program but also being forced to be bystanders in the sexual activities that go on around them. It's those activities called relief or class demonstrations. And they're really objecting to having the boys use the girls' locker room and restrooms, and girls using the boys', like the schools are requiring.

"Apparently the conservative Christian student population in much of the eastern Pennsylvania Dutch Country, that's Lancaster, York, Lebanon, Berks, and Dauphin, makes up about half of the students in the schools. All of these students' families are vehemently opposed to the Program on moral and religious grounds. Not only is the participation a moral problem for us, it's the implied participation that being a bystander to the sexual activities that go on is a serious sin too. At your school, and in a number of others too, the administrations agreed to somewhat accommodate those students who objected to being exposed to the sexual activities, but when the leaders of the churches represented in my clergy group learned that the feds contacted the schools to tell them that they won't allow the schools to continue those accommodations, they quickly took action.

"I heard this week that two of the larger churches in the region, back in January, filed a petition..." he pulled out a paper and began reading from it... "for an emergency restraining order in the Commonwealth Court against the Commonwealth's education department, all of the school districts in the local five-county area, and all of the high schools. This petition cites the petitioners' personal, deeply held religious belief in modesty as required in the Bible and

therefore they must be protected from seeing any school-supported sexual activities while attending the public schools, their attendance being mandated by the education laws of the Commonwealth, and in addition, petitioners must be allowed an exemption from being forced to take part in the Naked in School Program.”

“Oh my goodness... thank God for their doing that,” Drew exclaimed.

“I’m sure that God appreciates your thankfulness,” the pastor chuckled.

“We did hear reports and rumors about some legal challenges to the Program starting up,” Connor said. “Everyone’s kinda discounted them since the feds have always come up on top.”

“Not this time, so far. There were a few further developments and some came this week. First, the emergency restraining order was granted but was immediately sealed because of a challenge from the feds. That temporarily blocked it from taking effect. Meanwhile, the churches in question brought civil lawsuits against the largest school districts in Lancaster and York Counties. Those two court cases are ongoing regardless of the fate of the restraining order.

“And on Friday, after an emergency hearing earlier in the week, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the restraining order, so the order has now become a court injunction. If a student claims to have a religious objection to the Program, they must be granted an exemption. But that’s not the end of this saga, since it appears that the Program office has other legal options.”

“That’s wonderful news, Pastor,” Connor said. “In our school, most every kid is saying now that they’ll refuse to participate. I heard that only 53 kids have been in it so far. When you count all those who refused or who weren’t picked yet but who say they won’t do it when their name comes up, that’s 96 percent of the students. And since the religious kids are successfully refusing, claiming that participating violates their beliefs, all the rest of the kids are claiming that they have the same beliefs. Hey, what a great way to save souls, right?”

They all laughed.

“Hey, does Mr Gelb know about this?” Connor asked.

“He does; I called him after I first heard about the restraining order and he’s kept me up to date on this. He’s the source of all that technical legal jargon I used. Glad I studied theology and not law. But some folks claim that there’s little difference between them.”

Laughter.

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By Monday, the student grapevine had spread the news of the state supreme court decision and the injunction; media news outlets had broken the news the previous day. That’s when the news release had been sent out; Sunday was chosen because of the day’s association with religious worship.

Two weeks later, the two teens heard further news about the Program’s religious-exemption legal challenge. It was a report on the local TV evening news.

“...given the result that the Pennsylvania courts have backed the churches in their quest

for a religious exemption from the Naked in School Program, the federal Office of Social Awareness, the agency in charge of the Program, has appealed the state Supreme Court's decision to the region's federal district court. The OSA has claimed that since the Program is a federal law, not state, the state court lacks jurisdiction. Just this week, the federal court has denied the OSA's petition to block the state injunction from taking effect prior to a full panels' hearing on the issue. That court agreed with the state's brief that Pennsylvania's Religious Freedom Restoration Act applied to school programs, even those that are federally mandated, and religious freedom is guaranteed by the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution. The hearing for this issue has been scheduled to take place in June."

There was widespread celebration at that news at school the following day. Even though none of the students were agreeing to participate in the Program now, they now had full legal backing for their refusal. At lunch, Jason pulled out a crumpled sheet of paper.

"You know, because of that court decision, kids in this area, maybe all of PA, probably will get to know the Bible better than most kids anywhere else," he remarked. "I'm in the process of memorizing this list so I can quote Bible verses condemning public nudity."

He passed the paper around to the others at the table. It had listed fourteen biblical verses referring to nudity or modesty.

"Hey, I like these," Connor said. "Especially this one, from Nahum Chapter 3, where it says that God says that when one exposes their nakedness, it makes them shameful, filthy, contemptible, and a spectacle. And this one, Galatians 5:19, where it says, 'The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery...' These are great. So if you're asked why..."

Jason interrupted, "Yeah, if I'm picked, I claim a religious exemption and if they say to prove it, I can recite the parts of the Bible that guide my beliefs."

The others at the table asked him to email a copy of the list to them.

"See?" Jason laughed. "Every kid in the region will become a Bible expert on why nudity is a sin."

"You do know that most of the verses on your list are misinterpreted or quoted out of context, right?" Drew asked. "Or else they're metaphor or allegory."

"Oh, sure," he answered. "Doesn't matter. Religious beliefs don't have to be based on logic, you know."

"True. Well, you guys, I'm really feeling good about going to school now," Drew remarked. "I'm just so grateful for what the churches did—how they used the courts to stop that terrible federal law's interference with their members' personal beliefs. And the rest of ours too. Looks like the Program will just about get shut down in Pennsylvania now."

"Yeah, but Drew, you know that you were the one who got all of that resistance started, don't you?" Jennifer asked. "It was your ideas and those stories you told everyone, even before the Program began, that got people's attention to the abuses that the Program causes."

The other kids agreed while Drew blushed.

“Well, maybe this crap will be all over now,” Connor said.

Except it wasn’t.

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Apparently the school officials weren’t going to let the students off without some kind of activity based on some of the Program’s principles, including forced exposure and sex. Several weeks later, April appeared at lunch accompanied by Stan. April, a friend of Jennifer’s, was a sophomore on the girls’ soccer team and Stan was on the boys’ team.

“Guys, you’ll never believe this crap the school pulled now,” April told them breathlessly.

“What happened?” Jason asked.

“You know how our sophomore health classes are set up? They combine two classes on alternate P.E. days with a double period and today was a health and hygiene class day; it starts in the gym. When we came into the gym, the teachers started pairing up boys and girls into couples and told us that today we would be starting a three-session unit in hygiene called Advanced Sex Ed. They told us that all of the sophs would be taking it; it was a requirement to pass the term’s health class.

“They combined the classes and selected two groups of equal numbers of boys and girls and sent us to the two health classrooms. Me and Stan got partnered and we went into one of the rooms and there were two teachers for the class, a really youngish man and woman, who we never saw before. I’m guessing that they were student teachers or something. But when we saw that the whole classroom floor was covered with mats, we started to get worried. Then the teachers told the class that it was designed to get us familiar with our sexuality. They said that this first session was to intimately familiarize ourselves with the bodies of the opposite sex, and while everyone



Some kids begin to strip for the Advanced Sex Ed class

was still milling around the room, wondering if we should sit down, they ordered everyone to strip naked.

“That caused total chaos but about three-quarters of the kids completely refused right there. I noticed that the ones who did strip had already been in the Program, like Stan,

and he stripped. Me, I refused.”

“I did,” Stan told them, “‘cause I had already gone through with it, so I guess I just automatically got out of my gym clothes—six boys and a girl quickly followed the orders—and then I noticed that most of the others weren’t undressing, like April. She called out, ‘No way will I do that!’ The teachers began making threats and told the ones who refused that they’d fail the entire hygiene class—but nobody changed their minds. So they got sent to the office.”

“Yeah,” April continued the story. “They told us to go there immediately, but when someone said that they had to change back to regular clothes, the teachers said to go dressed as we were. No way was that happening. We all went and got changed and then went to the office. At the office, the AP told us that we’d have a week’s detention and would fail the whole hygiene course. But I’m not gonna do the detention, I’m gonna have my parents complain to the school board. That class is totally obscene!”

Stan nodded, “It sure was. After the dressed kids left and the rest of us got settled down, the teachers showed us a video about sex and sexual response which had a demonstration about how to locate erogenous zones, to do sensual teasing and stripping, kissing, foreplay and masturbation, and then it ended with scenes showing blow jobs and pussy licking! After the video, we were told that we were to spend the rest of the class getting familiar with our partners and using the time to examine each other’s sex parts.

“Well, that was a non-starter. There had been twenty-eight kids at first. Twenty-one had left the room, thirteen girls and eight boys. That left one girl and six boys. The girl said that she wasn’t gonna be on display for a bunch of boys and just began dressing, but since the period was almost over, the teachers just let us go. But before we left, they told us that for the second session, they’d make sure that the kids who refused to take part would be forced to return for it, and we would learn how to sexually please our partners and practice with them by doing the exercises that were shown in that video. The guy said that we would start with the basic exercises, and by the third class session, we were supposed to show that we could make our partners cum using oral sex!”

“Oh shit, that’s a new wrinkle,” Connor groaned on hearing that. “We have that class later today.”

“I’m gonna just cut it,” Drew declared. “I’m gonna go to the office and have them pull their copy of my written statement of my religious rights for modesty to see why I’m skipping that class.”

“I’ll join you—hey, still have the sophs’ phone numbers from the text-message tree?” Connor asked.

“Oh, good idea! Yeah, let me message them. Most of them might not have heard about this abomination,” Drew responded.

When the time for their sex-ed class arrived, instead of going to the gym as instructed, everyone in it went to the office, where they claimed that the sex-ed class violated their religious rights. The AP’s demands to return to the classrooms were met with stony faces and threats of lawsuits; the kids had been emboldened by news of the churches’ success in obtaining their injunction.

“Mr Turner, that injunction applies to nudity and modesty in all school activities, not just to the

Program,” Drew told him. “That means it applies to that class too. All of us here have a religious right to be modest and no one can force us to surrender that right.”

Turner took all of their names then and told them, “Either I or Dr Slater will be in touch with your parents and we’ll discuss your disobedience with them. We will determine a suitable punishment. You may continue your P.E. class in the gym.”

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That weekend, while Drew and Connor were visiting at the Ritters’ home, Eva spoke to them.

“Your principal called me on Thursday,” she told them. “He said that you cut the required sophomore health and hygiene class on Wednesday and that meant that you are going to fail it and have to repeat it. He wants Frantz and me to go to the school to discuss your additional punishment.”

“Did he tell you about the class we skipped?” Connor asked.

“Only that it was a sex-ed class and all sophomores were required to take it.”

Connor described what that class was about and Eva exclaimed, “Oh my goodness, no! They’re still trying that nonsense?”

“They are. Drew and I went to the office and she spoke to the AP; she told him that she was asserting her religious-modesty rights. We all did. He’s ignoring that.”

“Indeed,” Frantz grumbled. “As I understand it, the court injunction applies to all school officials; they’re required to permit you to observe your moral values. I’ll call him Monday and remind him that he’s required to comply with the court injunction.”

“That’s what I told him, but he ignored it,” Drew said.

“Well, we’ll see if he ignores it when I tell him.”

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The following week, Drew’s lunch group heard from April and Stan about what happened in that sex-ed class when Stan’s second session occurred.

“The parents of the kids in that group all got calls from the school. April’s folks told her that she would fail the P.E. course if she didn’t go to the next two sessions.”

“Yeah, but when I told them what we were supposed to do in that class, they said I certainly could skip it and they’d support me,” April said.

“So yeah, I decided to go myself, just for yucks, to see what would happen,” Stan said. “When I got to the classroom, now only five of us guys showed up, those teachers were standing there stark naked! But with just boys there, the session just stopped right then; the teachers called the office and spoke to someone there for a minute and then just sent us away. I’m sure that the teachers never even considered having us boys partner up—just imagine that scene if they did try that.”

What occurred in all of the rest of the scheduled sophomore sex-ed classes was identical to Stan's. The same thing happened in every class—only a few wound up going, almost all boys, because virtually all of the sophomores just cut the class when their group was scheduled.

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Toward the end of the spring term, Drew and Connor heard some gossip from the twins about that sex-ed class. Jason gave them that news.

“Our office spy, Diane, spilled the tea. She heard that more than 80 to 90 percent of the sophs, but it's probably more, skipped it totally. The rest only went for the first session and the second sessions all petered out 'cause there were just about no boy-girl couples that would do that stuff.

“She thinks that they're gonna fail everyone—but heard them arguing over that—but anyway, every soph is gonna have to re-take it this coming school year. And she told me that they're planning on redesigning that class for the fall to get kids for it by just pulling pairs of boy-girl partners out of every gym class on their gym days instead of having a scheduled class. That way, nobody could just skip going to it.”

“Huh, won't the same thing happen? Kids will still refuse, right?” Connor asked. “There's no way to force us and there's that court injunction too. I'm not gonna worry about it.”

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Summer vacation was only a few days away now and Connor and Drew had their summer jobs to look forward to and Drew, her soccer program. At the end of June, the news reported that the religious-freedom case before the federal district court had been decided in favor of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's ruling. Media commentators were opining whether or not the federal OSA would pursue an appeal of that decision with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; given the vehemence of the wording of the district court's decision against them, the favored opinion was that they wouldn't. The opinion had soundly scolded that agency for its blatant disregard for the students' rights of religious freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment. Therefore, the OSA was required to allow religious exemptions to participating in the Program, and to forestall any attempt by the OSA to create some kind of rule for church attendance or a test of a student's “deeply held belief,” the appeals court wrote that a written declaration by the student would suffice for proof.

Despite this ruling, most kids opted to be on the safe side, so many of them searched the Bible for verses to back up their beliefs. As Jason had predicted, every student in central Pennsylvania was becoming a Bible expert on why public nudity is a sin.

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At the end of the summer, Drew and Connor welcomed the Ritters home again after their vacation at their Maryland nudist resort. Jennifer was bursting to tell them all about what she and Michael had learned from the Maryland teens at the resort.

“So we found out that the high schools in Maryland are starting the Program this fall,” she told them. “All of us kids had this big meeting one day, after the Maryland kids heard about us being

in a school with the Program. They wanted to know what to expect. And damn, their reaction to our stories was total shock!”

“So no Maryland schools started it early?” Drew asked. “Our lawyer, Mr Gelb, told us that some states had schools that had been running pilot versions.”

“No. But some schools showed a video about the Program this past spring. I think most of the kids who saw it were in local middle schools and they said that it terrified them ‘cause of all the sex scenes it showed. But this was something really wild. There was a young teen girl there; her name was Emma, and she’s scary smart. She went to high school in Alaska, of all places, and she told us that they tried running the Program in her high school!”

“What? Alaska, naked, and winter?” Connor said, trying to keep from laughing. “Was she shitting you? C’mon, the feds are dumb, but that idea is so way out there that it’s not believable.”

“I wouldn’t have believed it either, but she had these great ideas, and she wouldn’t have thought of them unless she had seen the Program in action—or trying to get into action. But about a week or so later at our resort, something happened that proved that she was truthful. Four Program enforcing officers got into our resort by climbing over the gate and came looking for Emma to arrest. They had tracked her down from Alaska and wanted to arrest her for interfering with the Program in Maryland.”

“Okay, now you totally gotta tell us about that,” Connor said. “This is the craziest thing I’ve ever heard. And it shows that the Program people must be total morons.”

“Sure,” Jennifer said. “Emma told us that after she got the Program stopped at her school—it never even got started there—she got the school’s federal Program coordinator and six enforcers arrested. They were convicted and jailed too.”

“Jeez, this keeps getting better,” Drew smiled. “Did she say how she got it stopped?”

“She sure did. And she also gave advice to all the Maryland kids about what they can do when it starts in their schools. Oh yeah, that’s how the enforcers found her. She told those kids how to resist and the kids told their parents, who contacted their schools and threatened the school officials that if their kid was forced, they’d call in the police and charge sexual assault, just like that they had heard had happened at a school in Alaska. Well, the Program officials at those schools must have realized that having this info circulating was bad for the Program, so they contacted the Program office to warn them that it was happening. Since Alaska was mentioned, the Program office people figured out that Emma was involved; they got her cell phone traced, and sent the enforcers to our resort. Well, those four fed enforcers got captured and are getting charged with attempted kidnapping. Emma’s doing a one-person wrecking job on the Program office’s personnel.”

“Fantastic! Way cool!” Connor exclaimed. “What did she tell the kids at the resort about assaults?”

“Right, that was just one of the things that Emma told us about; it was something that her own attorney in Alaska had recommended. Just like yours did, Drew.”

Drew nodded.

“But instead of being defensive and simply reacting to her school’s plans to start the Program by getting the kids to resist, the way we did here, Emma went on the offense. Before the Program even began, she recruited a whole bunch of kids—called them her ‘army’—she even had officers in it—and they did stuff to the school to make it too cold in the classrooms to be naked. Next, she got her lawyer to get a permanent injunction against school officials, kinda like the churches did here, but the one she got didn’t exempt anyone, it said that no one was allowed to forcibly strip a student. It also stopped officials from using coercion or making threats to force kids to strip. If anyone tried even verbally threatening a kid, according to the injunction, they could be charged with sexual assault on a minor. So, for months, nobody ever got stripped.

“Then, when it got warmer as spring came and the school’s heat was now working okay, Emma’s intelligence service—see, I said she had organized an army—learned that the school’s federal Program coordinator planned to hold a surprise Program assembly, so she set up a trap for the federal people. The Program coordinator brought in those enforcers from out of state for that assembly and at it, the enforcers tried to strip some of the kids. But Emma had arranged for a police SWAT team to be standing by—when the enforcers grabbed several kids to pull off their clothes, the team rushed in. All the feds got arrested then. It was such an awesome story. Oh yeah. The feds aren’t gonna run the Program in any Alaska schools now.”

“Damn, she sounds like an awesome kid,” Drew said. “She a senior?”

“You won’t believe this either. First, she had her fourteenth birthday there at the resort. And second, she has a doctoral degree in physics. She graduated from high school and her PhD was awarded in the same month, even before her bachelor’s degree. That degree came about a month later. At thirteen years old.”

“Jeez, a genius then,” Connor sighed.

“Yeah, but a totally normal teen kid. Very charming and likable, she’s the definition of got razz, too. And even with her anti-Program background, she’s a nudist. Hint, hint,” Jennifer said.

“Okay, I’ll just ignore that,” Drew smiled. “You said that she had some other ideas about resisting the Program?”

“Oh, right. Sure. Justin and Jason told the group of kids there all about what happened in the Program here—all the crap that they saw, and I told them more of everything I saw too. So Emma suggested that we look into our state’s laws to see if threats or coercion could be considered to be assault here.”

“I think that the religious exemptions have us covered now, though,” Connor remarked. “We may not need the assault laws. But we’re still facing that sex-ed class crap that the school plans to try again in the fall.”

“Yeah, Emma did say something about that class when Jason told her about it. She had this great suggestion. She told us that if school officials warn us that they’ll fail us in hygiene for refusing to strip and do sex acts, then that’s extortion, in addition to its being a sexual assault. She said that if a teacher tells us to strip, we should tell the teacher that we’ll bring a police officer to the

class and have him listen to the teacher's request for all of us to perform various sexual acts in exchange for passing the class. Forced stripping is a sexual act in addition to oral sex and all that other shit they said that we'd have to do. Emma said that even the principal could get arrested for requiring that class, since he's the one in charge. And, she told us, if we don't want a direct confrontation, a lawyer could send a letter to the school that tells them what would happen legally if the school starts that class up again this fall."

"Again, that's great advice. Jeez, she must have been a terror in her high school, organizing everything like that," Drew observed.

"She does have this real *intensity* about her," Jennifer told them. "Seeing her nude, she just *glows* with an inner energy—seeing that *glow* she has was simply riveting."

"You know, Drew, maybe Mr Gelb can write a letter like that," Connor said.

"Sure. Let's ask him."

"Oh yeah, one other thing," Jennifer told them. "This was an interesting idea that Andrew mentioned when he was telling us how Emma was getting used to being naked. She was kinda like you, Drew; the Program had soured her about public nudity, but Andrew and his sisters convinced her to give it a chance. He told us that he thought that the Program would work lots better if they just simply let kids be naked without all the sex and humiliation—run the Program like nudist places are run. The others thought that was a great idea but said that it would never happen."

"Sure, that would be way too far-fetched to happen," Connor agreed.

"Michael and I met two new families from the York area who've been at the resort before and we like the kids in one of them. You know, they live only about twenty miles away—maybe we can visit them sometimes. Anyway, the kids, a brother and sister, they're in a high school there and they had the Program, obviously. They told me and Michael that when it started last fall, it was kind of crazy like it was here, but their district had a church minister on their school board. He came up with the religious-freedom idea on his own and counseled those kids how to use it. So after the winter holidays, that school couldn't get one single kid to participate. That's where one of the churches that got the court injunction is located, in York."

"Damn, you really did find out a lot," Connor said. "It's great to see that we're not alone in the wilderness of Program refuseniks."

They all laughed.

Connor did tell Gelb about the hygiene sex-ed class and he agreed that indeed, the way the school was requiring participation was extortion in the legal sense and, in addition, criminal sexual abuse, even in the absence of a passing or failing grade. Even giving a detention to someone who refused would trigger the extortion felony. A conviction could bring a twenty-year prison term. Gelb prepared a letter to the local school board chairman, detailing the potential criminal infraction which would result from making the sex-ed class mandatory in order to pass the course. The chairman, the district superintendent, and the principal, plus the class's teachers, would all be implicated in the felony. The class could be offered on a voluntary basis, as long as

no incentives, or disincentives, were attached.

Emma's advice to Jennifer and her group at the nudist resort was quite accurate.

### Chapter 13 - A New Home

The principal's letter to the new term's students and their parents had arrived in mid-August. It consisted of a welcome letter to the new and returning students, materials about performance and sports schedules, team tryouts, class schedules, and a reminder that any student whose last physical exam was completed prior to the previous March, must provide a copy of a current exam. Nothing was mentioned about the Naked in School Program.

When the Ritter family had returned from their vacation, they were busy getting Michael all packed and ready to go off to college; he was going to be at Penn State and needed to be there on the Tuesday before Labor Day.

When high school began that same Tuesday, Drew and Connor were happy to see that no school-wide assembly had been scheduled. On the Monday following Labor Day, however, their home-room teacher had an announcement to make to the class.

"Class, during this school year, the Naked in School Program is still a required part of the curriculum. Students will be selected to participate beginning on Mondays and their names will be announced during the home-room period. The named students will go to the assistant principal's office, where they will receive their instructions and then will disrobe. All of the Program participation rules will be the same as last year."

Then she named two students as the current week's participants, but both of them responded that they were claiming their religious exemption and refused to leave the classroom. The identical scene occurred in each classroom that morning; every student chosen as a Program participant gave the same response, with the result that no student agreed to participate that week. Or the following weeks too.

During the next several weeks, all Monday calls for participants went unheeded. Sylvia Overmeyer, the Program coordinator, traveled from one classroom to another, trying to get students to comply, but after several teachers, exasperated by her interruptions, told her to stay out of their classrooms, she began trying to track kids down at lunch. That's when William Bennett decided to confront her. Will was a senior now and was one of the resistance group's initial planning members.

"Mrs Overmeyer?" he said when he approached her as she was badgering a student in the lunchroom.

"What is it?" she responded.

"Are you aware that your harassment of the kids here violates that court injunction?"

"Just who are you? You can't threaten a federal official like that; I'll arrange to put you in the Program for the rest of the school year!"

William just laughed. "Really? First, the Program is defunct here. Second, you have no right to put me in it; I'm eighteen. I have an adult's right to privacy. Next, if I see you bothering one more kid, I'm getting a cop in here and making a complaint against you and the school..."

"Local police have no authority over a federal official..." she started.

“Is that what you think? Maybe you better read the court injunction. You are aware that the injunction was upheld by a *federal* court, and therefore it’s a *federal* court’s order, aren’t you?”

Overmeyer glared at him, then she turned and stomped away as the kids around them cheered and applauded.

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During September, Connor had learned that the fire-insurance lawsuit on his home had been finally settled and paid out, and that his father’s estate had received the insurance payment for the destroyed car. Also, Connor had turned sixteen years old and was able to apply for a Pennsylvania motorcycle driver’s license, effective immediately. Gelb’s legal office was able to get some of the usual delays and waiting period loosened for him so he didn’t have to take the instruction course and the waiting period was waived. It took a private meeting with a judge from the county Court of Common Pleas to obtain those waivers; the judge was sympathetic after hearing about Connor’s past. Connor also applied for a regular learner’s permit because he intended to eventually purchase a car.

Drew’s soccer team was enjoying a good season this term, and by mid-October, they had clinched a spot in the regionals. Drew’s play was an essential part of the team’s success. The team reached the state class-3A quarter-finals but then lost that game on a penalty-kick shootout.

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Jennifer, Michael, and the twins had been in touch with their nudist resort friends over the fall; they were following the news from them about how those kids were doing as their schools adopted the Program. The stories were varied; not all of their high schools had begun running it for many reasons. In the couple of schools that did run it, Jennifer learned from those kids that they had taken Emma’s advice to heart. Their parents had warned the school officials that if anyone used force to strip their child, their parents would get the police involved. Thus the word had spread to all of the other kids in those schools that nobody would be forcibly stripped, but even so, still the Program had kids willing to participate in it.

In late January, Connor received troubling news. He received a phone call from Alphonse Garcia. Connor told Frantz about the call the following day.

“Frantz, one of my dad’s ... um, former associates, called me. He’s sort of watched out for my interests back in my home town and he’s a straight-shooter. Anyway, he found out that some malcontents from one of the gangs back there that my dad used to supply has decided to go looking for me—that’s what the police and prosecutor had told me could happen. Anyway, my contact told me that those guys found out about that last group home where I was living, and they tried to get the operator to tell them where I was living now. I heard that he had no idea where I had moved to, but they still shook him up a bit. You think that they could track me down to here?”

Eva had come into the room while Connor was speaking and had sat down across from them.

“Oh dear, Frantz,” she said. “Could they find out where Connor’s living?”

“Not sure, dear, but possibly this isn’t good,” Frantz exclaimed. “This could be a problem. I really don’t know how secure the social services people are back there about protecting kids’ information—we’ll need to talk to Wayne. But, ah, maybe this is a good time to tell the kids the change that’s likely to occur.”

“I think you’re right. Let me get Jennifer and Drew.”

She went to the stairs and Connor heard her call to them; they were in the basement apartment, where Connor and Drew slept when they stayed over. Then Eva called Timmy to come. When they had all gathered, Frantz looked at each of them.

“Let me start with a little preamble so you have some background,” he said. “You know that I’m a professor here at the medical school in Hershey and a doc at the Hershey hospital and the Penn State clinic. I’m board certified in pediatrics and adolescent medicine and in endocrinology...”

They all nodded.

“...and I’m the director of the Diabetes Center at the hospital; also I’m a clinical investigator doing patient-oriented research on pediatric type-2 diabetes. This summer, when we were at the nudist resort, I met a prof from the Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore. We started to talk shop and he mentioned that there’s a senior opening coming up in their med school at the end of the academic year; an associate dean is retiring, and their Division of Pediatric Endocrinology has begun to search for a senior faculty member to fill a named chair in diabetes research and patient care. They’d like one person to fill both slots if they find the right candidate.

“I was curious about the position or positions so he made a few phone calls. They’ve been searching since last May but hadn’t yet contacted some of the few prospects they’ve identified as their preferred candidates. To my surprise, I learned that I was one of them. Apparently I had been identified by their search committee for possible recruitment. Then, two weeks ago, that trip I took? They had me come out for a visit and interviews and it looks like they’ll make me an offer. It was so quick... they must have fast-tracked this recruitment. It seems that I have the exact qualifications and experience they were looking for—my diabetes research background together with my clinical work in both the hospital here and the satellite clinic was an added plus.”

“So we’d be moving then?” Jennifer asked.

“Looks very much like it,” Frantz told her. “If we do, it’ll be the end of the school year.”

“But I’ll miss my friends,” Timmy moaned.

“If we do move,” Eva told him, “you’ll be in a new middle school where you’d make many new friends anyway.”

“Will we live near other kids?” he asked. “There’s nobody nearby here to play with.”

“That’s something to check out, isn’t it, sport?” Frantz asked. “Jennifer? How do you feel about moving?”

“Um, well... most of my friends are seniors and they’ll be graduating this spring and will go away to college ... hey, if we do move, that means that we could live really close to our resort? It’s

right near Baltimore. Could we? The resort has events going on all year 'round and I have lots of friends there too and I'll get to see them all the time, right? And our friends from here go there every summer too and..."

"Jennifer, cool your jets, okay?" Frantz laughed, interrupting her. "So I take it that moving away wouldn't break your heart."

"Well, I'd kinda miss being a senior and top of the heap here, but since Stacy's family moved away last fall, going to school isn't as much fun now. I miss her. But there's a bunch of girls from the resort who I hang with when we're there and I like them, they go to Baltimore-area high schools. So maybe we can live nearby?"

Frantz laughed again. "We can check it out. Remember, they haven't made me an offer yet. But I brought this up, Connor, because this could solve the problem you mentioned."

"Yeah, I guess so; moving again would make it extremely hard to find me. What'll be strange is that we'd be seniors in the new school ... and... hey, Drew? You'd need to change soccer teams again..."

"Somehow I don't think that Drew would have a difficult time getting on a school team," Frantz chuckled. "First team All-State honors; named as one of the top-three defensive players in the Eastern Region two seasons running, and two prep-school scouting/rating websites named her as one of the top defensive players in the state."

Drew smiled. "Yeah, I've been scouted. Several college recruiters have already spoken to me; they've been watching my games. Division 1 schools too, so they have scholarships to offer. If we move, I'd like to get in a school with a competitive team."

Frantz rubbed his face. "Oh boy. Lots of factors in play. We'll see; one step at a time."

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The middle of the spring term in their high school was uneventful. The federal pressure on the school from the OSA about the lack of student participation was virtually gone, since Overmeyer had been recalled and reassigned to a school in Philadelphia over the winter holiday break. The high school was still naming students to participate by posting their names on a bulletin board outside the office each Monday. That list was completely ignored by everyone and the named students simply went blithely on with their day. The school officials' threats about failure to graduate never materialized; at the end of the previous spring term, all the seniors had been allowed to graduate—and were allowed to attend the commencement ceremony too, including those who had claimed a religious exemption.

Frantz did receive the offer from Hopkins and it combined the administrative dean's position and the named professorship. It was an amazing opportunity and much too good for him to turn down, so during the school's spring break, the Ritter family, together with Drew and Connor, traveled to Baltimore to look for a home. Frantz had gotten in touch with a recommended realtor there and had given her their minimum requirements. The parents had spoken to Drew and Connor about their lodging situation; clearly their living apart from the Ritters wasn't feasible now. The agent found several five-bedroom homes in the areas where Frantz had specified, and

three of them had separate in-law apartments. She sent the listings to Frantz before their trip.

Jennifer had contacted her resort friends too; she had sent texts to them to ask them where they lived and which school they attended, while Drew looked at the websites of the high schools in the areas where those houses were located to try to get information about their soccer teams. She didn't want to ask the Ritters to pay the approximate \$1,200 annual cost for her to join a Premier League club.

After several days of touring the available real estate, the Ritter parents had narrowed the choices down to three homes. All were located in Anne Arundel County, a southern suburb of Baltimore; they were reasonably close to the medical school; and each home had a separate apartment suitable for Drew and Connor. When Connor offered to pay rent, Frantz firmly refused.

What delighted Jennifer was that two of the homes were within fifteen miles of the nudist resort. Drew laughed when Jennifer mentioned that tidbit of information.

"You really do love nudism, don't you?" she asked and Jennifer nodded enthusiastically.

"Sure, I really do," she replied. "If we live close, we can go lots more often. Look. Mom and Dad are talking with Mrs Howland about some details about the areas and the schools. Let's see what they found."

Frantz and Eva were looking at an area map with the agent, Susan Howland, who was giving her own analysis of the relative merits of the areas around the three homes.

"This first home, the high school isn't the best of the three, and the local street traffic might be higher—that might not be good for Timmy, and the middle school is a distance away. Oh, here's Drew. Drew, did you find out about the soccer teams in these areas?"

"I did. None of the three high schools have a great team right now, but kids come and go, so when I was back home, I had emailed some of the schools' athletic directors and told them that I would be moving into the area and was a good soccer player. Could they tell me about their coaches' backgrounds, like career team records and if they themselves played. I told them that, if possible, I wanted to be on a team where I would get good exposure to college scouts. So I got the three responses. They were okay but one was very good. That coach played in a professional league but had to stop because of an injury. She has a lot of D1 college contacts and a number of kids that she's coached get scholarship offers. She's the coach at Glen Burnie High—and that house is the one we all liked best too."

Howland nodded, "That school is one of the better ones in the county, it's in the top ten, and the middle school is located nearby as well."

Jennifer was hopping with excitement now. "Oh, that's the school where Sherrill and Wilma Robbins go!"

"You know people from here? Are they sisters?" Howland asked.

"Cousins. They're gonna be seniors in the fall like me."

"Ah, Frantz and I know those families too," Eva said. "We've met both Robbins families socially

when we've been here on our summer vacations; we like them too," Eva told her. "I think that we've decided, Susan. Let's get things moving so we can make our offer."

Later that day, Eva asked Jennifer, "How is it that the house we picked is the one near where your friends live?"

"I've got, ah, eleven really good friends from the resort who live all around Baltimore, Mom. The Robbins girls are just two of them."

While Howland went off to negotiate the purchase with the selling agent, Eva decided to contact both of the Robbins families to tell them that they were moving to the Baltimore area. When Eva reached Delia Robbins and told her, she was in her car and had her phone connected to the car's audio. Their daughter Wilma was with her and her squeal was ear-splitting when she heard Eva's news; this was followed by a rush of exclamations and questions.

Eva laughed, "Goodness, Wilma, I can see why you and Jennifer get on so well. You both have enough enthusiasm to power the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders! Yes, Frantz has been offered a position at the Hopkins Medical School and our agent is negotiating a house purchase. Block your ears now, Dalia. The house is in Glen Bur..."

She was drowned out by Wilma's squeal again.

"Wow, wow! Jen's going to be in Glen Burnie?" Wilma shouted.

Eva had turned on her own phone's speaker, so Jennifer heard this.

"Hi, Wilma, it's Jen. Yeah, looks like I'll be a classmate."

The two celebrated.

"Eva, let me call Brenda and tell her, okay? Say, are you open this evening? Come over for dinner and I'll see if Brenda and Frank can come with their kids."

Eva called out to Frantz to ask him and he agreed, so they arranged it.

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That evening, the Ritter group went to the home of Jay and Delia Robbins. The other Robbins family was there; the Ritters knew both families and, in fact, they all quite liked each other. Jay was a partner in a local law firm and his brother Frank was an architect. His wife Brenda owned an interior-design service and Delia was a supervising social worker. So the only introductions needed were for Connor and Drew. When the two of them walked into the Robbins' house, Wilma and her cousin Sherrill were standing off to the side. When they saw the two teens, their eyes grew large and their jaws dropped.

"Ohmygod!" Wilma exclaimed. "It's Conan and Xena!"

"Um, no, name's Connor, not Conan," Connor laughed.

"Thanks for the compliment," Drew chuckled. "I'm not in Xena's league, can't you see?" She put her hands on her chest. "Name's Drew."

Sherrill's tongue was finally loosened and she spoke.

"No, Wilma's right. Look at you both. Jen's told us that her parents became guardians of two teens but she never described you..."

The adults were looking on at the byplay, amused.

"Nice to meet you, Connor, Drew," Jay said, shaking hands first with Connor. "Let's get the introductions done; come meet our combined family."

As he shook Drew's hand, he pointed his chin at Sherrill and winked at Drew. "Clearly you've impressed my daughter and niece," he laughed.

They went around greeting everyone. Wilma had an older brother, who was away at college, and a younger sister, Tracy, who was almost thirteen and in middle school, while Sherrill had twin siblings, Jessica and Robert, who would be twelve in two weeks.

"I do get Wilma's Conan reference, also the Xena one," Brenda said, looking at the teens appraisingly. "You two are amazing physical specimens. Connor, you're what? Six-three?"

He nodded. "Yep. And no, I don't play football," he smiled.

"You have a very similar build to a teen we know... oh, you must know him too, Randy Clawson..."

"Oh sure. He's in my school. Yeah, I guess I can see that. He's a couple inches taller and maybe fifteen-twenty pounds heavier, but we're built just about the same."

"And you, Drew, Eva told us that you're a soccer star," Brenda continued. "You must be five-ten or eleven and your clothes don't hide how muscular you are. You could be a model for an Amazon princess, actually," she laughed.

"Not a soccer star, but I'm working on that," Drew chuckled. "I hope to play on the team here."

"I'm sure that they'd want you," Frank said. "Say kids, do you want to bring your friends with you to school tomorrow? It's a short day, right? You can introduce Drew to the coaches." He spoke to the Ritters. "Our spring break doesn't exactly coincide with yours; ours starts Monday, and there's a half day tomorrow."

"Visiting the school's a great idea," Connor said. "Jen too? We can meet some of our new classmates to be."

They agreed, and Wilma made plans to pick them up from their hotel to drive them to the school. Then she announced to the others, "While you adults talk about boring stuff, Sherrill and I want to talk to Jen and get to know Drew and Connor."

"You can see who really runs this family," Jay joked as the kids left the room.

All the kids went off to the den while the others remained in the living room, catching up on Ritter and Robbins family news.

When the kids were alone, Sherrill asked Connor quietly, "I gotta know—are you as cut as

Randy? He's got a body like one of those Greek sculptures."

Connor laughed. "And you've obviously seen him in the all-together. Yeah, I guess I have good muscle definition like he does. I don't compete, but I swim and do weights. Oh, and run with Drew too. She got me into that but I don't have her stamina. You know, in a typical game, she runs over six miles and a lot of that is sprinting and changing directions."

"Oh, hey, just thought of this," Jennifer broke in. "Will we see any naked kids at school tomorrow?"

"Oh, you gonna start talking about that naked school crap again?" Tracy moaned. "Jess, Rob, let's go to my room and play video games. When the high school kids get together, all they want to talk about that stupid Program, like last summer at the resort. Program talk, all the stupid time! Want to go with us, Timmy? We can play in teams."

"Oh sure, Tracy! Cool! What games do you have?"

"Minecraft, Fallout, Super Mario... a whole bunch..."

They went off as Wilma laughed at them. "Okay, what happened with the Program in the schools here is pretty crazy; that's right, maybe you two didn't hear. Drew, Connor, did Jen tell you about the bull session we teens had at the resort last summer? With a kid named Emma?"

"Sure. Awesome story. She sounds like quite an operator," Connor said.

"Frikkin' way more than that," Wilma retorted. "We heard that she won the Physics Nobel Prize last fall. At frikkin' fourteen years old! It was a discovery she had made in Alaska while thinking of ways to keep warm. So funny."

The others were staring at her, amazed and speechless.

"Yeah, I had the same reaction. It's tough to make me speechless, but that news did."

The others laughed.

"Okay, I'll tell you more about Emma afterwards. So, the Program. I mentioned Emma 'cause she's lots like you two as far as family goes. She's an orphan and lives with a family that she met in a very complicated way, it was about something like grandparents knowing each other. And then I guess she declared that those family members were her honorary cousins. The boy in the family, Andrew, has two younger sisters and they're all lit kids; and Emma and Andrew are tight too. But his sister Sam, she started high school last fall, they put her in the Program the first week 'cause she was going around their school telling everyone that they didn't have to do it. She had been telling lots of kids in the school that if they refused, they couldn't be forced. That was exactly what Emma had told all of us kids at the resort to do. To just refuse, periodt. So Sam refused and got most of the other kids who got picked to join her in refusing that first day, and most kept it up for the rest of the week. Now she's been writing a blog every single week, telling kids how to avoid participating. And lots of kids in her school do refuse now."

Wilma was just charging ahead with her stream-of-consciousness description as the others tried hard to keep up with her words.

“The Program started up in most of the other schools in the area, but I hear from many of my resort friends that lots of kids have been refusing, but lots do wind up having to do it. Now, in our school, something really different happened. See, one of the kids at school, her grandfather is a judge on the state Appellate Court in Annapolis and knows a judge on the U.S. District Court in Baltimore. The grandfather got several families, friends of his granddaughter, together to request an injunction against the school district, naming our school in particular. He got the request heard by that federal judge, since it was against the federal Program requirements, and the federal district judge gave a temporary restraining order against the school, stopping them from starting the Program unless the school or government provided funding for us kids’ security, including video surveillance of the entire school and guard personnel to be stationed where student privacy is required. This totally got the school tied up so far and kept them from starting the Program here, but the word last week is that the hearing on getting a permanent injunction is to be in June and that the request for the injunction will very likely be overturned. But that granddaughter will graduate in June, so the grandfather got what he wanted for her.”

“Huh, that’s quite a tale, if I followed it all,” Drew told her. “You know, the churches in our area used a religious-freedom injunction to allow exemptions for kids who claim that the Program violates their rights for personal modesty, as the Bible requires. Our area is crawling with extremely conservative churches, not like here, so I don’t think that very many kids could use that exemption here.”

“Um, I guess you’re right,” Sherrill said. “People here are very diverse and religion isn’t that big of a deal in general community life. Well, that’s why we haven’t had the Program in our school yet, but we expect that it’ll start this fall, unless Emma comes up with another brilliant idea.”

“She go to your resort a lot?” Drew asked.

“She came first time last summer. She had moved to Maryland from Alaska just before the summer,” Sherrill answered. “But Andrew’s family, they came the summer before that. They’re British and been going to nudist places in Europe for years before they came here, Andrew told us.”

“Hey guys, you said a brilliant idea?” Drew broke in. “Emma may have already had one, um, actually it was Andrew’s idea, according to Jen.”

The others looked at her.

“Sure, Jen told me that Andrew was telling your group about Emma’s first nudist experiences. I remembered this ‘cause Jen told me that Emma was like me—the idea of the Program turned her off about being naked in public. Jen told me that he asked you guys if you thought that kids would accept being in the Program if it simply allowed them to be nude voluntarily and not require all that sex shit. Jen said that everyone liked the idea, but they wondered how it would work, or even *could* work.

“Maybe there’s a way it *could* be made to work. Connor got this great idea the very first day we saw the Program running in our first high school. He said that kids could protect each other by banding together—he had the idea to give the naked kid an innocuous Reasonable Request and that protects them from being forced to do a nasty one. So extending that idea, if kids could be

naked in a bunch together; they wouldn't become lone targets of opportunity for abuse and could mutually support each other. Jen is constantly telling me—yeah, Jen, you do slip nudism into our chats all the time—she tells me that what happens at your resort; it's respect and acceptance for everyone, is basically what the Program seems to want to teach kids. Except that the perverts in power added the sex shit and humiliation on top of that, which of course are its biggest cringe factors. So get lots of kids to agree to go naked and that takes all of the terror out of having to be naked in the school. 'Cause lots of kids are too. Right?"

"Jeez, Drew, that's a really awesome way to make that idea work," Wilma said. "Hey, maybe we *can* do something with that idea at our school. If we can come up with a plan before school starts and, um, then we could have the *students* take the Program over and then *we'd* run it how we wanted!"

"But how would you convince kids to get naked if there's no one forcing them, Drew?" Connor asked.

Drew shrugged. "I guess that would need a lot of planning and ... um ... a core group who are willing to get naked? To show that it's fun, not humiliating, no one's a target for groping or abuse. It could also skip any class demos which are certainly totally unnecessary. Am I right?" she asked.

"Say... maybe there's an idea there," Sherrill mused. "Wilma, you know how some of our non-nudist friends are so curious about what we do at the resort?"

"Sure, when we get back from vacation, they all want detailed reports," Wilma nodded. "You think that we could convert them to... um," she giggled, "to the dark side?"

Wilma and Sherrill looked at Connor and Drew speculatively.

Drew grinned and shook her head. "Hey, I might have gotten the idea, but don't include me—us." She pointed to Connor.

"Yeah, Drew," Sherrill said, looking at her with curiosity. "How come you guys don't come to the resort with Jen and Mike? Oh, that's right; Jen told us that you play in a summer soccer league, is that why?"

"Uh huh, basically. The league runs from mid-June to mid-August. Then it's time for the high school team practices. Also, Connor's got his summer job. But I don't know if Jen told you anything about my personal view of public nudity. I think it's fine if you want to do it, Program crap excepted, but it's not for me. That's how my moral sense feels, anyway."

"Oh... jeez, too bad," Wilma shrugged. "But if you get picked for the Program next year...?"

"Got that covered. I have a statement in my school file claiming a religious Program exemption."

"But that was in Pennsylvania. What if they don't accept it here?"

"Ah, they have to. A fed appeals court ruled on those exemptions. I have the decision bookmarked; let me check on my phone... Here we go. They based the decision on a 1972 Supreme Court case, Wisconsin versus Yoder. It was about a Wisconsin compulsory school

attendance law that required school attendance through the twelfth grade. But Amish parents refused to obey; they said that the law conflicted with their religious beliefs. And the Court agreed, saying that law violated their First Amendment rights to freely exercise their religion. On the Pennsylvania Program injunction decision, the appeals court based their finding mostly on the Yoder case and they held that a personal, deeply held religious belief in modesty must be allowed as an exemption from being forced to be in the Program.”

“But you won’t be living in that community next fall,” Sherrill objected.

“No, but when I move, I won’t be leaving my personal beliefs behind,” Drew told her. “They’re part of me and not connected to any church back there.”

“Damn, I guess that’s true,” Sherrill conceded. “Say, I have another...”

Just then, Brenda called that dinner was ready and everyone should come. The conversation stopped at that point and the teens trooped into the dining room. They all enjoyed the dinner and the Ritter “extended” family appreciated learning interesting details about their new community.

“And tomorrow, you’ll learn about the high school,” Frank told the two teens later as the family prepared to leave. “Wilma will pick you up, when, Wilma?”

“Starts at 8:30 so from the hotel, um, to be safe, I’ll come at 8:00. It’s ten minutes away and five to ten minutes to park, max. Then fifteen in the office to get guest permissions.”

Back at the hotel, Jennifer wanted to talk to Drew about their conversation with Wilma and Sherrill.

“I saw them making you a little uncomfortable, Drew. They’re really pro-nudism... um, guess I am too, right?”

Drew nodded, smiling. “Actually that discussion didn’t bother me. Too much. You got me used to your talking about the activities you do at your resort. I know that every time you used to mention nudism, I would change the subject. I guess that I’m just so touchy about it, you know? I’ve tried to think of why I feel that way and I have some ideas. Of course the biggest reason is that assault and I still get a feeling of terror and foreboding when I recall it. I get that terror when something reminds me of that time and seeing the Program nudity reminded me big time about it. And the abuses of the kids I saw made it all worse too. And then there’s my religious feelings about public nudity, like about what it says in the Bible, Oh, I know, much of that stuff is allegory, where nudity is the imagery for humiliation and degradation. But I think that the attack I had bolsters the feeling that being naked in public is wrong, and that wrongness was reinforced by seeing those naked kids getting abused and attacked, even injured, *just because they were naked and only because they were naked.*”

Drew emphasized those last phrases.

“Damn, Drew, I can see that, sure,” Jennifer told her. “It’s a real shame that you didn’t get counseling after that happened.”

“Uh huh, the woman police detective who spoke to me afterwards had strongly recommended it back then, but my father insisted that I had tempted that attack and that I didn’t need someone to

tell me any different.”

“Shit, I just don’t understand how someone can be so callous and unsympathetic. Even if he didn’t love you as his child, having sympathy is just human nature.”

“Maybe that proves that the man simply isn’t human?” Drew shrugged.

“You poor girl,” Jennifer said and hugged her. “Anyway, what do you think of my friends?”

“Hey, I like them. They seem to be really confident and mature. If their friends are like them, we’ll be very happy at their high school. I’m looking forward to tomorrow’s visit.”

## Chapter 14 - A New School

The little group arrived in the school at 8:15, and Wilma led them to the school office. She told the secretary that she had visitors and needed guest passes.

“These are Jennifer Ritter, Drew Harper, and Connor Martin,” Wilma told the secretary. “They’re moving to Glen Burnie end of spring from Pennsylvania and will transfer here. They need the info for their school records transfer and guest passes; they want to see what the school is like.”

A woman came out from an office behind the counter and came up to them.

“Well, hello, Wilma and Sherrill. You’re showing off your school to your friends? Hi, I’m Dr Petersmith, the principal. Wilma, please introduce your friends.”

She did and Connor explained that they wanted to see the school to get an idea about what a big school was like, and that Drew wanted to meet the soccer coach if possible.

“Our current high school has close to 1200 kids. This looks much bigger,” he remarked.

“It is; we have not quite double that number, Connor. I heard that your family’s moving from Pennsylvania. But you all have different last names?”

“We do, Dr Petersmith,” Jennifer answered. “My parents are the Ritters, but they’re also the legal guardians for Drew and Connor, who aren’t otherwise related.”

“My goodness, there’s a story there,” Petersmith said. “No time for that now; I see that Mrs Carter has your forms and passes for you. Drew, you play soccer?” She nodded. “I’ll let Ms Adcock know you want to meet her. After the last bell today should be good; if not, I’ll get word to you. Wilma can show you to the athletic department.”

They departed after thanking Petersmith, and Wilma and Sherrill led them to their first period class.

“How come the principal knows you guys?” Jennifer asked. “Such a big school, she can’t know everyone.”

Wilma chuckled. “Not ‘cause we get in trouble. Much, anyway. We’re both in the theater and drama club and act in the school plays, even did a musical last fall. That’s how.”

“You both have the same classes?” Drew asked.

“Yeah, we do this year. They do most everything by the alphabet here—even the assistant principals are assigned kids alphabetically. So unless we choose different electives, we tend to be in the same classes. Here we are.”

They went into the classroom and Wilma handed the guest passes to the teacher.

“They’ll be moving to the area and will transfer here, then start here in the fall,” she told the teacher.

The teacher told the three visitors to take seats in the back and gave the passes back to Wilma. The rest of the class sessions followed the same pattern. In one of them, however, a junior civics

class, the visitors had a chance to participate in the class discussion. Sherrill had mentioned that the guests would be moving from Pennsylvania and the teacher knew something of the religious-challenge court case against the Program in that state. She asked the guests if they were familiar with that affair. They were, of course, and Drew answered.

“We were kinda in the middle of it, ma’am. We live in the area known as the ‘Pennsylvania Dutch Country’ and a huge number of folks are fundamentalist Christians. Like the Amish and Mennonites, but there are lots more sects. Two of the big churches sued the school districts in two counties to stop the Program. They didn’t stop the whole thing, but they did force the feds to agree to allow religious exemptions to anyone who said that the Program violated their beliefs.”

There were gasps and a little applause from the class members at hearing that.

“More than half of the kids in our high school come from religious families, so they claimed the exemption. And when they did, most every other kid, the not-religious ones, found that when ‘Jesus saves,’ He works in more ways than spiritual...”

Kids in the classroom burst into laughter at that.

“...so our region has the largest concentration of Bible-observant kids in the entire country now.”

More laughter. When it stopped, the teacher complimented Drew.

“That was a most excellent impromptu report, Drew...”

Applause.

“... and it clearly illustrates, class, the function of the judiciary in its checks-and-balances relationship to the legislature and executive branches. Who can tell the class where this court case limited the operation of the Program at the school level? Okay, Jodie?”

Jodie answered, “Congress was limited a little because I guess that the law was too broad and they didn’t think of limiting it so it wouldn’t adversely affect who we learned are ‘protected classes’ of people. And that Program office—it’s in the Executive Branch—they wrote regulations that were too harsh and restrictive, like we heard that they don’t even allow medical exemptions. So the court made them allow a religious one.”

“Excellent analysis, Jodie. And as far as medical exemptions, the media is chock full of reports of legal challenges to the OSA, coming out of many states, seeking to receive such an exemption. Finally, as you all are aware, our own school is the center of a legal battle over providing security and protection for student Program participants against assaults or other kinds of threats. The final hearings on that case are set for this June. Can anyone give us another example of where a court decision overturned either a law or an agency regulation?”

And the class continued as the students answered and discussed the teacher’s questions. After the class, Connor told Wilma and Sherrill that he thought that the teacher was really good and they agreed.

“Lots of the teachers here are pretty much okay. There are a few who are so boring that it’s hard to keep awake in class.”

“Um, Sherrill, about the teachers,” Drew began, “In my first high school—where Connor and I met—we saw the Program in action and a number of the teachers there enjoyed humiliating the naked kids. If the Program starts here, can you think of any teacher like that? But wait a sec before your answer. People like that are kind of sadists but they can keep that part of their character hidden. Oh yeah... I got to hear all of my pastor’s anti-Program sermons and in one, he used a hundred-dollar word. I liked it so much that I memorized it. Pastor said that some people get off on seeing or causing someone else’s misfortune; he called that ‘schadenfreude,’ comes from German, meaning ‘joyful damage.’ Pastor told me that people like that can dehumanize the person experiencing the humiliation. So, any teachers like that?”

Sherrill looked at Wilma and they both shrugged. “Can’t think of any offhand,” Wilma said thoughtfully.

At their brief lunch period, Wilma and Sherrill got the chance to introduce their guests to more of their friends, and that’s when Sherrill decided to put the voluntary nudity idea out there.

“You guys are always asking us about our nudist resort—what it’s like, what we do there, right?”

They nodded.

“Oh, hey, here’s Danny and Art—sit down, guys—shift some butts to give them room! Guys, these are Jen, Drew, Connor, the guys here are Art, my BF, and Danny, who’s Wilma’s. Guys, we were talking about how you all want to know what we do at our nudist resort. You two especially keep asking—and I keep telling you, you want to know? Just come with us when we go! We love it there and you would too. Anyway.

“What I wanted to tell you all is about that stupid Naked in School Program that’s coming—you know that it’s almost certain that it’s gonna start here next term. I told you about Jen, Drew, and Connor; they’re gonna be transferring here in the fall. So Drew got this rad idea about dealing with the Program from talking to Jen, who also goes to our resort. Last summer at our resort, we got to talking about the Program coming to Maryland schools and one kid put an off-the-wall comment out there that made sense to the kids there who heard it. When she got home, Jen mentioned the comment to Drew.

“Anyway, yesterday the five of us were talking about the Program—they had it in their current school but it got stopped by a court injunction, kinda like what happened here—and we were trying to figure out how to cope with having to handle the dumb thing when it starts up in the fall. And that’s when Drew reminded us of that kid’s remark from last summer—it could definitely be a way to counter the Program’s abuses. You’ve all heard about the abuses, the random humiliation and unwanted groping. See, you guys ask us why we’re not scared or embarrassed to be nude with lots of other people at our resort. It’s simple. Just about everyone there is nude too, so it’s the *clothed* ones who get noticed, ‘cause they’re different.

“Drew reminded us about what that guy said: it basically was like, ‘why not bring the nudism culture from the resort to the school?’ The Program is nothing like nudism, you know. Our nudist friends who had to be in the Program in the other high schools around the Baltimore area hated it, even though they were very used to being nude in mixed company. They told me that their experiences were simply awful, ‘cause of that groping and fondling and being dragged and shit

like that, and by having to do gross sexual poses and in classroom demos.

“Now you know that *every single one of you* will have to get naked during some week this coming school year. When the school delayed the running of the Program here last fall, they told us that when it does start up, with our class sizes of up to 600 kids, they’ll need to strip a huge number of us each week—and next school year, when we’re all seniors, they need to get through all 600 during the 35-week school year. Yeah, I looked it up ‘cause I was curious. There are five weeks with a one-day holiday during those weeks, so that leaves just thirty full weeks for 600 senior kids to be in the Program. So that means there’d need to be at least twenty seniors each week, plus the underclassmen that get picked—they don’t need to pick as many of those each week ‘cause they’ve got more school years to go. Juniors, they’d need to pick six every week. So they would need to pick maybe thirty kids to be naked each week.”

“Damn, you think that they’d do that?” Danny asked.

Sherrill replied, “Almost definitely—they chose lots of seniors when the Program began in the other schools where our friends go, and I also heard that on the first week, they made the first group of kids strip on stage in front of the entire school. At least they can’t do that super humiliating on-stage stripping here—all four grades of students can’t fit in our auditorium at the same time...”

“But they could in the field house...” Chuck, one of the boys at the table, interrupted.

“Only if they brought in maybe 2300 to 2400 chairs, like they do when they use it for graduation. Can you imagine the mob scene with 2400 kids milling around and they tried to get some of them to go up to that little platform and strip there? That’d never happen.”

“Um, guess you’re right.”

“So back to Drew’s idea that Wilma, Jen, and I were thinking about. Maybe we can even preempt the way they pick kids to be in the Program. Since everyone will have to be nude at some point, why not make nudity so common in the school that it’s normal? Um, you know, it’ll be **neat** to make **nudity** the **new normal now**.”

She emphasized the “n”s to highlight the alliteration and the others laughed.

“Good slogan, Sherrill.” Wilma chuckled. “Nudity’s the new normal now. I like it!”

“Yeah, well, if we do that, we can take control of the Program ourselves, right?” Sherrill went on. “If there are large numbers of naked kids hanging together, the group can protect its members. There wouldn’t be a chance for anyone to do those stupid ‘reasonable requests’ that I heard such bad things about, ‘cause bystanders would have no idea who the Program kids are. A lot of naked kids in the classrooms can completely disrupt any demos a teacher tries, and all those kids can cover for each other too. Same with the opposite-sexes in the lockers.”

The others got thoughtful looks, and one of the girls, Rachel, asked her, “It’s a radical idea, Sherrill, but it’s challenging for me to even think about my getting naked. How did you do it for your first time, anyway?”

“My father and uncle grew up in a nudist family and our families kept it up. So I was always a

nudist. But noobs who come, when they see everyone nude, they just join in and in no time at all, they're comfortable in their birthday suit. Say, Wilma, what about this idea? We can see if the resort can give special passes for teens who will have the naked Program in their schools. Then... ah... these tentative textile teens... ha, ha, get that one? ... will get a chance to experience nudity the way it's meant to be? Guys, what do you think of that?"

Laughter, then among the group there were lots of nods of approval, but some kids were still uncertain.

"Remember, you're a senior coming this fall, so, guaranteed, you'll *have* to be naked when your name comes up, and then you'll *have* to deal with it alone. With this idea, everyone's together to support each other."

"Great suggestion, Sherrill," Wilma told her and the others agreed. "Guys, the bell is about to ring. Spread the word about this. We'll thwart the Program by overwhelming it. We won't submit to it—we'll simply take it over!"

When the bell rang, Wilma and Sherrill said their good-bys to Danny and Art, and they all left for their next classes.

Two of the kids, Rachel and Lois, were among those who were a little uncertain. While they walked along with Sherrill, Wilma, and the others in the direction of their next classrooms, they asked for some more reassurance about how they could face the impending public nudity.

Rachel asked, "I'm sure you're right about all of us eventually having to be naked, but it's still a difficult thing to do. I'm still not sure..."

Jennifer broke in, "I'm still kind of an outsider here, so I don't know how this suggestion will fly, but I know of some kids in my school who were scared of the idea of the nudity of the Program before the religious exemptions became the thing to do. They started sleeping naked and spending naked time in their house or even just their room. I heard that kinda helped them a bit."

"Huh. That's a good suggestion," Rachel replied. "Maybe I'll try that and see. The resort idea is kind of intriguing too; Wilma, you guys are always talking about all the dope things to do there."

"It *is* a lit place. I hope this idea of overwhelming student nudity will work."

Lois was walking along with them too and she also agreed that trying out private nudity just might help her, and then they split off to go to their own classrooms.

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After the bell ending their final class period, Wilma and Sherrill led the visitors to the athletic offices and found Coach Adcock waiting for them, and immediately her eyes lit on Drew.

"Hello there, I'm Coach Adcock. Dr Petersmith told me that you'll be transferring schools from Pennsylvania—I do recognize Sherrill and Wilma. Hi there to both of you, too. These gals are pretty capable volleyball players but we weren't able to convince them to try out for the team. So, Drew, is it? You're clearly athletic."

Drew nodded. "Yes, Coach. My guardians—Connor's too..." she took his hand, "are moving here

in June. I've been playing soccer since I was nine, both community leagues and varsity. My usual position is in D, a fullback, but since I have great speed and fast reactions, my coaches use me as a stopper or center-back. Wing-back in some formations 'cause I can attack on breakaways. Here's a sheet with my stats."

Drew handed her the copy and she read it.

When the coach looked up, her face wore a surprised expression.

"Drew, these are top stats. I can see from them why you were picked for first team all-state, and why the Prep-to-Pro site named you one of the top five top defensive players in the state. Your stats are simply amazing."

"Well, we were a strong team in a comparatively weaker region. We did have a harder time against the schools from bigger cities."

"What kind of stats does a defensive player have?" Wilma asked. "I only know about goals, assists, and goalie saves."

"Okay, Wilma, maybe this will get you out to see some soccer games next year then. Defensive players have different metrics based on their control of the opposition. Drew's first stat is pass completion percentage, that's 79 percent, which is astounding. That's passes completed divided by passes attempted. Like a batting average. The next is similar, her dribble success rate, which is 81 percent. That means she has an outstanding ability to keep control of the ball and not lose it to the opponent. Two other super numbers are her ability to steal the ball—her successful tackle rate is an incredible 73 percent, which shows that she has great reflexes, and she averages interceptions at just over four per game. And for a D player, her goals scored of 0.9 per game and assists at 2.4 per game would look awfully good for a mid-fielder."

"Connor says she's fast too," Sherrill added.

"She certainly is. Drew, you must wear a soccer tracker, right?"

"Sure, that's where they got those speed and distance metrics," Drew answered.

"Okay, Sherrill, Drew's really fast. She's been timed sprinting at 23.3 kilometers per hour and running longer distances at 19.8 kilometers per hour. That running speed, kept up for a mile, converts to, ah, something like a five-minute mile. Sprinting, she's close to a four-minute mile."

The others looked at Drew in awe.

Drew laughed. "C'mon, guys, I can't run a whole mile that fast. That's just my sprinting speed."

"Let's put this in soccer perspective," the coach told them. "The distance a fullback would need to run from their penalty area to the opponent's is about 80 meters. Drew could run that distance in nine to twelve seconds. She could easily outrace her opponent's midfielders with her speed. Drew, that must be the source of your goals and assists?"

"Sure, Coach. I do it on steals and interceptions and I'm traveling past the centerline before their midfield players can reach me to mark me."

At the girls' curious looks, she explained what "marking" meant.

"Coach, I have some videos on my phone of Drew playing," Connor told her and showed her some clips of Drew's play.

Adcock watched and her smile grew to a broad grin as she saw how some of Drew's moves left her opposition either flat-footed or sprawled on the pitch, having tripped over their own feet trying to recover from Drew's dribbling moves and fakes.

"I rarely see a high school girl with your dribbling talent, Drew. Some of those moves—that Zidane roulette I saw, for example—are hard to master, and in those clips, you were doing them at your running speed. You could be a great striker too, but with your dribbling, passes, steals, and interceptions, you're more valuable at playing D. Killing an opponent's attack gives your O more possession time, after all.

"It would be fabulous having you play on the Glen Burnie Gophers team. We'll need to certify your eligibility, so let me get you the eligibility verification form that our state high school athletic association uses; you'll need to complete it and get it signed by your current school's athletic director. Okay, it's been a real pleasure meeting you and our conversation's been great. Keep in touch—here's my card—and we'll see you when you get here to register in the school."

"Thanks, Coach; thanks for seeing me today. I'll let you know when we get moved in here. Bye."

The others said their farewells too and they all left. Sherrill and Wilma borrowed Connor's phone to watch Drew's videos and were greatly impressed.

On Saturday, while the Ritter parents dealt with the house purchase, Drew, Connor, and Jennifer got together with Sherrill and Wilma and eight of the cousins' friends to discuss their attempt to, as Wilma put it, to "turn the damn school into a frikkin' nudist facility." Convincing a number of the Maryland kids to consider it wasn't too difficult, since public nudity had been becoming increasingly common. With the expansion of the number of cities that hosted events like the World Naked Bike Ride, the increased publicity and popularity of Naked Hiking Day, growing observance of National Nude Day in numerous communities, and the prevalence of naked Outreach activities by kids in the Program, seeing occasional public nudity had become less unusual. Most kids knew this and accepted it, but a number of their other friends were more uncertain. However, the idea of mutual support from other naked kids was far more acceptable than the idea of suffering through the experience as a solo participant. Wilma's group made plans to recruit more kids to form a core for the nascent movement to co-opt the Program. They would organize kids to help during the rest of the term and into the summer.

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The Ritter family returned to Pennsylvania on Sunday and as they traveled, they began to discuss the week.

"Mom, look," Timmy said soon after they left the hotel and were driving past a shopping mall.

"There are naked kids going into the stores over there! And when we were riding around to go to the other houses we looked at, I saw naked kids on the streets then too. Why are they naked?"

Eva turned around in her seat and looked at Drew.

“Want to answer that one, Drew?”

“Not really, but okay. Timmy, you heard us talking about the Naked in School Program... Remember when you went with Tracy and the twins to play video games? She didn’t want to stay.”

“Uh huh...”

“So one part of the Naked in School Program is called ‘Outreach,’ and the kids are supposed to go to places outside the school and be naked there. Like shops, malls, parks, on the streets, in their homes. It’s supposed to build their confidence in their body and appearance.”

“Huh. That’s weird,” Timmy said after a few seconds’ thought.

“I totally agree,” Drew told him and the others in the car agreed too.

“So did Tracy, Jessica, and Robert tell you about their middle school, Timmy?” Eva asked.

“Yeah, Mom. It’s gucci that I’ll know kids there when I go, and they said that they’d have me meet their friends too. Maybe moving won’t be too bad.”

“I’m sure you’ll find that it won’t be and you’ll make new friends. It’ll be exciting to see new places too, right?”

“I guess, Dad.”

Several minutes later, Frantz began to tell the others how the moving of the family was only a small part of his changing jobs.

“This is a huge opportunity for me,” he explained. “While the Penn State medical school is excellent, the Hopkins one is world-class and they have a children’s hospital too; they’re in the top five in the country in my specialty, endocrinology. I’ve got lots to do at home now. I need to get working on transferring my NIH—that’s National Institutes of Health—research grant from Penn State to Hopkins...”

“Dad, doesn’t it just move with you?” Jennifer asked.

“No, dear. The grants are made to the institution and the person who applied for them is just in charge of the work, not managing the funding, the accounting, and payroll process. The person who’s in charge of the actual research work is called the principal investigator, or PI. To change institutions, I’ll need to submit a progress report and write a mini-application to certify that I’ll still have the appropriate facilities and have the new institution’s permission to do the work, and mention any plans to modify the research’s objectives for the conditions at the new institution. Since I use patient data in my work, there’s also a new institutional review board approval process that’s needed. Lots of paperwork, see?”

“Also, we’re not the only ones affected by my changing jobs, you know—I’ve got five others involved with my moving. They’re paid from my grant and I need to look after them. First, there’s Janille, my PA. I spoke to her after I accepted the job offer and told her that if she wanted

to move, to stay on my project, I'd hire her there. She's divorced and told me that she'd most likely do that. I have a research tech, a secretary, a postdoc, and an MD-PhD student too. The tech and secretary are able to transfer to another project. I've arranged for the student to move to a collaborator's closely related project but I'll stay on her committee and do her progress meetings by Zoom. Finally, my postdoc is still considering what to do, but will probably move. Depends on his spouse's decision and her own job."

"Wow, Dad, I had no idea..." Jennifer told him.

"No reason for you to know, honey, but with college approaching in just over a year, you'll need to get to know some of the facts of life—ah, not the ones that the Program seems to want to teach, that is."

"Yeah, right, Dad. So true. So when will we actually move?"

"That's something we need to talk about. The hospital wants me there by May 15. We have a purchase contract pending on our current house and the buyer wants possession on June 1. Timmy, your middle school classes are essentially over by then; there are mostly exam days afterward, so we can have you take your tests earlier. The last day of high school is June 6. What we thought of doing, and this is up to Drew and Connor, is that Eva and I, with Timmy, would move the household to Maryland in mid-May and Eva and Timmy would move into the new home then. That's if Jennifer could stay with you, Drew and Connor, for the last two or three weeks of school, Connor has his license so he can use one of our cars. Then you'd join us after June 6—Connor could drive you down there."

Drew looked at Jennifer, then Connor, who both nodded their agreement.

"We can do that, Frantz," Connor told him. "We can work out the details."

"Jen can stay in my room," Drew said. "We can share the queen bed or I can go to Connor's room."

"You okay with sharing..." Eva began and then interrupted herself. "Of course you are; you sleep together in the guest room downstairs."

"We do. But no hanky-panky goes on there, Eva. Yet," Drew said as she smiled, took Connor's hand, and winked at him.

Drew had gotten to love their oral-sex sessions. She was still reluctant to go further and didn't want to trust a condom.

*I need to find out more about contraception, she mused. I hate the idea of taking hormones. Possibly an IUD?*

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Back at home, Drew looked at the calendar on her phone.

"Moving in June means I'll miss playing in the community league, sweetie," she told Connor. "I haven't missed a summer before."

“Let’s see whether there’s a summer opportunity in Maryland,” Connor suggested. “Check the dates if there is something.”

A few minutes later, Drew said, “Damn, look at this. There’s a Nike summer soccer camp being held this summer right in Glen Burnie! The head coach is from a local college. I wonder if Coach Adcock knows about it—of course she must. I’ll shoot her an email.”

The following day, school resumed, and since it was mid-April, everyone was looking forward to warmer weather. In the home-room class, they got a surprise. The principal, in an announcement over the P.A. system, told the students that the federal Program officials were making a last-gasp attempt to salvage the Program at central Pennsylvania schools, all of which now had all students on religious exemptions from participating.

“We were informed,” Dr Slater spoke, “that Program officials will be visiting the high schools in our five-county region, beginning at 10 a.m. tomorrow, to interview those students who have refused to participate in the Program. We were not told anything of their intentions, but our school board members believe that they will be attempting to assess pupils’ sincerity in their religious beliefs. I personally feel that even doing that is a violation of one’s religious freedom. While we can’t forbid them access to our campus, our school board suggests that you do not discuss your Program participation with an outsider unless you have a parent present. In fact, you have the right not to speak about your beliefs at all. I’ve been advised not to put this advice in writing, so please let your parent or guardian know what I have just said. Your teachers will have the notice letters for the students selected to be interviewed. That’s all; have a good morning and a productive day in your studies.”

There was an outburst of shocked surprise from class members at hearing that and Drew leaned over to Connor, saying, “Holy shit, guess he’s a good guy—a supporter of our rights. Who knew? Hey, do you know if we were even selected to participate?”

Connor just shrugged.

At the end of the day, Drew dropped off her Glen Burnie eligibility form at the athletic department and went to see Coach Aberman to tell her that she’d be moving at the end of the term.

“I heard that, Drew; I got a call from Coach Adcock from your Maryland school earlier today. She wanted some info about you. She’ll get in touch with you later. I’m really sad that you’ll be leaving us. You’ve got a bright future in soccer.”

“Thanks, Coach. Leaving’s not my choice; my guardian’s family is relocating. I hate to leave too.”

“Well, please stop by to say farewell before you take off for good, okay?”

“Absolutely, Coach. Thanks for all you’ve done for me too; you really helped me improve my game.”

She departed and later that afternoon, Drew got a return email from Coach Adcock. She told Connor about it.

“Coach says that she’s actually one of the supervising staff for that camp. And they’re looking for skilled players for teaching and coaching. She didn’t think of it while I was visiting there since she’s never had a high-school kid skilled enough, but that camp still has a few openings for counselors who can play and teach. They’re waiting to hear from a few college kids who were on staff last summer if they can work this summer; they can’t wait much longer so that’s why they have some openings still.

“She called Coach Aberman today and asked her if she thought I could teach and Coach told her how I’ve been teaching kids how to improve their dribbling and teaching my fancy moves to those who are more advanced. And how she gave me field control of our D during games so that she could concentrate on the O players. So Adcock wrote to me that she wants to hire me as a counselor-coach for the Nike soccer camp! And I get paid too! And the camp dates fit just about perfectly. I’ll be able to play in demo games and in scrimmages too, so this is sooo perfect.”

Drew was hopping with excitement and when Connor hugged her, she melted in his arms.

“What great news, darling. Hey, I have news too. At swimming today in P.E., the swimming coach saw me doing laps. I was blowing off energy after hearing about that new Program crap; that annoyed me so much that I had to just pop off. When I had done six laps, he got my attention and asked if I could do the other strokes. I was free-styling for my laps. So I showed him that I could do the other strokes too, and I do them pretty well, I must say. You know? He wants me to try out for the swim team. So I had to tell him that I was moving. But I got to thinking... That’s a winter sport, so maybe I’ll try out for the Glen Burnie team. You never know, right?”

Drew chuckled. “Hey, maybe you’ll find that you’re an Olympic-class swimmer.”

They both laughed and Connor held out his arms to her. Drew went over to him and they pulled each other into an embrace as they kissed. She squealed when Connor scooped her up and carried her to her bedroom, where he deposited her on her bed. Then he put a knee on the bed as he leaned over her to resume their kissing, their tongues wrestling each other’s enthusiastically.

Drew moaned with lust and whispered, “Want you naked now,” and then she sat up, pulled Connor down onto the bed with her, and began to attack his clothing. Since he was just wearing sweat-pants and a tee-shirt, she made quick work of his garments, which she threw onto the floor, and bent over him for another kiss. While they kissed, Connor reached his hands over to her groin and began stroking her vulva through the cloth of her shorts, and he realized that her crotch had become quite damp.

Connor reached up and, with a quick jerk, pulled Drew’s shorts down her legs and was startled to see that she wasn’t wearing panties—and then he saw the thong.

Ohmygod, it’s one of my fantasies! he thought. *A naked gal in only a thong!*

“Jeez, lover,” he gasped, “you’re just the hottest gal I’ve ever seen... please, let’s stand. I gotta see you in that thong!”

“Is that a Reasonable Request, then? You want me to do a naughty pose?” Drew giggled.

“Shit—I just want to do all kinds of naughty and unreasonable things, and every one with you,

doll.”

They both stood up and after Connor pulled Drew’s top off; she smirked at him, raised her arms over her head and sinuously twisted them together, and slowly twirled while he looked at her in awe and ill-concealed lust.

When she completed her turn, she looked at him and laughed. “You can put your tongue back in your mouth now, sweetie.”

“Damn, I’m burning that image into my brain for forever,” Connor panted. “That was the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen!”

He took her in his arms again and together they sunk down onto the bed, where Connor quickly divested her of the thong.

A brief thought flashed through his mind, *I wonder if she’ll let me keep it and I’ll frame it?* But he dismissed the thought. *Nah. She’ll think that’s too kinky.*

Connor lay back now and pulled Drew on top of his chest so that her muscular but awesome butt was near his head. He had long wondered what doing a “69” was like and this was his chance. He slid his hand around her left buttock globe and marveled at its delightful shape and how firm the underlying muscles were. Then he moved his hand into the crease between her cheeks, then further down to her hot core. Yes, she was truly soaked there. With his fingers, he spread apart her labia to reveal her protruding clit and again was amazed at its size and how much it resembled a miniature penis. As his fingers manipulated her vulva, Drew moaned and pulled her mouth off his cock—he hadn’t even realized that she was sucking it; he was so absorbed in the marvel of her femininity.

Drew spread her legs apart then and that allowed Connor to pull her groin down so he could bury his mouth into the heat between her labia. He spent a minute tonguing her and stroking around her clit with his fingers as he felt Drew’s mouth once again capture his cock. That’s when he decided to step up her stimulation, so he stretched his head up and seized her protruding clit with his lips and squeezed them hard on the little organ.

That got the desired result; Drew squealed, gasped and shuddered as she strained to clamp her legs together, but Connor’s position was now holding them widely apart. He ran his fingers around and around the sensitive little organ, and saw that, indeed, Mrs Steward was right; the clitoris did retract somewhat into its prepuce during an orgasm.

Let’s see what it does with more orgasms, he wondered, and began licking her and rubbing around her clitoris as fast and as randomly as he could, while Drew kept gasping, moaning, and quivering while he brought her through two more orgasms, one quickly following another. Pushing a finger rapidly in and out of her vagina while sucking hard on her clit brought her to a third crashing orgasm but she was nearing exhaustion now and was screeching with orgasmic release, her entire pelvis was now wracked with spasming and she was trying to close her thighs together but couldn’t.

Drew couldn’t take any more stimulation and cried at Connor to stop.

“Yaaaaah Con... Connor...! *Aaahh*, oh, oh, stop... *unhh... ahh ...* too sensitive... *uuhh... please stooooooppp!*”

Connor reluctantly pulled away and let Drew slide bonelessly off his chest onto the bed.

“*Oooooohhh... oh, lover... ahhh ...* that was ... sooo good...” Drew moaned when she could catch her breath. “You had me so wound up that I couldn’t take care of your gorgeous cock,” she whispered as she closed her hand over his erection.

Connor shivered and moaned as Drew began to stroke him gently at first, then she began a steady, two-handed jacking motion. She raised herself up onto all fours alongside Connor and continued the jacking for another thirty seconds and then, with a moan, she moved her head down and took him into her mouth as deeply as she could, while pressing her tongue against the bulging tube along the bottom of his shaft.

Stopping to catch a breath and releasing his penis, Drew redoubled her sucking efforts while she continued working both hands up and down his shaft below her mouth. Connor began groaning and his pelvis started making involuntary fucking motions when Drew pulled back to lick his cock’s frenulum and started licking and swirling her tongue around its corona. Connor put his hand on the top of her head and began running his fingers through her hair, which she had let grow out to shoulder length. Groaning with the intense sensations coming from his cock, Connor moved his hands over Drew’s shoulders and down her spine to her butt to caress her there.

Connor’s hips began jerking violently when she suddenly began humming as she lashed her tongue over his crown and tickled the frenulum, while using her hands to stroke him. With an anguished moaning growl at his building sensations, Connor finally released.

Drew could feel Connor’s erection quickly begin to bulge and stiffen even more and its underside swelled as Connor grunted, his entire body became rigid, and he suddenly exploded into Drew’s welcoming mouth. The first volley almost surprised her with its force, but the several following hot, pulsing ropes of cum poured out of Connor with far more force as he grunted with each spasm. Then his shuddering jets turned to several soft spasms as his remaining cum oozed out of his cock while Drew gently stroked him and soon Connor once more became aware of his surroundings.

“Holy fuck, lover,” Connor gasped as he caught his breath. “Shit, what an incredible BJ. You were inspired—you must have been horny!”

“You really turned me on tonight, lover,” Drew sighed tiredly. “I’m done.”

They both slept well that night.

Chapter 15 - Farewells

All during that week, students were being summoned to the little conference room next to the office to be interviewed by the Program officials. The two teens heard from some of the kids who had been interviewed on the first few days, and indeed, they had been asked to justify their religious exemptions. The students had followed Slater's advice and told the officials basically nothing. Many had responded to the questioners with one biblical verse after another until the questions stopped, while others had simply stone-walled the officials and said nothing at all. At the week's end, both Drew and Connor learned that, indeed, they had been selected for the Program.

On Friday morning, their home-room teacher handed both of them official notice letters that their interviews were scheduled for Monday morning and they could have their guardians present—that's how they first learned that they had been a potential Program participant. They found out that their names had been posted on the office bulletin board on two different weeks in January, but since nobody ever looked at those lists, the two of them weren't aware that they had been selected. Since they had previously filed their written claim for a religious exemption, their participation was waived when they didn't appear in response to their names being posted. That was a strange way of handling the Program participant selections, but it's how the process had developed.

After discussing the pending interviews with Frantz, they decided to act as each other's "guardian" and Frantz gave them a short letter to formalize his "appointment."

Drew was summoned for her interview first, at the beginning of the second period, and Connor went along with her. There were two people waiting in the room, a man and a woman.

"Who are you?" the woman asked as Connor entered. "This interview is to be with Drew Harper."

"Our guardian designated me as his representative for Drew," Connor said, giving the woman his letter.

"You can't be her..." the man began but Connor interrupted, holding his hand up.

"Stop. You can't dictate who a student has for representation. And what you're doing is essentially illegal, asking us to justify our religious beliefs; it's a violation of the federal injunction. We're here, so start your interview. Oh, to save time, you can ask us both, because you scheduled me for this morning too."

After a bit of grumbling and paper shuffling, the man began.

"You... well, both of you... were chosen to take part in the Naked in School Program here but you both claimed a religious exemption. What church do you belong to and what's the basis of your claim for modesty?"

Drew looked at Connor and he nodded.

"Those questions violate my right to practice religion free of governmental interference," Drew answered. "Next question?"

The woman asked, “Why do you believe that your religion gives you the right to ignore the law?”

Connor spoke up. “I’ll answer for the both of us. Refer to the Supreme Court’s decision on the Yoder case and the federal appeals decision in the Stony Brook Mennonite Church case. That’s all I’ll say on that question.”

“I agree,” Drew said. “Do you have anything else for us?”

“All of the students here refuse to answer these questions—and now you are too. You are required to answer them...” the woman began but Drew cut her off.

“Required by who? If you claim that you, as a rep of an agency of the U.S. government, are requiring answers, then we will cite the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as our basis for refusals. That’s all, we’re done. Any further answer is ‘no comment.’”

“But you...”

The objection was cut off as Drew closed the door when they left the room.

“I wonder what they intend by this fishing expedition?” Drew mused.

“Only thing I can think of is intimidation,” Connor responded. “Hey, why didn’t I think to contact Wayne about this? Let me send him a text and a copy of the notice to appear for the Program interview.”

He did, and when school ended in the afternoon, Connor got the reply. He showed the text to Drew.

You’re correct; what they’re doing is a violation of the federal court injunction. I had my governmental affairs specialist contact the federal district court. The lead judge in this case was highly annoyed, so the court is invoking the federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4.1(a); those interview activities actually constitute criminal contempt, and your Program interviewers can expect a visit from a deputy U.S. marshal tomorrow or Wednesday. He or she’ll have a summons and a cease and desist order. Let me know if something else happens.

“Super!” Drew exulted. “Too bad you didn’t think of that sooner.”

“So where were you, darling? You’re the one who’s got the brains here.”

At lunch Tuesday, the room was buzzing with excited conversation. An earlier interview session with one of the kids had been interrupted when two federal marshals entered the room, served the summonses, and escorted the two Program officials out of the school. He was telling everyone all about it, in detail. One could forgive him if some of the details were slightly embellished.

Drew and Connor looked at each other and smiled, then exchanged a high-five salute. Jennifer and their other table mates looked at them with puzzled expressions and Drew leaned over to Jennifer.

“Tell you later. It’s kinda secret,” she whispered.

Drew told her later in private what they had done.

“But you can’t tell anyone. We don’t want any notoriety, okay? Besides, after what you told us happened to Emma, we don’t want kidnappers hunting for us.”

“Oops, that’s for sure,” Jennifer nodded. “Say, do a couple more of those things against Program officials and you’d catch up to Emma’s record,” she giggled.

“Ah, no thanks. The fewer contacts with those morons, the better. She can be the reigning champ. I give my definite permission.”

They both laughed.

As the end of the school year approached, Drew, Connor, and Jennifer were spending a lot of their free time with their friends and Drew with her teammates. About half of their closest friends were seniors and were graduating. Many were going to Penn State; a few had chosen the nearby Elizabethtown College, and others would be attending several of the other local colleges. Some had chosen schools in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. The twins, Jason and Justin, had chosen Drexel; it was their father’s alma mater, they wanted to study business, and they liked Drexel’s program. They all promised to try to keep in touch with each other.

When the movers got the Ritters’ house packed up and her mother and brother left for Maryland, Jennifer moved into Drew’s and Connor’s apartment for the two-and-a-half weeks remaining in the school term. Frantz had left the family’s SUV for their use and Connor had his bike crated and shipped to Maryland using a motorcycle moving service.

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All the farewells were over. Drew and Connor made their rounds, visiting Pastor Richardson and his wife, Connor’s supervisor and co-workers at the chocolate plant, Drew’s boss at the ice-cream shop, Drew’s coach, and finally, their attorney, Wayne Gelb.

“Wayne, your advice and mentoring has been wonderful; you basically saved us from all kinds of bad things that can happen to runaways,” Drew told him. “I’m sure we’ll need legal help with switching our guardianship to Maryland—should we continue to use you for anything related to that?”

“Actually, Frantz has already begun that process and has the judge’s permission to move. He needs to get a Maryland lawyer to start the guardianship process there. I told him that I’d be glad to consult with an attorney that he selects locally, Drew. Perhaps you could check with Frantz and see who he plans to use; he might have gotten recommendations from the attorney he used for his house purchase. But you wouldn’t want to use a real-estate lawyer; you’d need one specializing in family law.”

Connor spoke up then. “Say, Drew, isn’t Wilma’s father a lawyer?”

“Oh, right, he is. Wayne, one of the good friends of the Ritters in Maryland is a lawyer. We could ask him.”

“That’s excellent. Do you know if he’s in a firm or in solo practice?”

“Um, Wilma said he’s a partner in a law firm.”

“Ah. Give me his name and I’ll look him up. With everything being on line, my professional life’s much simpler.”

“Jay Robbins? His firm’s in Baltimore.”

Gelb worked his keyboard for two minutes.

“Okay, I found him. Tyler, Scott, and Robbins. Full service firm, but they specialize in corporate law. He’s the managing partner. Sure, ask him. Here’s my card to give him; if he takes over your guardianship legal work, I’ll be happy to share what we’ve done.”

It was an emotional farewell when they departed.

Saying farewell to the Robertsons and to Mrs Neumann was the hardest of all for Drew and Connor. In many ways, they had become surrogate parents for the teens and had done so much to help them. They were the last good-byes for the teens before they drove off toward a new life in Maryland.

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“We’ll be right back in the thick of the action in the fall,” Jennifer predicted as Connor drove south on I-83. “Dealing with that damn Program.”

“You could play your religion card—the exemption—you know, and avoid all that garbage,” Drew told her.

“Sure, I could, but it seems so... like cap to do that. I know that just about everyone at Etown High used that exemption, but after moving away from that Bible-quoting area, I think it would feel kinda wimpy to take that way out. And you know that the nudity part isn’t that scary for me—it was the sex shit they heaped on top. Damn, that’s just the right image... pile of shit. So if Wilma and Sherrill get that plan you came up with to work, I’ll be right in there with them making it work.”

Drew chuckled, “Jennifer Ritter, the making of the legend. You go, girl. I’ll be on the sidelines rooting for you all. Say, anyone think of getting input from Emma on the plan to take over the Program? She’s almost a legendary figure herself. Maybe she’d like to hear how Andrew’s idea’s being used.”

“No clue; we’ve been busy with our exams and saying goodbye, so I haven’t been in touch. Maybe I can see if Wilma can talk.”

Jennifer sent a text to Wilma and about five minutes later, her phone rang. She connected the speaker to the car’s audio.

“So hi, Wilma, we’re on the way!”

“Hurray!” Wilma cheered. “How soon will you get here?”

“Connor says with the expected traffic, not quite ninety minutes. It’s been sooo busy with final exams, packing, saying goodbye to everyone, that I haven’t had any time to think about you guys and the planning.”

“Hi, Wilma!” both Connor and Drew called.

“Yeah, hi guys! Can’t wait... this’ll be so, so dope to have you here. Yeah, we have lots of kids interested in the Project... that’s what we’re calling it... but maybe only two dozen who’ll definitely get nude so far. We’ll need hundreds to make it work, though. Lots more kids say they *might* do it.”

“Drew was wondering if Emma knows what you’re doing, since this, um, project, is based on what Andrew said at the resort.”

“Um, no, we didn’t talk to her about that; maybe Sam did. Me and Sherrill were in touch with Sam about what she’s been doing to resist the Program at her school... she lives in Langley Park and that’s at least a half hour away, or more when traffic’s bad. Ha, traffic’s always bad, heading into D.C.”

“I kept in touch with Sam too, Wilma, and told her what you two were trying to do. I’m sure she told Emma about it, so maybe Emma can suggest an idea about how to get kids to go bare for the cause? We need at least a third of the kids in every classroom to be naked—maybe even half—to take control. You think?” Jennifer asked.

“We didn’t get into the numbers yet. Sherrill and I are still in recruiting mode. About ten to fifteen others are so energized by the idea that they’re recruiting too. And, yeah, there’s the whole incoming freshman class we couldn’t talk to, of course; they’re coming from the two middle schools near us. A number of high school kids here have siblings in those middle schools, so we’ve been tapping those contacts. Emma? Maybe. I’ll see what Sherrill thinks. Oh, that’s right. I think that Andrew mentioned that his family goes to the resort on weekends starting late June. But we probably should contact her before that.”

They chatted for several more minutes and then Wilma disconnected to call Sherrill. And just as they arrived in the Baltimore area, Wilma called back.

“Hey, we spoke to Emma and she loves what we plan doing. Actually it’s her... ha, adopted sister Sam, who says the idea’s bussin’. She has some recruiting ideas too, and wants to meet us.”

“When can she meet?” Jennifer asked.

“Weekends. She’s working at a lab in Laurel, a physics lab. Part of Johns Hopkins. She’s actually a professor there now.”

“No cap? Wow. She’s how old? Fifteen now?” Jennifer exclaimed.

“Um, yeah. Remember, she got a Nobel Prize.”

“Oh, that’s right. You did tell us that. You know, we should get right on this ‘cause fall will come real fast if we’re not ready.”

“I hear ya, girl. I’ll see if we can set something up for next weekend. Talk soon; ‘bye.”

They disconnected and Jennifer asked Drew, “When does your camp start?”

“Monday. Coach sent directions to the club where the camp’s held. It’s about three miles from

our new home. It runs from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday.”

When they pulled into the driveway to their new home, Frantz, Eva, and Timmy came out to greet them.

“Hi, kids,” Frantz said as Eva hugged them all. “Let’s give you a hand unloading the back.”

“How’s the new position doing?” Connor asked. “Is it what you expected?”

“It’s far better than I had hoped for, Connor. The people and facilities are simply outstanding. How was your trip?”

“Very smooth, until we got near Baltimore. Reminded me of the traffic back near Boston, but at least the drivers here are courteous. In Boston, the roads are like a war zone; aggression everywhere.”

Frantz chuckled. “I’ve heard that said before.”

Connor’s and Drew’s new home was a small apartment somewhat separate from the rest of the house. It shared just a single wall with the main house and had two levels. There were two bedrooms and a full bath on the upper floor and a kitchen, half-bath, great room, and utility room on the ground floor, a total of almost 1000 square feet. The apartment in Mrs Neumann’s home was slightly larger, but this layout was much better for them. Since their former apartment was furnished and that furniture had to remain there, the Ritters had equipped the new apartment with the furniture from their basement apartment. Connor told the Ritters that he planned to furnish the second bedroom with second-hand items; he refused letting the family pay for any of it. Meanwhile, he and Drew would share a bedroom. They were getting used to sharing a bed.

That evening the three teens visited Sherrill’s house; her house was only a half-mile away and not far from Wilma’s.

“Hi, Sherrill,” Drew greeted her and then Jennifer and Connor did. “We’re kinda moved in but we took a break to come see you and where you lived.”

“Yeah, I saw your new house; it’s dope. Love the private apartment there. Hey, here’s the tea from a bunch of kids in the Project. There are about fifty upperclassmen now who are willing to go naked and several dozen middle-school kids, their sibs mostly, who’ll do it too. And there are over a hundred who’re sitting on the fence. If we can get them to hop off, that will swing a whole bunch more ‘cause we’ll have the momentum then. That’s what Emma and Sam will talk about when we get together. There are more than twenty kids in the Project group who want to meet her.”

“Jeez. Where can we all meet? That’s a huge group,” Jennifer exclaimed.

Sherrill giggled. “Yeah. That’s the surprise. Emma really set up this totally rad arrangement. She’s reserved a clubhouse and we sent out invitations by text to a whole bunch of kids. About eighty said yes, they’ll come. And here’s the invite.”

She grabbed her phone and showed the others the text.

Hey, GBH squaddie! You’re going to be STRIPPED NAKED in school very soon, you know. It’s

coming to town this fall. Want to be prepared and not be scared? Find out how next weekend, Saturday, June 17 at 10 a.m. Come to Pine View Lodge and learn about the Project to Survive the Program. Heads up! Pine View is a nudist resort but you don't have to be naked there, except in the pool. But you do need an ID and if you're under 18, a signed parental note. The note should state that you have permission to go to the Pine View Lodge and the responsible adult is LtCol Stuart Marshall, Royal Marines, chief military attache, British Embassy. You will get to enjoy the resort's facilities FREE. If your parents want to come too, they're invited, and their reduced daily fee will be only \$10 for two adults. See the link below for the resort's website. It contains all the details you'll need plus directions to get there. Learn how we'll BEAT the Program! But doing that needs YOU!

"Goddamn—did Emma arrange all that?" Connor asked in disbelief.

"She's subsidizing the kids' and their parents' fees, actually," Sherrill told him. "She convinced the owners that doing this could bring in a large number of new visitors, plus be great PR for social nudism too. Her family will be there and Stuart is Andrew's dad."

Drew had a thoughtful look and Sherrill noticed it.

"Hey, Jen did tell us that you're not a fan of nudism, but it's really important for you to come, 'cause you suggested the idea that became the Project and you've got all those first-person stories. And the resort's clothing-optional."

"Sure. But there'll be lots of naked people too, and ... well, I gotta have a sit-down discussion with my personal religious beliefs. Ha, it'll be a real 'come-to-Jesus discussion with myself."

"You're really funny, Drew. Oh, almost forgot, so listen to this. Virtually the whole girls' soccer team has signed on to the Project! And they'll be there too. Half of the boys' team is with us too, so far. The resort's sports field has soccer markings and nets, and when the girls found that out, they said that they want to play. They won't play nude, though, since they said that the jersey and shorts give some protection. Besides, if everyone's nude, you can't tell who's the opponent."

"That's true, the clothes do help from getting all scraped up. Shit. Now I'm really conflicted. I'll think about it. Okay?"

"Sure. Hope you will, though. Hey, did you guys get registered at the high school yet?"

"Yep; Mom took care of doing that for me, Drew, and Connor," Jennifer told her. "Etown High had sent a copy of our records to the school here, so she checked them over, had a copy of each page made, and had the office date-stamp each page. Their lawyer said for her to do that; it makes certain that the school can't say like they never got the record if, for example, we don't get credit for a class we took in PA. They told Mom that our counselor will be setting up our senior schedules in a few weeks. Then we'll get a welcome packet with the schedules."

"Cool. I just can't believe that you moved here, girl. We're gonna have a blast at school next year."

The conversation turned to other topics of interest to high-school kids and soon it was time to leave. On the way home, Jennifer asked if she could do anything to help Drew make up her mind

about her going to the nudist resort with them.

“I don’t know, Jen; no cap, people there do wear clothes sometimes?”

“Oh, sure they do. Some adults will wear something occasionally; many women wear cover-ups some of the time, except in the pool, of course. Some teens do, especially girls going into puberty; they get embarrassed at their new boobs. Um, oh, one time, I think it was the season before... no, two seasons ago. Yeah, when I was fifteen. I mention this ‘cause she was about our age, maybe sixteen. Her parents won a cruise on a fund-raising raffle so she and her brother had to stay with her aunt and uncle for ten days.

“I noticed her walking around the grounds only because she was always dressed and always alone and looked really sad. So I introduced myself and Sherrill and Wilma to her and we got to talking. Her aunt and uncle were nudists, and they weren’t gonna skip their vacation time there just because of her. So she had to go to the resort with them and she totally hated the idea. Her brother was ten, so he was just fine, she told us. He found kids his age and was having fun.

“The three of us tried to make her comfortable but she had a very hard time even looking at us—if she did, she’d blush and look away. We got her to wear a bathing suit when she went around the resort instead of clothes, and we did coax her into the pool a few times...”

“How? If she wouldn’t get naked?” Connor asked.

“Right, so she took the suit off and did her shower in private, then she wrapped a towel around herself and sat down at the side of the pool, on the edge. And then she would slip out of the towel into the water.”

“And this is supposed to help me?” Drew asked. “Talking about a girl with the same mind-set as mine?”

“Coming to it. After a week of her doing that maybe four or five times, she told me and the cousins that she had noticed that she was getting stares whenever she got in the pool that way and she felt that it was attracting attention. She asked us to help her and told us what she wanted. She would take her towel off at her lounge chair and walk to the pool and hop in and we would kinda surround her so she wouldn’t be walking alone. That’s just what we plan to do in the Project, in fact.

“So we agreed, she did it, and for her next couple of days there, she was a little better with the nudity. She didn’t go fully naked away from the pool area, though; she wore a cover-up and that was no different from all the other women who did. See, she noticed that when you’re nude, you become essentially invisible. So my message is that sure, you can wear clothes or a swimsuit, but people will notice you. No one will ask about it or try to embarrass you, though. If you do get embarrassed, it would be ‘cause you’d be the one standing out.”

“Huh, that’s a story with a mixed message if I ever heard one. Look, I’m a performer of sorts. As an athlete, I *want* people to notice me. So if folks stare at me ‘cause I’m dressed, so be it. I’ve got this big concern, though. See how the cousins reacted to me—and Connor—when we first met?”

Jennifer laughed, “You mean Conan and Xena? Sure.”

“Okay, it’s not only them. In the girls’ locker room, did you ever notice where all the other girls would look when I was naked in there, like in the shower?”

Jennifer’s eyes widened. “Shit. You’re right. Everyone watches you. You’ve got that killer body; you’re tall, ripped but sleek—you don’t have that ugly muscular-female look. Actually you could be a fashion model with your figure now. Is that what you mean?”

“That’s straight fire. It’s kind of another reason why I ran away to escape the Program. Back at my first high school, I looked about the same as I do now but without the tits, and I got the same reaction from the gals in the locker room then too. Just think of how boys would react to seeing me walking around the school, totally naked.”

Connor had been quietly listening but interjected his thoughts now. “Sure, Drew has an awesome body; you’ve seen her naked. And you should know that she abhors self-display for what she looks like. She thrives on self-display for her athletic abilities, her soccer. Drew also saw what happens when a smokin’ hot gal goes around a school naked. At our first high school, one of the gals there, a senior and actually a soccer player too, had a body kinda like Drew’s but stacked on top, and she got put in the Program the first week. Fortunately, she was muscular like an Amazon like Drew too and she was able to physically defend herself—and she had to, because she had to threaten a number of hormone-crazed boys who kept pestering her. Drew, honey, Jen should know that what scared you back then was that you kept seeing yourself having to be on constant guard against the abuse you saw that week, if you had to be naked in school. Right?”

“Totally, that was one of the many reasons I felt that I had to escape being put in that horror.”

They had been sitting in the car talking, parked outside the Ritters’ garage and Frantz came out to see if everything was all right.

“Oh, sure, Dad,” Jennifer answered. “We found out at Sherrill’s that the whole high school group from here has been invited out to Pine View next Saturday, and Drew is trying to decide if she can get herself to go.”

“As I am,” Connor said. “I haven’t been as vocal about it as Drew is, though.”

“That’s fine,” Frantz replied. “Say, I think we’ll all go out there then. I heard two weeks ago that our cabin is ready and I’d like to check it out. We’ll go Friday. Drew, Connor, the invitation for you kids is still open, you know.”

“We’ll see, sir,” Connor said and Drew nodded, a thoughtful expression on her face.

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At an office in a federal building in Suitland, Maryland, five miles southeast of the Capital in Washington, D.C., a woman was reading files on a computer monitor, when a man stopped at her desk.

“Hey, Beverly, you get to those summary reports yet?”

“Working on them now, boss. Incoming reports from the schools are much lighter, now that school’s out for the summer. But, hey, one item caught my attention because it’s local and

unusual too. Let me find that report... okay, here we go. Baltimore area school. A Program coordinator was recently assigned to the school, which will begin the Program in the fall, and he reports that he's working on setting up the admin and physical details. All routine there. But then he reports that there are several student transfers who will be starting there in the fall, and get this, they all have a declaration of religious exemption in their transferred permanent high-school records."

"Hmm, okay, they must be coming from that problem area in central Pennsylvania. Listen, please get as many details about that matter as you can and let me know what you find. We need to keep that exemption cancer from spreading."

"Will do, Bill. I'll keep you informed."

By that afternoon, Beverly Gordon had gotten some preliminary information and went to see her supervisor, William Garcy, the director of Operations for the OSA, the Office of Social Awareness.

"I've got some info now. The subjects in question were enrolled in a high school in Lancaster County; that school, plus about twenty-five other high schools in the entire region, have religious exemption declarations filed for every single student in attendance at every one of those high school. Our Enforcement branch has determined that this was an anomaly since they are convinced that statistically it's impossible for 100 percent of a community's children to be so religiously observant that they'd claim to have a 'deeply held belief' in modesty that Bible believers must follow.

"So Enforcement dispatched six teams of investigators to area schools to interview students and within one week, the team which was sent to our subjects' school was served with a federal court's arrest warrant for criminal contempt of court and a cease-and-desist order was served against all of the Enforcement investigators. The Enforcement people think that it was odd that two of the subjects, two who had been selected for participation but refused for religious reasons, were attending that same school, so those two teens have become 'subjects of interest' now.

"They have now obtained the home addresses of the subjects, but the Enforcement chief doesn't want to move against them as yet. But they do want to follow their activities and movements to see if the subjects are spreading their exemption ideas in the Baltimore area. Tech services is attempting to use cell phone records and location tracing to determine the places that the subjects visit, but they can't find any cell-phone subscriptions in the subjects' names, just others in the family.

"As you are aware, Enforcement has been having a number of serious difficulties with students at a number of high schools in the Baltimore area; all those difficulties were traced to that nudist-park incident last summer which involved the arrest of four enforcers and their conviction for assault and attempted kidnapping. The convictions are currently under appeal."

"Thanks, Beverly, well done. I take it that Enforcement will continue to pursue this problem?"

"That's their plan, Bill."

"Good. I'll check with them for progress updates. But please include this issue in your monthly

Freedom to be Free

Naked in School

activity summary.”

“Will do. See you later.”

She left his office.

## Chapter 16 - Soccer Camp

On Monday morning, Connor offered to give Drew a ride to the soccer camp facility. It was only three miles away on a direct line, but the most direct route there was blocked by two major highways, making the trip somewhat longer, so getting a ride there was practically essential.

“We’ll need to use the bike today,” Connor told Drew. “Frantz says that he’s okay with us looking for a car for ourselves, maybe before the summer’s over.”

“Yeah. I don’t care for that riding in bad weather we had to do sometimes. You know how to get to the camp?”

Connor grinned, “I don’t, but my phone nav app does. Let’s go.”

The first day was for the staff alone; they needed to set up the camp; the soccer campers would be coming Tuesday. This was an extended day camp, so there would be no overnight campers. When Drew and Connor arrived at the parking lot, there was a large amount of activity going on with a number of people unloading several trucks and carrying tables, folding chairs, bags of balls, and other items needed for the camp, over to the turf field, so Drew and Connor pitched in and helped in the carrying.

After several minutes, Coach Adcock came out of a little office trailer set up at the end of the parking area, and two other adults followed her. Adcock saw Drew, waved, and called her over. They went into a tent pavilion set up next to the trailer.

“Welcome, Drew,” she said. “Let me introduce you. Coaches, this is Drew Harper, our high-school state first-team defensive player from Hershey, Pennsylvania. Drew, these are Head Coach Leonard Walker, the camp director and men’s soccer coach at Loyola, and Coach Janice Graham, girls’ coach at Arundel High School.”

“Welcome, Drew,” Walker said and shook her hand; then Graham did. “After we get everything set up, we’ll get the rest of the staff over here and get your final sign-ups done and talk about our camp program. You can leave your gear here and we’ll check on the crew setting up.”

They went over to the crew carrying the items and directed where they should be placed; then Connor came over to Drew.

“Hi, Coach Adcock, you others too. Drew, I’ll take off now, sweetie. Pick you up at 7?” he asked.

Walker looked at him with a puzzled expression. “But weren’t you were working with the setup crew? I don’t recognize you...”

Adcock interrupted, “Oh, Len, he’s with Drew. Came to my school in April, when I met her.” She looked at Connor appraisingly. “I don’t recall your name...”

“It’s Connor Martin, Coach.”

“You were helping the setup?” Adcock asked.

“Sure; two guys needed another hand, so I’ve been helping. Hope that wasn’t a problem?”

Adcock looked at Walker. “Len, could he be a possibility? Connor, can you wait a few minutes to talk—do you have to be somewhere?”

“No ma’am... I don’t understand...”

“We’ve had two last-minute counselor cancellations, so we’re short-handed for camper supervision. You appear to be very athletic and...”

“Coach? I don’t play soccer.”

Walker spoke then. “What Coach Adcock was getting to is that you might be able to help us. Like how you pitched in to help the crew carry stuff. We find ourselves short on a camper counselor and a fitness coach, not soccer instructors. We need someone to supervise the 13 to 15 group. And our strength and conditioning coach had to pull out too. We’re wondering if we could recruit you for a job here, if you’re available this summer. Do you know the camp’s schedule?”

“Yes sir; I’m Drew’s transportation.”

“A thought. You look awfully fit, Connor. Play any sports?”

“Sure, Coach, but no organized sports yet. I’m a good swimmer so I plan to try out for the swim team here. I run and lift, too.”

Adcock and Graham looked at each other and Graham asked, “Do you follow a particular weight-training program, Connor?”

“Sure. Coach. I don’t lift to bulk up my muscles. I use routines that build speed and power. I’ve been doing explosive workouts for power for maybe four years, with and without resistance, and for the last two years, at Drew’s instigation—gotta keep up with her—I’ve been partnering with her when she does her sprints and agility drills like shuttle runs—and five-mile runs for endurance. And good discipline and proper pre- and post-workout stretching is a necessity. It’s essential to develop that habit.”

“Len, he sounds perfect, you think?” Graham asked.

“Can you teach others how to train like that safely?” Walker asked.

“Oh, certainly, Coach. It’s not hard to learn the exercises. It’s the self-motivation to do them with proper form and the dedication to keep at it to maintain conditioning that’s hard to develop.”

Walker smiled. “That’s the perfect answer, young man. We do need a strength and conditioning coach, as I mentioned, and if you think that you’re up to it, want to give it a go? I’ve got our camp’s complete fitness schedule in the trailer showing the exercises and drills we use; you can modify the routines to fit your own style as long as you keep the overall format. We’re building campers’ agility and stamina, primarily, and strength is a second goal. I think that your physical appearance is the only skills reference I need.”

Connor blushed.

He named the pay that he could offer for the camp session and then quietly told Connor that he’d have to pass a sexual-offender background check.

“But you don’t have any skeletons to hide, am I right?” he asked and Connor told him that he was clean.

And with that fortuitous encounter, now both Connor and Drew had summer jobs—with the same hours at the same place. The rest of the day was taken up with completing employment paperwork, going over the camp schedule, and getting assignments. Drew learned that her skills and abilities were highly valued by the camp’s leaders when Walker told her that she would be introduced to campers as Coach Drew. Adcock had learned from Coach Aberman that Drew had essentially become her varsity team’s defensive unit coach and strategist.

The most intensive part of the rest of the day was the staff run-through of the camper activities and Drew got to demonstrate her ball-handling prowess. Adcock set up a five-on three scrimmage session with the soccer instructors—these were five college players—and they were to defend against Drew, Adcock, and Graham—to show how good ball-handling abilities could overcome being out-manned. Or in this case, “out-personned.” Their three-person team scored on the defenders on five out of six attempts and Drew was elated with the attention which the others heaped on her, praising her skills.

Connor got to showcase his knowledge too. Walker had given him the previous year’s conditioning schedule earlier and Connor had looked it over. Walker asked him to demonstrate how he thought he should teach those exercises in his sessions.

Connor glanced over the sheets again and then looked up at Walker, then at the group. “You know, you gotta tailor the drills and exercises for the kids’ ages,” he told the group. “This looks like the same stuff was taught to everyone. Proper exercise routines aren’t a cookie-cutter deal. You can’t teach the same things to a ten-year-old that you would to someone who’s sixteen. So for the youngest groups, I’ll concentrate on developing their wind and stamina by sprints and shuttle-runs; perhaps a half-mile run—we’ll see about doing that after I get to evaluate how physically prepared the kids are. I was happy to see that you’ve got lots of hula hoops and sports rings and there are plenty of agility exercises that use those. Let me show you a few.”

He ran through a half dozen and had the group try them.

“Great. Those exercises are perfect for most ages but best for the young ones—and they can do them at home too. But those exercises, also running ladders or cones, are really change-of-direction drills and they don’t truly train for the kind of agility one needs in playing hockey, football, and yes, soccer. I’ll show you something I saw to train kids for improving true reactive agility.”

Connor placed two soccer balls twelve feet apart to either side of him.

“When you’re doing the usual agility training moves, you always know which way your next step needs to be, right? Running hoops, it’s either left or right and you go through them in sequence. What I’ll show you makes you do quick movements in random directions and trains for the kind of agility that you need in facing an opponent on the field. We’ll use four directions to move for this drill: down, up, left, and right. Here’s what you do for each direction.

“Down.”

Connor dropped into the plank position and did a full push-up and jumped back up to stand.

“Up.”

He went into a full squat; then explosively leaped up with his arms held high over his head.

“Left.”

He took a quick lunge to the left, moving behind the left ball, and squatted down to place his hand on the ball, then leaped back to return to the center.

“‘Right’ is the same move to the opposite side. And you need to keep your feet in motion the entire time—no standing in place waiting for the next move. I’ll demonstrate now; someone please call out a random direction about six times with a three second pause before the next rep.”

He demonstrated how that drill worked and then had the group try it.

“I’ll have the campers do this in groups of five with a sixth direction caller; then the callers will do the exercise themselves. Each drill is for three minutes and we’ll do it twice a day. It’s best in my experience to do the agility drills no more than three days a week. That gives the body and mind some ‘reset’ time, so you’re always sharp for it. The other drills I think work well for soccer players are shuttle runs; ladder running several ways: going forward, doing a sideways shuffle, and doing it single- or two-footed hops over the rungs; and Drew showed me a cool dribbling drill, doing a slalom course with a ball. At our old school I saw a great exercise called the box drill. Put cones at the corners of a three-meter square. The player sprints forward to the first cone, shuffle-runs sideways to the second facing outward, runs backwards to the third, and shuffles to the starting cone, this time facing inward. Time the campers and look for improved times.

“For strength, I’d teach the younger ones the same three weight-lifting exercises as the older groups, with a major modification. Reps don’t work for the youngsters; they’re boring. There are plenty of physical games that we could do that activate the same muscle groups that squats, deadlifts, and bench presses do, and I saw equipment inside the sports facility that can be used for the kids that will work just fine. I’ll use the regimen you used for last year’s camp, Coach Walker, and I’ll use that to set up my schedule. Will that work for you?”

“Connor, that was well beyond my expectations; thanks. Listening to you talking about physical training, it sounded to me that a guy with a degree in sports physiology was speaking. How did you get so well informed, may I ask?”

“It’s complicated, sir. The short version is to avoid bullying where I grew up—lived in a rough neighborhood—I decided that I needed to get strong, so I learned as much as I could and had to improvise a lot. So many of the things I’ve come up with are based on my personal experience. And I suppose my physique serves as the proof of their effectiveness, if I could say so,” he finished with a grin and a shrug.

The other coaches and instructors laughed and gave him a bit of applause, so he bowed to them, which resulted in more chuckles.

“Maybe Connor needs a class in modesty,” Drew jibed, which evoked more laughter.

Toward the end of the day, Walker and Adcock met with Drew and Connor. Walker told the two about camper procedures and management.

“Since you’re newcomers to the camp—everyone else has been here at least one prior season—we wanted to go over a few details with you. They’re mostly common sense. We have an accident and injury policy and procedure and you need to get familiar with that. You’ll need to watch your charges to be sure you know where everyone is at all times and for safety, be sure that no one goes off on their own. Since the camp’s co-ed, watch for any sexual conduct; that’s forbidden, of course. No smoking, no drugs, obviously. Be sure everyone stays hydrated—we keep water stations at locations all around the area. Watch for inappropriate behavior of any kind, especially bullying or fighting. Many kids are intensely competitive and will try to overwork themselves. Watch for that, and for signs of physical and heat exhaustion—and especially for the danger of overheating injuries. You got packets of staff guidelines and the staff manual; please read those. Any questions?”

There were none, but Adcock had a request for Connor.

“If you’re willing, I’d be really happy to have you think about joining our soccer team for the season as a student conditioning coach, Connor. See how your job here works out here before deciding. This is a fairly intensive job, so you might have some reservations about doing it.”

“I might, Coach. But I plan to try out for the swim team. There might be some season overlap so I’ll need to look into that.”

For the next several days, both Connor and Drew were kept busy with camp activities. Connor led groups of campers in a combination of the camp’s training regimen combined with his own additions. Drew learned that her skills were among the best of anyone at the camp, and the kids were constantly pressuring her to teach them the fancy ball-handling plays she used. She insisted that only those with more advanced skills would benefit from knowing how to do those trickier moves. At one session, where she was coaching a rondo drill, several of her group asked her to teach the roulette move.

“Okay, guys, here’s the scoop. All those ball-handling moves I’ve used when we’ve scrimmaged—scissors, Maradona, Elastico, Zidane, rainbow flick, all the others—need top-notch dribbling skills. Think about this. All those moves are done only when you’re being very closely marked, like you can feel-the-defender’s-breath-on-your-neck close. So if you try to play tricks with the ball and do a fake, it’s *you* who’ll get faked, maybe even get to eat grass, while you watch that ball heading back toward your own goal.

“So sure, I’ll teach those skills, but only if you can show me, when we have our scrimmages, that you can keep control of the ball when you’re being marked. Next time we do an open-field dribbling clinic, if any of you can keep the ball for fifteen seconds when I’m marking you, then I’ll teach one fancy move to you. Deal?”

A few of the kids nodded, grinning. They liked Drew’s challenge.

“You can take the camp’s personal development time to use your phone to look at some YouTube dribbling videos too. If you show me that you can handle the ball and footwork

methods solo for a particular dribbling move, and your technique and control look good, I'll work with you to see how you handle being faced with an opponent. The idea isn't to look fancy, it's all about keeping possession of the ball and moving it toward the goal. Also good?"

The kids answered that it was.

"Right. So let's get back to our passing clinic again; this time we'll do the 8x3 positional rondo. The three defenders get the orange vests; okay, Georgette, Tony, and Lucille, you're defending to start. You all know the drill; two touches on passes so you have better control. Defense, always watch the ball! Not the face, not the hips, just the ball. Then you'll see the passer's free leg position just before the ball is touched—that should give you an idea of the intended kind of move. And when you're marking a dribbler, you'll also catch a fake or moves like a stop and go, a push-pull, La Croqueta, a stepover, or whatever. Now for this rondo, if the defense can't intercept within five minutes, they each need to give me ten pushups. Now hit it."

And that's how Drew spend her days coaching at camp. Ten hours a day and four days each week. Of course, there were meal breaks, but the conversation topics were... soccer. She loved it. Connor, too, was enjoying his coaching job and the kids he was teaching. When the older kids saw the strength and agility games Connor was doing with the younger ones, they wanted that too, so Connor came up with variants which used weights like kettlebells and medicine balls in group games to complement their traditional free-weight reps. He was also gaining upper-body and leg strength, he realized after a week when his muscles let him know.

He woke up Thursday morning with the typical charley-horse pains of muscle overuse.

"Uuunh, damn. I'm kinda stiff," he complained.

"Poor baby... used muscles you didn't know you had?" Drew didn't sound very sympathetic.

"Ahhh... no, just overuse. Yeah, I got seven one-hour conditioning classes each day and I do all the exercises with the kids. That's fuckin' serious overuse. I gotta temper my participating a bit to stretch it out more. Speaking of, let me do some of that to get the kinks out. Then a hot shower and some ibuprofen and I should be good."

Since it was the week's end, the coaches brought the kids in to give them their progress reports and point out the areas that each camper needed to concentrate on. Drew provided a list of recommended YouTube videos they could watch and Connor had a written list of exercises that could be done at home.

"But remember... the body needs one day or more to rest every week. Remember what I told you about how muscles are built. The fibers are broken down with heavy use and need recovery time to rebuild and, putting it simply, when they do, that's where the improved strength comes from. So remember to take rest days between training each muscle group. And two days off between agility training sessions."

Before everyone left at the end of the day, Walker told the two teens how pleased he was with their week's work.

"Not only were your sessions effective at teaching the campers, the campers all love you both

and say that this has been the best sports camp they've ever attended. I'd love to recruit both of you to enroll at Loyola, but you two have far better prospects at larger D1 schools. We'll see you Monday. Enjoy the weekend."

"Thanks, Coach," they chimed.

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Thursday night. Now Drew faced the moment of truth.

What is the truth, really? she wondered. True to myself, true to my friends, true to my beliefs—such as they are—true to my goals, true to my commitments? Which of those is the true truth? True to my freedom—maybe that's the truth. Freedom to be me without people telling me how I should think, what I should believe, how I should conform to artificial morals constructed by psychological so-called experts about how I should become socialized. How I should become socialized by becoming sexualized. That's no freedom. I want my freedom to be free. That's the true truth.

"Connor?"

"Um, huh?"

"What you thinking of?"

"Jeez. What we're doing tomorrow."

"Me too. I decided."

"You did? Wow. So that's why you were so quiet."

"Uh huh. Deep thoughts, heh, almost existential. No, really existential. Like in our English Lit class, you know, Beckett and Kafka. I was thinking of individual existence and the search for meaning in an absurd universe. And alienation, absurdity, authenticity, and freedom. And truth. But freedom's the biggie."

"Ahhhh, okay. Is this gonna be like 'Waiting for Godot'? Waiting for Harper? Aaaaand the winner is...?"

"Funny. Yeah, I decided on freedom. Kids should be free; I should be free. Free from the tyranny of laws that strip away people's rights. Or kids' clothes in high schools. So I reassessed my moral feelings about life and I think that I fell into a loop of 'people believe things because others tell them it's proper, so that makes the belief proper.' It's like the Greek fable of the guy forever pushing on a rock, only to have it fall again."

"Um, yeah. That's Sisyphus."

"Jeez. How'd you know that?"

"Liked to read mythology. Okay, go off..."

"Where was I... yeah. I need to deal with life's absurdity and false authenticity. And lack of true freedom. I decided that I'm gonna do a total belief reset. Declare myself to be free from all my

past baggage. So I'll go to that meeting at the resort and support the Project. Um, with my clothes on. Still not ready to face that."

"Wow. I didn't expect you'd go, even wearing clothes. I think it's super that you'll go."

"You were lost in thought too, Connor..."

"Sure. You mentioned 'search for meaning in an absurd universe'? That's us. That's what I was thinking about. Two kids with broken-down lives and zero karma meet and bond over a totally absurd situation—which was facing having to be naked in school, of all weird and absurd things. Then the universe does a one-eighty and starts heaping so much karma on us that good stuff just keeps happening. Like Pastor meeting us and introducing us to Wayne. Like that coach seeing you play. Like Mrs Neumann's apartment. Like the Ritters' generosity. And now I get this coach job totally out of the blue. So yeah, I was thinking that I gotta share all this good karma and help kids too—so I'm in with you on this."

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It was Friday morning and the Ritters were running through the final items in their well practiced preparation for their resort visits. Only this time, Drew and Connor were involved and Jennifer was so excited about it that she was simply vibrating with anticipation.

"Oh, you're gonna see how rad this is; we're gonna have such a fun time. I hope that some of my friends from the other schools come too. They said that they'd try. There's all kinds of dope things to do there, but just hangin' with other kids who like the same stuff I like is awesome, And..."

"Jen. Jennifer? We get it, we really do." Drew smiled at her and winked at Connor. "So what are the sleeping arrangements and what do we bring, again? I never really listened when you told me earlier; sorry 'bout that."

"No prob. The folks bought a cabin there from a long-time member who moved to Florida. It's big but old and run-down. It has two sides with two small bedrooms in each—the former owner let the resort manager rent out the other side and he got a little income for it. Dad said that it was such a great deal he couldn't pass it up. So he bought it and got it fixed up. I can't wait to see it!

"Dad told me that on weekends when my friends' parents aren't going to be there, the kids can stay in the extra bedrooms—and that means—nude pajama parties! Seriously, he said that there's lots of room. Two of the rooms will have queens and bunk beds and the other two, just queens, Dad said. He had it fixed up so that it can be split into two units with a solid moving partition if he decides to rent it out.

"Anyway, the folks have everything we need for the weekend covered. They'll bring the food, drinks, piles of towels, a gallon of sunscreen (*giggle*), bed linens and pillows, all that stuff. You just need your personal stuff like toiletry items. Drew, you said you're gonna wear clothes but I suggest that you wear a bathing suit, not clothes, and cover-ups..."

"I have two one-piece suits but no cover-ups..." Drew began.

"Um, let's go shopping in my closet and in Mom's," Jennifer declared, grabbed Drew's hand,

and dragged her off.

Connor watched them, grinning. *This is gonna be one hell of a weekend.*

Then Timmy walked by, carrying stuff to be loaded the car. He too was vibrating with excitement.

*Must run in the family*, Connor mused, and then called, “You look like you just got everything on your Christmas wish list, Timmy. Fun plans this weekend?”

“Oh you bet!” he replied. “Three of my resort friends will be there and I haven’t seen them since last summer. Can’t wait!” and he dashed away.

A half hour later, the girls reappeared with Eva in tow.

“It’s 8:35 now and we plan to leave at 9:30,” Eva announced. “Drew found several cover-up possibilities in my closet that I no longer wear. She’s welcome to them but she wants your opinion, Connor.”

Drew picked up the first one.

“Here’s one I’m not sure of, a black long-sleeved maxi-length kind of dress, see, it’s got this low vee-neckline and an open keyhole with a ring that holds it closed.”

“Um, not sure I like the black color,” Connor said. “Looks nice on you, though.”

“The others are shorter but since I’m tall, they’re *really* short on me. This one, you can see it’s multicolor—tropical, it’s an open-front kimono but closes with this cloth belt.”

Drew turned around to show the back.

“It is short, honey. Looks like it comes down to maybe two or three inches below your butt. I like it a lot, though.”

Eva and Jennifer chimed in that they thought it looked great on her.

“Next is this. A kinda shirtdress in muted tropical colors. It’s sleeveless and has a button-up front.”

“Hmmm, not a fan,” Connor told her.

“That one looks more like a night shirt than a cover-up,” Jennifer said.

“These last two are similar to the second. Both kimonos and one is longer and has a fringed bottom hem.”

She put them on and got three highly approving votes.

“I really liked the colors and patterns of those last two, but all three kimonos look amazing on you, honey.”

“You can have all three, Drew,” Eva said. “I haven’t worn them in years.”

“Oh, thanks, Eva. Yeah, I’ll bring them. And Connor, Jen says I shouldn’t wear a one-piece suit

and showed me these two bikinis I could use. I'd wear them under the cover-ups. I tried them on and they fit, amazingly, since she's way bigger up top than I am."

Jennifer giggled. "Those were from three years ago when I was in an A-cup. And the sides of the tops and bottoms adjust for chest and hips, so they both fit Drew just fine. And we got something for you to wear too."

Drew picked up a handful of patterned cloth, two were quite colorful and two were more muted.

"You'll stand out if you walk around the place wearing a board-shorts bathing suit or even a speedo," Jennifer told Connor. "Mom found these in Dad's dresser. I've never seen him wear them..."

"We got those pareos on a cruise six years ago," Eva said. "That's the only time Frantz has worn them. He wanted to donate them but I suggested that he keep them, so I'm sure that he'll tell you to use them this weekend and keep them."

Connor looked at the rectangular pieces of cloth; one was six feet long and about thirty inches wide and the others, somewhat narrower. They all had pleasing tropical or masculine patterns.

"Jeez, how do you wear them?" Connor asked.

"I can show you. Girls wear pareos too... Oh, wait. Sure. Mom, Drew can wear pareos as cover-ups too."

"You're right, dear. I'll bring several along and she can decide."

"So obviously you won't need much in the way of clothes this weekend, but do bring some warm items," Jennifer remarked. "Some evenings can get chilly. Dad's bringing a few cases of bottled water, but if you have a sport bottle you like, bring it. Drew, remember that the soccer girls will want to play a bit, so bring your gear. Wilma said several balls would be nice too."

The resort was only about sixteen miles away, much of it on limited-access highways, so the drive only took a little under a half hour. During the ride, Connor recalled that he needed to ask about their guardian status.

"I've been forgetting to ask; it's been so busy with soccer camp ten hours a day, but shouldn't we be doing something about changing our guardian status?"

"Indeed, Connor. It's already under way. One of the things we spoke to Jay Robbins about when we visited to look for a house was just that. Jay's firm is handling the details and I'm sure that they've been in touch with Wayne about it by now."

"Oh, that's great. Do we need to do anything?"

"Delia's a social worker for the county and said that we'd get a visit and a caseworker will want to speak to you. Jay told me that Pennsylvania and Maryland courts work together very smoothly when guardians move between the states. With families becoming far more mobile, guardian moves are far simpler than they used to be. We should have everything wrapped up in a month, he thinks."

The conversation was taking Drew's mind off where the family was headed, but as the scenery outside the vehicle changed from suburban to rural, her mind returned to her thoughts of the weekend ahead.

*Why am I so nervous about this? No one's gonna force me to do anything. And I'll get to meet my future teammates and new friends too.*

Connor sensed her nervousness and squeezed her hand, whispering, "Ease up, darling. You'll have fun, guaranteed."

She grinned back. "Or I get my money back, right?"

"Absolutely. Every penny you paid."

She gave him a grin.

Checking in at the resort was simple. Since the Ritters were members, all Frantz had to do was give Connor's and Drew's name to the gal who manned the office—or "*personned*" the office, Drew thought. *Shouldn't that be a word?* She was happy that the young woman was dressed, but noted that what she was wearing was a striking Eastern-looking garment.

Jennifer saw her looking and said, "Yeah, that's one way to tie a pareo. Didn't that look elegant?"

"Sure did. Do you know how to arrange one to look like that?"

"I know a few and Mom knows some too. But the expert is Sherrill. Ask her when you're wearing one and she'll show you."

Frantz got them back in the car and drove to their cabin site. They all trooped into the cabin and looked around.

"Oooo, this is really nice," Drew complimented as she looked around.

"I like how you can split the two sides with those sliding walls," Connor said.

Drew peeked into one bedroom. "This must be the smaller room. Queen bed," and then she went into the room next door. "Oh, that's a king!"

Frantz peeked in. "I had them change the beds in the two larger rooms. This can be Connor's and Drew's. Let's unload."

After they all helped to unload, Timmy asked if he could go to find his friends.

"They said that they'd be at the pool around this time, Mom."

"Sure—remember, towels, sunscreen, and a water bottle!" she called as he dashed out to strip in the smaller bedroom which they had checked out earlier.

Not more than thirty seconds later, he was back out, naked, carrying his items, and dashing out the door.

Jennifer laughed, "That pink blur you saw was Timmy. Funny that he can go that fast when he

wants something. Otherwise, he's like molasses flowing uphill."

Everyone laughed.

Jennifer looked at Drew. "Are you okay if I change into the resort attire—nudity? Ah, wait. First, let's get Drew situated. C'mon, Connor, you're part of this enterprise too."

"Where do you sleep?" Drew asked.

"When Michael was with us, we three stayed in one room with a full-size bed and a cot..."

"You slept with your brother? Michael?"

"Sure. No prob. Nothing to hide and I didn't feel the need to attack him," she laughed at Drew's horrified expression. "Damn, but you're easy to tease. He's a great guy but we didn't do anything sexual together. Last year, Emma told me that she slept in the same bed with Andrew and both his sisters—all four in the bed. She said that she loved doing that, loved the closeness. So I wanted to ask, usually I'd be in the room with my brothers but seeing the king bed, I think it would be gucci if the three of us shared that. I won't push it, so think about it. Okay, let's see you in this tropical print pareo, Drew. Get into your bikini and I'll show you how to wrap it."

"Um, you staying?" Connor asked.

"Oh, Connor, of course she is. What's to hide? We've showered together," Drew chided him.

She quickly stripped and got into the turquoise bikini.

"Ooh, look at you," Jennifer exclaimed. "The lighting here is better than in my closet and that color looks awesome on you!"

"It sure does," Connor choked. "Shit, you look wonderful."

"Okay, now here's how to tie the pareo like the girl at the desk."

Jennifer did several quick moves and the fabric was secured in place. There was a mirror on the back of the door and Drew looked at her image in it.

"Oooo, perfect," she cooed.

"Now let me do it slowly so you can see how the folds and drapes are made."

Within several minutes, Drew was able to copy the steps and, making a few adjustments, was delighted with the look the pareo gave her.

"Yeah, so nice. Boujee in a good way, right?" Jennifer asked and the others agreed. "Okay, your turn, big guy," she said, smiling. "I could walk out while you change, but here's a secret: this is a nudist place, okay? Nothing I haven't seen before. Up to you."

Connor glanced at Drew and she gave him a tiny nod which he knew meant "up to you but go for it."

So with a quick glance at Jennifer—she was rummaging through his bag and pulling out the pareos—he quickly pulled his shorts and briefs down together and stepped out of them. Happily

he didn't have an erection, but felt that one was lurking somewhere there in the background. As he reached over to the bed to grab his speedos, Jennifer surprised him mightily when she turned around, looked at him, grabbed the hem of his tee-shirt, and with one motion, pulled it up, forcing his arms to lift, and whipped it off his head.

Connor stood there in front of her, naked now, and his erection began to blossom.

"Oh my fuckin' gosh," Jennifer breathed. "Be still my heart. Randy was awesome but much too big; he was scary, like the Incredible Hulk. You, you're just perfect. Drew, can I?" she beseeched, her hand hovering just inches away from Connor's chest.

Drew was enjoining this; she loved showing off her man, so she just nodded. Connor? He was in shock and speechless.

Jennifer stroked Connor's chest—his pecs and shoulders, then down over his washboard abs, over his hips and down his chiseled thighs. She sighed and gently got him to turn sideways and caressed his butt, squeezing the muscle and tracing the crease between his cheeks, then up his back, and ended by stroking his left biceps with both hands, feeling the hard muscle underlying the skin.

"You're an Adonis," Jennifer breathed in awe. "It's Conan. For real. Oh, lookie there. Oh how nice..."

Jennifer had rediscovered Connor's erect cock. He was still dumb-struck, standing there, holding his speedos with limp fingers. Drew reached over and plucked the swimsuit off of his fingers.

"Lover, you'll never get this tiny suit on over that monster," she laughed. "Jen, my morals are all shot to hell now. I had a come-to-Jesus moment and Jesus told me that what I did in love was none of his business, I need to be true to myself and my lover. In the Program, oral sex shit is so lowkey... it's basic. I need to help my bae here. You mind?"

Jennifer gulped and shook her head "no."

Drew knelt down and slurped Connor's rigid cock into her mouth and with her hands, began stroking him and then caught the look of lust in Jennifer's eyes.

She pulled off the cock with a pop and looked into Connor's eyes, then flicked them toward Jennifer. Connor gulped, squeezed his eyes closed, and jerked his head in a quick nod.

Still stroking Connor's member, she asked, "Sis? Jen, we see you as our sister. Can you help me here with your almost brother?"

Jennifer stared at her in amazement and squeaked, "Ohgod, sure," and one second later, Connor had two tongues working on his cock. He was moaning constantly now, his pelvis thrusting forward and back, as first one, then the other girl took turns taking him into their mouths. Connor was gasping; both girls could tell he was right on the verge of eruption. Then Jennifer took one of her fingers, slobbered some spit on it, and wiggled it into Connor's rectum.

The effect was instantaneous; he bellowed as his entire body convulsed and began shooting great ropes of cum onto both girls' faces. As his spasms showed down, he collapsed on the bed in

exhaustion. Jennifer looked at Drew and moved her head close to her.

“Kiss?”

Drew’s eyes rounded in shock but then her new mindset urged, “*Do it.*”

Drew leaned into Jennifer and they shared a sensuous, if not passionate kiss. Then they got up and sat on the bed, bracketing Connor, both running their hands all over his torso.

“Goddamn. What the fuck was that?” he asked as his breathing returned to normal. “Drew, you really okay with all that?”

“Uh huh, sweetie. I resolved to free myself from my self-imposed rigid ideas about life. I told you that. I’ve grown to love Jen too... she’s our sister in spirit if not by genetics and I can tell that you love her too, not romantically, but more than as a very close friend, right?”

“Ah, I do. Jen, you’re more than a sister to me and I think that you know it. So Drew, sweetheart, are you okay with all this? And the BJ, which was mind-blowing as well as, um, blowing something else. I love you more than anything, doll, and don’t want you to think...”

“What I think is that you and I are so firmly connected, romantically and spiritually, that there’s room in our hearts to love others too. There was an author I heard about somewhere who said something like ‘love doesn’t divide, it multiplies.’ And I can see how that’s true.”

She looked down at her chest.

“Oh, ugh. I got cum on the bikini top. Good thing I took off the pretty pareo before we started.”

Jennifer chuckled. “Well, I didn’t think to get my top off—or any of my clothes; now this thing needs to be rinsed off. Time to shed the rest, anyway.”

She got up and stripped off.

Connor looked at her and smiled. “Man, Jen, you’ve got one sweet body. Wow. Shit, it’s a good thing you gave me that BJ or else I’d be sprouting wood again.”

“Let me get a washcloth and I’ll clean you up. Drew, let’s go to the bathroom; I’ll put my top and your bikini top to soak; you can wash your face and chest.”

## Chapter 17 - Pine View Resort

In a few minutes, they were back with a washcloth and Drew used it to clean up Connor's groin.

"Let me show you how to tie your pareo, Connor," Jennifer told him. "You're soft—um, well, half-soft, anyway. Maybe you'll fit, not sure. You can try putting your suit on now."

He tried and his cock poked the suit front out obscenely. He pulled it up, but now the entire crown was showing above the waistband.

"You know? Maybe I'll just skip the suit and just wear the pareo. Do they do that?"

"Actually that's exactly how the thing is worn. Commando. There are ways to tie one to keep the package from flopping around but I'm not sure how to do that one. I just know two ways."

She wrapped the garment firmly around Connor's hips with a third on one side of his body and the two-thirds on the other. Then she tucked the shorter end of the fabric into the waist of the material at his hip and rolled an inch or two into a tight tuck. Then she took the long free end to his hip and gathered it into folds there to hang down at his side. Then she rolled the fabric at his hips over four times to secure everything tightly. Then she grinned at him and pushed the garment's waist down so it sat just above his pubic hair.

"All done; how's it feel? Tight enough okay?"

"Um, sure. Feels okay, like it won't slip, I guess."

"Try to jump and twist and see."

He did and reported that the pareo was secure.

"Drew, wanna get out the other bikini now?" Jennifer asked.

"Hell, maybe I'll skip the top and just wear the bottoms," she replied.

Connor's eyes nearly bugged out and she giggled at him.

"Hey, if you can go commando, I can go braless. Like how often do I wear a bra anyway?"

Jennifer looked at her. "Drew, you said you were in an A-cup but you look bigger than that, I think."

"They're still growing; itch all the time. Last bra I got was an A but it's almost too small now. So maybe I'm almost a B-cup. You're what, in a C? You've got an almost hourglass figure, you know."

"Got a wide chest so I think that makes the boobs seem smaller. I'm a D but on the small side. I'm lucky to have the small waist and that gives the hourglass look. Okay, Drew, you tied that pareo right, so we're ready to go. Grab your towels. I've got a beach bag with sunscreen and some water bottles. Take sunglasses if you want. All the teens hang out at the pool so we'll check there. It's almost 11 so Wilma and Sherrill should be here. Their parents will be out tomorrow."

Jennifer walked to the cabin door with the others and as she opened it for them to pass through, Connor hesitated for a second and opened his mouth to speak.

She laughed. “You were about to ask if I forgot something, like my clothes?” she giggled again. “Hey, nudist resort, hello?”

Connor just shook his head and preceded her out the door.

*It feels kinda strange, Connor thought as he walked along with the others. This very light, sheer fabric lets the breeze circulate under this skirt thing. Is this what wearing a kilt is like? It's almost erotic, this feeling of freedom.*

Drew was having similar thoughts. She liked the feeling of the very light and soft fabric rubbing and tickling her nipples, and movement of the air trapped under the pareo felt sensual.

*I wonder what it would be like without the bottoms on, she mused. Hell, I wonder what it's like for Jen, being totally naked. Wow, just look at everyone—not a stitch of clothing anywhere, and nobody's even staring at anyone. This is so different from what I saw in school.*

“Drew, this is amazing,” Connor broke into her thoughts. “All these naked people. Just standing around chatting; groups walking over there; a bunch of youngsters over on the swings, boys and girls, and everything looks totally normal. But no one's wearing anything.”

“You see now what I was telling you both,” Jennifer broke in. “It is totally normal. Wooo, you're both here with me!”

She did a little jig, hopping up and down in glee.

“Oh, I'm so happy you came! This is so awesome I can't stand it!”

She threw her arms around Drew and kissed her, then turned to Connor shyly. “Can I ...?”

He held out his arms in invitation and Jennifer ran to him and they kissed.

“You guys are just the best. I knew it when we first met and you kissed me then, Connor. I feel so close to you both. Oh, look, there's Wilma coming in the other gate!”



*Drew and Connor at the resort pool.*

She called and waved; Wilma saw her and waved back; then she pumped her arm in celebration

when she saw Connor and Drew. Then she turned and called to someone behind her. Sherrill appeared then, and there were two boys with her—they were Danny and Art, the cousins' boyfriends. All four were nude. Wilma and Sherrill ran around the pool and wrapped Jennifer in enthusiastic embraces.

Sherrill looked at Connor, standing there bare-chested and wearing only a brief pareo tied like a short kilt and cocked at his hip.

"Holy fuck," she breathed. "Conan, totally! Can you lose the pareo so I can see it all?"

Connor smiled. "Sorry, not ready for that yet. Okay?"

Wilma looked over at him and gave him a thumb's up; she was talking to Drew. The two boys walked up now; their walk around the pool had been taken in a far more sedate manner than the girls' trip. They were re-introduced to the others and the guys couldn't keep their eyes off Connor.

"Hey there," Connor said, looking at them both. "Your GFs finally got you to come out here?"

"Yeah, sure," Danny shrugged. "If we hafta be naked walking around school, might as well get used to it. What's with the sarong?"

"I guess I don't have your confidence," Connor told him. "I'd rather stay covered up—for now."

"But next fall..." he started to object.

"A big secret. Drew and I have a solid federal religious exemption. We saw that all of our PA school records were transferred to Glen Burnie High, and the exemption declaration statement was there too. Drew and I have certain moral beliefs about public nudity."

"So why did you guys come here, then? To a nudist place?" Art asked.

"To support you guys and the Project. Drew recalled the idea and made the suggestion, plus we both have first-hand experience. We were in *two* schools running the Program and this would be the third—we want to help others so they don't get traumatized like we saw happen to a number of kids who couldn't deal with the physical and psychological pressures."

"That's dope, bro," Danny nodded. "Damn, your bod is fuckin' awesome, you know? How'd you get so swol? And Drew is one sweet-looking gal. You two tight?"

"We are. And I won't humblebrag now, but I wasn't trying to get beefed up to look like I do; I just was trying to get strong to beat off all the bullies in the neighborhood where I grew up."

"Well, your body shows you did something right... yeah, honey?" Danny asked Wilma, who had called to him.

"I said, 'Wanna hop in the pool now?'"

"Um, sure. With Art and Sherrill?"

"Yeah. Need to grab a shower first, you know."

"You gonna come too?" Danny asked Connor.

“I see Drew grabbing a lounge chair, so I’m gonna go sit with her.”

Connor went over to Drew and sat on a chair beside her as they watched the others showering.

“Crap, the showers are all in the open like that,” Drew observed. “It’ll be tough to get myself to do that if I ever do decide to strip off. Um, how do you feel about this morning’s little sexing?”

“Fuck, that BJ was just rad... y’know what that tease Jen did? Stuck her finger up my ass and I just totally blew.”

“Oooo, she did? Yeah, Jen told me how she’s honed her oral techniques by practicing them lots. Especially here, where she told me that access is so much easier.”

“Huh. So much for nudism not being sexual.”

“Ah, she said it’s as sexual as clothed life, sweetheart. Only that here, there aren’t any clothes in the way. But everything’s gotta be totally lowkey; absolutely do nothing out in the open. So what do you think of Sherrill and Wilma naked?”

“Not fishing for compliments? They can’t hold your candle, lover. Yeah, nice figures and all, and they’re loads of fun too. But not my type. You’re my only type.”

“Sweet. I noticed that both boys have foreskins and that Danny’s is really long. It looks strange; like his cock comes to a point. But compared to the other boys whose cocks I’ve seen, theirs look so small. Like Jerry’s, remember?”

Connor laughed. “Guy’s cocks are sensitive to temperature, sweetie. When it’s cool, like today, we shrink a little and...”

Just then, Wilma and Danny stopped at their chairs, wet from their showers.

“Sure you don’t want a dip?” Wilma asked and Drew shook her head.

“I’m fine, Wilma. You guys have fun.”

“Okay, doll, bio lesson. Notice Danny’s dick?” Connor asked after they walked away.

“Funny. Yeah. Bigger.”

“Warm water. You know what goose bumps are?”

“Sure, when you get cold or frightened.”

“There are tiny muscles in the skin that contract with cold temps; it’s an involuntary reaction. Pulls up the hairs on the skin making it bumpy. Okay, in the cock, when it’s cold, its artery muscles close down a bit to allow blood flow to go to keep the body core warm. So the cock shrinks a bit. Cocks tend to be shorter in the winter because of that.”

“You’re a walking anatomy reference, Connor. How do you... Oh sure, your body-building reading, right?”

“Sure. I read lots of stuff about physiology to understand how to get strong. I wanted to know the reasons why certain exercises were best for each muscle group.”

“We need to decide about sleeping...” Drew started but got interrupted by a hand on her shoulder; she and Connor looked up.

It was Eva, and Frantz was standing behind her grinning. They were both nude, of course.

“Hey, kids, how come you’re not in the water?” she asked. “Look at all the teens in there now.”

“Not ready for that yet, Eva,” Drew said. “I need to convince my body that there’s no danger in being nude. My mind knows but my body doesn’t.”

Frantz sat down on an adjacent chair.

“That’s exactly right, Drew,” he told her. “That’s the basis for how phobias affect a person, and calling it a phobia doesn’t imply a mental illness at all. Virtually everyone has a phobia of some kind at some level of discomfort. Like fear of speaking to an audience—that’s a common phobia. In your case, you were naked when you got attacked in the shower, so your body associates that nudity with danger. Since you don’t experience any difficulty being nude with other girls, it’s virtually certain that your phobia’s limited to uncontrolled situations, like here at the park. Or in that school naked program. And yes, your body needs to learn, not mentally, but sensorially, that your nudity isn’t dangerous.

“Shrinks help people overcome phobias by teaching a coping technique. It’s called CBT, or cognitive behavioral therapy. For something like getting over fear of being nude, a kind of CBT called exposure therapy is used, and this therapy helps people, in a structured way, to face the situations which cause them difficulties. It seems to me that you’ve embarked on your own version of exposure therapy here. A kind of desensitizing, if you will. By taking small steps with no ill effects, your body learns that there’s no danger. So keep up what you’re doing. You might be surprised at how well you can adapt, because you’re young still and can adapt easier than older folk.”

“Thanks, Frantz. That does reassure me a bit. Somehow giving my reluctance a name makes it seem less intimidating.”

“Great. The important thing is to have fun here. We wanted to tell you guys that we’re having dinner with the Robbins at the restaurant at 5:30, so let the others know too. Okay?”

“Sure. Does that include their friends, Danny and Art?”

“It does. We’re their adult sponsors this weekend.”

“Cool. We’ll see you then.”

They walked away, waving to Jennifer and the others as they went out the pool gate.

Drew smiled at Connor. “Damn, I hope that I look as good when I get to be their age.”

“I guess the Martin family’s got good genes. “Eva, Michael, Jen, my dad too... Jen showed me their family photo album. Lots of good lookers there.”

“And Connor. The best of the bunch. Hey, we were gonna decide about the sleeping arrangements. So that there’s no pressure on you, my vote is sure, let’s ask Jen to sleep with us.

But you can veto that if you'll be uncomfortable."

"If you're good with it, I'm good. Give any thought about what we're gonna tell the kids who come tomorrow? Sounds like we're gonna be the main attraction."

"Connor, one thing bothers me. If I don't get naked myself, I'll be a hypocrite, won't I?"

"How 'bout this? Can you turn the non-nudity thing around? Instead of saying that you're uncomfortable or afraid, which would defeat the idea of the Project, tell everyone how you mobilized an entire region to oppose the Program. So highlight that plus side. You can't get naked 'cause it's a biblical imperative and conflicts with your beliefs. Second, you mobilized the clergy of the entire south-central PA region to have the church kids resist. Third, you organized the others ... the unbelievers..." they both chuckled at that "...to resist by getting our lawyer to warn the principal never to try force-stripping anyone. Hell, the result was that you created an entire frikkin' *army* like Emma did—no, make that *two* armies—except that one of your armies went on a frikkin' *crusade* and got not one, but high schools in *sixteen* frikkin' districts to honor the religious exemption and the other stopped school officials from forcibly stripping kids. Isn't that a more powerful message than apologizing for why you don't shed threads?"

Drew flew into Connor's arms and wrapped him in a powerful hug and a passionate kiss.

"Oh, how I simply love you! That's absolutely so perfect and it's a very powerful message too. I'm not modest about showing off what I can do—you know that. I hate false modesty. But yeah, if I say that as one single girl, working all by herself at first, mobilized the kids in a big chunk of a big state to either resist or totally avoid the Program, just think of what several hundred kids could do in a single school."

"Right on! There you go. If your ... ah, Frantz called it a phobia... gets better, whether it's in a month or in a year, by taking that aggressive approach, no one would question your motivation."

"Whose motivations are being questioned?"

That was Sherrill; she was standing in front of their loungers, dripping water. She grabbed a towel and turned to watch Jennifer as she came out of the pool with a boy following her

She came over and introduced him as Tony, who went to Annapolis High.

"Tony's been coming here as long as I have," she told Drew and Connor, "and no, he hasn't been picked for the Program yet."

They grabbed towels.

Then Wilma and the guys approached, stripping water off their bodies with their hands.

Connor was mesmerized by the sight of all the girls' breasts jiggling as they moved around, toweling off. And when they raised their arms to dry their hair...

*Fuck. I could become a nudist convert real quick, if I saw that every day, he thought. As long as I can keep my cock under control, no, oh shit, here it goes...*

Sherrill noticed the growing bulge and her eyes got huge.

“Connor? Shit, looks like you’re hung. Like Randy from your school? Are you like that?”

“I thought that erections were a no-no in these places. Hey, how do you keep them from popping all the time? You seem to be the erection expert here,” he joked as he winked at her.

“Let me consult the erection committee on that. Girls,” she beckoned to Jennifer and Wilma, “Connor has an erection question.”

*Damn, she’s quick. Turned my trying to tweak her into her nailing me.*

Drew was watching and giggling into her hand.

“This I gotta see,” Art announced and he, Danny, and Tony came over too.

Connor grimaced and then decided, *the hell with it.*

“Yeah, I do. So many naked gals and so many are serving gorgeous, like you three are. So how does a guy keep from popping a boner whenever he turns around? Art and Dan? This is your first time, right? How are you guys doin’ it?”

Danny grunted, “I asked Wilma the same thing. She told me that everyone needs to carry a towel to sit on and if I get hard, to just cover it.”

“Or jump in the pool,” Art added. “Yeah, I’m having a hard ti... oops...”

Everyone laughed.

“*Difficult* time keeping soft. Sherrill told me that if I come and behave...”

Sherrill grabbed his arm and told him, “State secrets! Don’t blab.”

Laughter again.

“That’s nice. Doing favors for friends is admirable, Sherrill,” Drew chuckled. Hey, now that we solved the mystery of the forever reappearing erection...” That elicited more laughter “... Connor thought of what I should tell the horde tomorrow to motivate them. It’s my motivations that we don’t want to discuss.”

Drew told them what she and Connor had discussed and the others gave their rousing approval.

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After dinner, Jennifer grabbed Drew and Connor.

“The old-time teens want to initiate some noobs into nudist life. Sherrill and Wilma have their boyfriends here, and there are a few other teen girls who wanna hook up with some GBH guys they’ve been hanging with all day.”

Drew chuckled, “Yeah, saw them. Jeez, they were really hanging onto those boys—I saw two of them spring a boner too. Say, what’s in the water here... or air? So many guys seem to be really hung, you know?”

“Hmm, yeah. Hey, maybe because the guys who came don’t have any cock-size hangups. Just a guess, but I noticed that too.”

“Ah, this initiation... is that what you kids did with, um, the twins and Randy?” Drew asked.

“Not sayin’. Just come, you two. We like to do Truth or Dare, but it’s tame ‘cause we’re already nude, right? So you can’t get a dare to strip.”

“Um, Jen? Not me—coverup, you know.”

“Oh, fuck—just come, okay?”

Drew looked at Connor who just shrugged, so they went off with Jennifer. Her destination was an isolated gazebo on a lawn located a fair distance from the main area, and when they got there, there was a small group of teens hanging out. Introductions were made, but Drew and Connor knew most of them from the Project planning group. The couples they knew were Sherrill and Arthur, Wilma and Danny, and Jennifer, who went over to Chuck, a boy they had first met when they visited the school in the spring. She was considering dating him. The rest of the group, Drew knew, were just casual couples which had formed at the resort today.

The group of twelve kids settled themselves on the lawn in front of the gazebo and just chatted, but after a while, they moved to the Truth or Dare game. Typically, the early rounds were “truth,” but then on Sherrill’s turn, she chose “dare,” and Wilma was the questioner.

“Sherrill, I dare you to kiss Arthur with tongue, and your hands can do whatever comes naturally. No genital contact. For one minute.”

Everyone in the group sighed and watched as the teens kissed and stroked chests, breasts, and buttocks, and when time was called, both were heaving gasps of arousal; Arthur’s penis was so hard, it was standing up against his abdomen, almost purple with desire, and throbbing.

Drew was sticking to “truth” requests, Connor was too, and finally one of the teens called that on them.

“Okay, I’ll do dares but not any dare to strip,” she replied. “I’m not ready for that.”

“And I might do dares that don’t involve stripping too,” Connor said.

“They both have Program exemptions,” Wilma clarified for the group, “and Drew’ll talk about that tomorrow, okay?”

The game continued and the dares got hotter, starting with one that Jenna got—a dare for her to solo masturbate for two minutes. After several rounds more, Connor took a dare from Sherrill.

“Hey, stud, you wouldn’t show me the goods at the pool earlier, so I dare you to stand up and take off the pareo. I see it’s nicely tented out in front. Keep it off for a minute while you turn slowly around for us.”

Connor shot a look at Drew, who gave him an imperceptible nod, so he slowly stood and removed the garment. When he did, most of the girls sighed, and Sherrill moaned, “Fuck, Jen, how can you live with that gorgeous boy and not attack him every day?”

“Yeah, Sher, it’s hard... um, oh shit...” she began and the others laughed when she stopped and blushed.

Connor's minute ended and he sat again; Drew whispered that he should keep the pareo off.

"I love seeing you nude," she finished.

Now the game became more sexual, with every dare requiring genital contact.

Wilma laughed, "Just like they want us to do in the Program, right? But here, it's voluntary."

Soon Sherrill changed the game rules a little.

"Phase two of the game is tandem dares. The requestor can ask two people, of the same sex, to select truth or dare; the two asked can decide between them which one they'll do. And the dare can't involve one on the other."

After several clarifying questions, they began and the dares ramped up quickly into very sexual ones. Late in

the game, Sherrill and Wilma took a joint dare, which was to to give their boyfriends blow jobs. Danny and Arthur looked like they had won the lottery when the girls got them into position.

The other teens watched, awed, and all the boys, Connor included, were sporting hard erections at the sight.

Sherrill began by holding the base of Arthur's cock with her right hand, and then, amazingly, she buried its six-plus inches so deeply in her mouth that her nose bumped his pubic bone. Then, when she pulled back with a sucking, slurping sound, they all could see part of Arthur's very red, very hard, penis.

While Sherrill was working on Arthur's phallus, Wilma wasn't far behind with Danny's. Clearly these girls had extensive experience at fellatio and the boys were grinning at the watchers—all of the other boys were stroking themselves gently and most of the watching girls' fingers were busy



Truth or Dare at resort gazebo

jilling themselves too, mostly unaware that they were doing it. As Wilma took Danny deeply into her mouth, she put her left hand beneath her right and began fondling Danny's balls. Then she grabbed Danny's buttocks and forced her mouth all the way down on his member. Danny's member wasn't as big as Arthur's, a bit less than six inches, but fairly fat—still respectable in the watching girls' eyes. The watchers could see the bulge in Wilma's throat as Danny's cock slid in. He howled at the sensation.

That was all that the watching teens could stand; an orgy broke out as couples joined together in mutual masturbation, fellatio, and cunnilingus, and Drew and Connor, who was still nude, watched in bemusement as Jennifer pushed Chuck onto his back, swung her hips over his head, pushed her groin into his face, and commanded, "Eat me!"

He did as Jennifer energetically attacked his quite respectable erection.

Drew looked at Connor, who was red-faced, panting, and stroking his cock, so she took pity on him, pushed him flat on his back on the turf, and gave him a quick blow job. It only took twenty seconds before he came.

Suddenly the two standing boys began roaring with release, crying out incoherently, and began cumming, and that attracted the attention of many of the others, who stopped what they were doing and watched Sherrill and Wilma, who appeared to have their mouths glued to their boyfriends' penises as they milked their cum from them.

Slowly cries of orgasm rang out from among members of the little group and soon, everyone sat up, formed a ragged circle, and looked sheepishly around at each other.

Sherrill grinned at Arthur and he blushed.

"Told you that there'd be a special treat if you came," she said playfully and his blush deepened.

"Fuckity fuck, what was that all about?" Danny asked. "Wilma, you always said when we asked you about the resort, that nudism wasn't about sex?"

"Yeah, Wilma, I want to hear that answer too," Drew said.

Jennifer broke in, "Shit, even back in PA, as conservative as it is, I heard stories of teen group orgies like this. So textiles do it too, for sure. But for nudists, we got a head start—the clothes are already gone."

"Say, you old-timers here..." Connor began, "does this kind of gathering happen a lot?"

"Not really," Sherrill answered. "When we have some noobies here that we like, we might get a group of couples together to do it. But no fucking; we don't want to go there with random groups... although maybe..."

She looked at Arthur suggestively and he blushed down to his toes.

By unvoiced mutual consent, the group began to break up, but Drew noticed that the previously loosely associated couples were now holding each other tightly as they walked back to the central resort area.

“Jeez, sweetheart, was that part of a new you, giving a public BJ?” Connor asked as they walked back.

“Got caught up in the waves of lust I felt, I guess,” she answered. “But everyone was busy and I doubt if anyone noticed. Hey, you stripped off too, lover. I get a real charge out of seeing you display your body like that. Wasn’t Sherrill’s reaction too funny when she finally saw your cock?”

“Sure was. You okay with what we did?”

Drew thought a bit. “Not sure. But I can see now what ‘Program sex’ is all about; sex with no strings. Glad nobody suggested swapping partners—I’d be gone in a flash.”

Jennifer was walking ahead of them with Chuck and as they approached the cabins, she kissed him and they parted. Then she waited for Drew and Connor and they entered their cabin together.

“Damn, Sherrill got that session really ramped up quickly,” Jennifer said. “Hope that it didn’t put you two guys off. You okay?”

“We’re sorta okay, Jen, but that came close to the line for us,” Connor replied. “No sweat, though.”

“You guys told my folks that you enjoyed the day. Did you really? ‘Cause you skipped going in the pool, you know,” Jennifer asked.

“It really was fine, Jen,” Drew answered. “Your dad spoke to me about my reluctance about public nudity and I just need some time to get used to the idea. Frantz said it was a kind of desensitizing. Um, Jen, you’re vibrating with excitement now. I bet you’re burning to ask about the sleeping arrangements...”

“You decided? Tell me, please! I hope that...”

“Sure, sis, so yeah, we agreed that you can share our bed.”

Squeal! “Oh, thanks, thank you, that’s awesome! Let me get my little toiletry bag and stuff from the other bedroom.”

After they had gotten their evening ablutions done, they came back to the bedroom naked and sat together on the edge of the bed, to decide now about who’d be in the middle.

“It’s really up to you guys...” Jennifer said.

“Jen, it’s so obvious that you have a major crush on Connor,” Drew smiled at her and when she started to deny it, Drew continued, “No, it’s obvious and I don’t mind. At all. I figured out that I love you both. Connor’s my forever guy, but, you know, still I was okay doing what we did this morning...”

She was interrupted by a little squeal and hug from Jennifer.

“Yeah, I think that remembering about all that Program sex between kids, and then that orgy, has totally wrecked my morals. Connor, you really okay with this idea?” Drew asked.

He was sitting there with his jaw hanging open, unable to believe what he was hearing.

“Drew, wait, are you saying that you want Jen to share in our... um... bedroom ... ah, frolics? Really?”

“Jen’s two really close boyfriends, the twins, are a state away now; also they’re going off to college in six weeks. Maybe they’ll get to come here in August, but Jen is solo now. Jen, your friend Chuck, is he possible BF material?”

“No, no chemistry there. Besides, he has an open relationship with his actual GF, and she’s away for two weeks; that’s why he’s here solo.”

“Okay, let’s just take it day by day,” Drew decided. “For this weekend, we’ll see how things go. Connor, I love you and I love to see your body naked. God! No, you have the body of a Greek god, and I just adore your cock. I also was really surprised at how much I enjoyed what we did this morning. I’m not sure about the orgy just before, though. Remember my total mental reset? I wanna be free, try new things, open up my life. And I think you do too... maybe our living in that puritanical area back in PA has stifled us. You wanna be ‘monkey in the middle,’ Connor? Then you get two gals to snuggle.”

Boing. Connor’s penis, which had been a little fluffed by their sexy talk, instantly expanded into its full extension.

Jennifer looked at it and sighed and Drew made a “go-ahead” hand motion to her.

Jennifer smiled back at Drew and took his cock in her hand, and as she slowly and sensually stroked it, she told the others, “Sherrill was so keen on trying to get to see this masterpiece and she finally did, at the Truth or Dare game. She loved Randy’s cock and when we were all in private, like just before, she’d play with it and stroke him to cum. But then one time I saw, she just went down on him—I was totally shocked when I saw that she could get her mouth around it, too. I could never even think of trying that. The twins were really fun to do; they have long, skinny cocks, maybe six inches, but nothing like this work of art. Can I do it?”

Connor just gulped, eyes wide with disbelief, but Drew grinned at him and gave Jennifer a thumb’s up.

Jennifer redoubled her stroking of Connor’s rigid erection and in no time at all, precum began oozing out of the slit. She kept working his cock with both hands, rubbing its crown and tickling its underside. Then Jennifer moved her head over his hips, pushed his cock down against his belly and began licking along its underside, down to his balls. Then she took one of them into her mouth and began tickling it with her tongue.

Meanwhile, Connor’s hips were jerking up and down and he was groaning and making sounds of encouragement, and when she released his testicle and started tickling his frenulum with her tongue, Connor gasped.

“Jen... oooh.... cumming now...”

Jennifer felt his cock twitch and got an idea, something she had seen Sherrill do that got boys crazy orgasms. She firmly grasped the base of Connor’s cock while pushing several fingers hard

against his perineum, right behind the scrotum, where the root of the penis attaches to the pelvic floor area.

Connor's eyes bulged, his mouth opened in a voiceless groan, and his body tensed.

"Oooff... what the hell, Jen?" he croaked.

"Heh. That's supposed to stop you from cumming. And it worked!"

She bent down once more and resumed sucking his cock, quickly bringing Connor to the brink again, and then she repeated her cock-squeezing technique which shut Connor down yet another time, making him frantic for release now. He was panting and groaning now and his eyes were open so wide that they seemed to be bulging.

"Jen, please... please... let me cum!"

"Poor little boy... let's see what I can do about that," Jennifer smirked as she resumed lashing her tongue energetically over the head of Connor's cock.

But now, while she tickled the underside of his cock with her tongue and rubbed its head with her thumb, she wet a finger on her other hand and stuck it into his rectum and began wiggling it.

Connor erupted with a bellow, his pelvis spasmed and thrust upwards as he spewed a huge bolt of cum, which arched all the way up over his body and landed on his face. That bolt was followed by four more shots of cum, which pulsed out in long, fat creamy ropes, painting his body with his cum from his neck to his abdomen.

Jennifer knelt back in her heels to examine her handiwork, giggled, and commented, "Was that okay, little boy? Jeez, ha, you look like you've been poleaxed!"

"Ugh... ahhh... I thought my whole body was gonna get shot out of my dick! You learned that trick from Sherrill? Jeez. I don't know what to say about that. I guess nudist kids learn some mighty sexy things, whatever you might say about nudism isn't being about sex. Hey, girls, it's your turn now."

Connor pushed Jennifer back on the bed, laying her flat on her back. Then he took Drew and positioned her next to Jennifer, and got Jennifer to roll over on top of Drew so that they were somewhat face-to-face. Although Drew was several inches taller, her height was mostly in her legs.

"What are you doing...?" Drew began.

"Shush," Connor grinned. "Hey, you two can kiss if you want now, right?"

They looked at each other; both smiled, and tentatively began kissing.

Jennifer's hips were almost on top of Drew's and her legs straddled Drew's.

"Now I'm gonna show you two how to do a dual orgasm!" he bragged.

Connor spread both of their legs and settled himself between them.

Fuck, this is such a beautiful sight, he thought. Two puffy Venus mounds with two cute little slits.

And Jen has this perfect tiny camel-toe where that deep dimple at the top of her slit divides it in two there. So frikkin' cute.

Connor wiggled close to them so that he could reach both of their vulvas just by moving his head; then he leaned forward and pushed his face into Drew's crotch, where he began licking and sucking on her labia. Then he switched to Jennifer and repeated doing that to her while he fingered Drew's vulva. He exposed Jennifer's clit with his fingers then, and leaned in and tickled it with his tongue on it as he pushed a finger into her vagina—no hymen—and located her G-spot there, and rubbed and pressed it while nibbling on her clit. She shrieked and a stream of juices began pouring out of her vagina all over Connor's face as she cummed hard.

Connor quickly switched back to Drew where he tried to stick his tongue into her vagina—didn't work very well, so he started wiggling it around between her labia. Then, knowing what set her off, he attacked her big clit and G-spot and quickly sent her into a roaring orgasm too.

Connor's jaw ached but he felt like a king, pleasuring two sweet girls. They were just lying there, wiped out and mostly asleep, so Connor gently untangled them and lay down next to Drew, spooning her. Next thing he knew, it was morning.

Chapter 18 - Making the Pitch

Drew was up first and her stirring woke Connor.

“Ahhh, morning, lover,” she yawned. “That was quite a scene last night. You got me so excited that after I came, I just crashed. You did a number on Jen and me.”

“Thanks, sweetheart, it was fun. But you look troubled somehow now,” Connor said.

“Oh, does it show? Yeah, unsettling dreams. Maybe my conscience is trying to get my attention or something.”

“Recall what you dreamt?”

Jennifer yawned and sat up.

“You had bad dreams?” she asked. “I’d think you’d have nice sexy ones after what Connor did to us,” she joked. “Yeah, can you remember anything from them?”

“Not that much. The thing I remember most strongly was Overmeyer, remember her?”

The others said they did and Jennifer added, “Ugh, that bitchy woman? Now *she*’s worthy of a nightmare!”

“Wasn’t nightmare bad, just, like, threatening and disturbing, I guess. The part I remember was that I was in school, naked, she was the teacher, and had me doing all kinds of humiliating stuff. But somehow being nude like that wasn’t the scary part...”

She trailed off in thought.

“What was scary?” Connor prompted.

“I couldn’t talk. I couldn’t tell Overmeyer that I wouldn’t do those things and couldn’t warn the other kids that what she was doing was wrong. It was like my mouth was blocked or something. But today I’ll be warning all those kids, so you think that my mind was warning me not to do that? ‘Cause Overmeyer was humiliating me?”

“Jeez, that is scary, sweetheart,” Connor agreed. “But maybe the dream’s the opposite: that your mind is telling you that you *MUST* warn the kids today and Overmeyer was trying to humiliate you so that you’d be scared to do it. Aren’t dreams sometimes a sign of frustrations during waking life? I think I heard that somewhere.”

“I know... let’s look on line,” Jennifer suggested. “The source of all human knowledge is in your cell phone, right?”

They all chuckled as Jennifer rummaged through her bag and pulled her phone out.

“Huh, gotta remember to charge this. Let’s see, I’ll put in ‘can’t talk in dream.’ ... Oh, lots of hits on that. Let me read ... Drew, looks like it’s a common dream ... this one says if you can’t speak in your dreams it’s because when you’re awake, you have a sense of not being heard.”

“Um, I don’t see that,” Drew mused.

Connor laughed, “Definitely that’s not Drew.”

“Um, there’s lots more sites. Let me read a few. ... Okay, most all say the same thing but go lots further since there are ... um, nuances I guess the term is, to feeling like you’re not being heard. The best one is that you don’t feel appreciated or valued for your ideas or suggestions. Or somehow you’re kept from telling others about them or that people may not be getting your message. The best one is that you might be feeling like you’re being silenced by someone who doesn’t want other people to hear your message.”

“You know, that def sounds good to me,” Drew nodded, “Yeah, it sounds somehow satisfying, like maybe my mind was trying to tell me that by not speaking up even louder in my past, I was letting people like Overmeyer get away with all those abuses. Connor, remember when I told you about my thinking about doing a social-media campaign against the Program? Well, I was lazy and never got to do that. Maybe the dream was reminding me of that. I was failing to speak.”

“Say, that sounds really right, Drew. Thanks, Jen, for the technical support,” Connor said, grinning. “Hey, ready? It’s a bit after eight and we should get breakfast...”

Someone began pounding on the door. “Jen? Connor and Drew?” came a shout. It was Timmy. “Mom and Dad went to get breakfast and said to wake...”

He stopped when Jennifer opened the door and then he peered at the bed.

“...to wake... um ... you up... um ... were you guys all sleeping together? Oh jeez, you were! Oh shit!”

His cock had sprung erect and he blushed, covering himself with his hands.

“Ooh, nice, bro,” Jennifer cooed. “You’re taking after Dad and Michael. Your girlfriends must think you’re a stud, right?”

“Quit it, Jen, c’mon. You guys didn’t ... um ... do it last night, um...”

Drew had walked over to the door.

“You mean, did we fuck? Is that a nice thing to ask? I’ll ask you then. Have you fucked a girl yet?”

Timmy blushed down to his toenails.

“I ... um ... please, Drew...”

“S’okay, Timmy, I’m teasing. Listen, if you want gals to trust you, sex acts are private, unless someone volunteers to talk. Even then, they might be bragging—guys do that lots and you can’t believe them. That’s how some girls get undeserved reps, okay? Hey, good. It worked, see? Gettin’ you humiliated got you softer. We’ll be at breakfast in a few minutes, tell the folks. See you there, kid.”

Timmy ran off, glad to escape the inquisition.

At breakfast, the teens told Frantz and Eva what they planned to talk about, and Frantz told them that he had seen the Marshall family heading to the office.

“Stuart’s the responsible adult for about sixty kids, I heard,” Frantz told them. “And thirty to forty more are coming with parents. That’s who called in advance. If it gets over 120, they might need to have the meeting in the Pavilion—too many for the clubhouse.”

They were finishing breakfast when the Marshalls arrived; their presence was unmistakable. Not because they were nude; for they were, but because Stuart Marshall was a big, husky man, about six feet tall and solidly built. He had an aura of command; it just radiated from him and everyone in the room turned to see who had entered. With him were three females, a woman, obviously his spouse, and two teens. The girls also radiated a kind of charisma and excitement that swept over the room.

“Let me get them over here to introduce you,” Frantz said and waved.

The Marshall family came over to the Ritters’ table.

“Hi, Stuart, Gerry, gals,” Frantz said. “Thanks so much for helping my daughter and her friends at Glen Burnie.”

“Oh, of course we had to help! What you’re doing is bloody brilliant!” one of the teens gushed.

“Thanks, Sam. Let me introduce you all. My family knows you guys; the two newcomers here are Drew Harper and Connor Martin, Eva’s and my wards. Apparently they are the original source of the anti-Program idea that was the impetus for getting this meeting organized. Drew and Connor, these are the Marshalls, Stuart and Gerry, and their irrepressible daughters, Sam and Abi. When do Andrew and Emma arrive?”

“Any time now,” Gerry said. “Nice meeting you, Drew and Connor. Andrew’s my son and Emma’s his girlfriend.”

“Mum, you know that they’re virtually engaged!” Abi objected and her mother just smiled at her and laughed.

Sam smiled at Jennifer and caught her attention. “Hi, Jen, ace seeing you in the skin again and not just by talking by phone, email, and text. You said you told your, erm, are they a brother and sister? Or what?”

Jennifer giggled. “Connor’s my second cousin. And honorary brother. And Drew’s my honorary sister. They’re tight, too.”

“Oi, we know all about honorary sisters. Emma’s ours,” Abi put in.

“Getting back to what I was saying,” Sam went on. “Jen, you told me when we spoke back in May, I guess, that you had told Drew and Connor all about that big meeting of the teens we had here last August. And how Drew had figured out a possible way to try to make Andrew’s idea a reality at your high school. Ace job, Drew.”

“Thanks, Sam. Andrew had a really good thought, bringing your social nudity to the schools and have it replace the Program. I just tried to figure out a way to make it happen—but it takes a lot of persuasion and organization to get it started. The real success is ‘cause Wilma and Sherrill took the idea and just ran with it. Of course we need to tell the kids that they totally have the right

to completely resist if they want no part of the nudity.”

“And they didn’t speak up at that teens’ meeting, either. Jen and those twin boys told all those horrid stories about what happened back in your school. But then you avoided the Program by getting an injunction—blimey, that’s like Emma did at her school. And now you moved here and need to face the Program again here.”

Drew chuckled, “You don’t know the third part. I got picked to be in the Program at my *FIRST* high school back in Massachusetts.”

“You *what*? No cap? How...”

“Long, sad story. Listen, I hate to have to keep repeating it, so wait till the meeting and you’ll hear it...”

Drew was interrupted when a small dynamo flew into the room and rushed up to hug, first Stuart and then the three women. Then a young man sauntered up to the table.

“Hi, Mum and Dad, Sam and Abi. Ritters. So who’s all this lot now?” he asked. “I’m Andrew.”

That’s when Drew and Connor got to meet Emma and Andrew. Emma was a charismatic dynamo, as Jennifer had told them last year. Naked, she just glowed with energy and vitality and even though she appeared to be a tiny girl, her presence filled the room. After the introductions were made, the Ritters left but Jennifer stayed behind with Drew and Connor. They nibbled on some breakfast danish and coffees, tea for Drew, to chat, while the Marshalls ate. Drew recapitulated for Emma and Andrew what she had told Sam earlier.

“Andrew, you know that your idea from last summer about why the Program can’t be run like a nudist place is becoming legendary,” Drew joked. “Jen mentioned it to me when she told me how you, Emma, had stopped the ... ha, ha, Alaska Program cold...”

They all laughed.

“Cold indeed. I do get a lot of mileage out of that pun, don’t I.” Emma grinned. “So your organizing experience from back at your old school is helping this new initiative, then?”

“It’s actually... ah, speak of them and they shall appear. Here come the real agents of the Program’s doom at Glen Burnie, now. Hey, Sherrill and Wilma!”

Sam lit up at Drew’s words. “Blimey, I love it! Agents of doom; what ace imagery. I gotta remember that one. Brilliant!”

“Hey, from what I heard, Sam, you’re the agent of doom at your own school.”

That caused Stuart to blow coffee out of his nose. Stuart and Gerry, who had been chatting with Andrew, had overheard Drew’s comment. Gerry laughed at Stuart’s discomfort while he wiped his face.

After he recovered and cleaned up the spilled liquids, he complimented Drew for her comment.

“And that is precisely what my older daughter is doing at that school, Drew. You heard the story, I’m sure, and she’s put all of their knickers in a twist over her anti-Program blogging.”

Meanwhile the other two teens had joined them and had greeted the Marshalls.

Sherrill hugged Drew and told her, “It’s so great you came, even if you gotta wear something. By the way, that pareo looks gorgeous on you; where’d you get it?”

“Jen’s mom; she had a few she doesn’t wear and gave me a couple.”

“Oi, Drew,” Abi said, “so you aren’t going to be nude? Is that what Sherrill meant?”

“Yeah, Abi, it’s complicated and I’m still getting myself all straightened out from a few bad incidents in my past. I’ll talk about them at the meeting. Connor doesn’t go naked too; he says it’s to support me, but I suspect there’s another reason. Anyway, you’ll get the answer at the meeting. Speaking of which, now that we’re all here, let’s plan how we want it to run.”

They began planning how to conduct the upcoming meeting while Stuart left to check on the numbers of expected teens for the session. By the time of the meeting start, over 150 kids were waiting outside the clubhouse; most were nervously looking around at the nude resort-goers while trying not to appear that they were looking.

Wilma came out of the clubhouse then, trailed by a few dozen more teens and she shouted, “Yo! Everyone! Follow me this way!” and led the group to the Pavilion.

This was a large roofed structure with no walls; it had a low platform at one end and was used for potluck meals when filled with tables, or folding chairs for music group events for concerts or dances. Currently, it was filled with chairs. As the teens settled themselves on the seats, Sherrill and Wilma went to the platform and took two wireless mics from an older teen resort worker, who opened a little cabinet and flipped on the amplifier power.

“Hi, everyone and welcome to Pine View!” Sherrill began. “As you can see from what I’m not wearing, this is a place where nudity is not only accepted, it’s embraced and celebrated too. I’m Sherrill, as a fair number of you know, and with me is Wilma. At nudist resorts, it’s proper etiquette not to ask for people’s last names unless the names are volunteered. Anyway, both of us are gonna be seniors at GBHS and somehow we became the unofficial organizers of this gathering. We’ll call what we’re doing ‘the Project.’ You all know what the topic is or you wouldn’t be here, right?”

“The Program!” a lot of kids shouted.

“Sure. If that’s not what any of you expected to hear, you’re probably in the wrong place. But you can stay anyway, ‘cause if you’re a high school kid in Maryland, you need to hear what we say today. Here’s Wilma.”

“Hi there, guys, and welcome to this piece of heaven in Maryland. First, some housekeeping. You’re free to use the grounds today and all the facilities. If you came with your folks, they can too. Nudity anywhere is the norm but not required, except in the pools and the spas. You were told what to bring today, in particular, towels and sunscreen. Towels are to set your naked butt on whenever you sit somewhere—and to dry off, of course. You need to take a shower using soap every time you go in the pool or spa.

“Okay. You know that our high school is gonna start the Naked in School Program this fall and

the principal has made it totally clear that every single one of you seniors will be naked for a week at some point during this coming school year. For you others, your naked time might not come this year, but it will definitely come. How many of you guys know a kid who goes to a school where the Program is running?”

Several dozen hands went up, about a quarter of the group.

Sherrill took over now. “Maryland schools began the Program this past fall, as you know. Unless you go around with your head in a sack, you’ve seen naked kids in our shopping malls and in shops and streets in other suburban areas. Those kids are doing the Program ‘Outreach’ that’s required—and you’ll have to do that too. I see heads shaking, but that’s part of the stupid rules. You see all those naked kids out there and they’re doing it. So face it; you’ll hafta too.

“True, there appear to be a lot of kids who seem to enjoy being naked in public; it’s called being an exhibitionist. Here’s a secret: Wilma and I are among them. We’d happily go to a mall nude, and in fact, we’re looking forward to doing that. Here’s another secret: The Program is not nudism, no way is it. It’s a perverted caricature of nudism and the way its rules have been written, it solely exists to humiliate and objectify the kids who have to be naked. What we plan to do at GBH is to turn the Program upside down, to take over its operation, and totally confound the school officials. But we need a lot of kids behind us to do that. Are you all willing to help?”

There was a resounding cheer of “Yes!”

“Great. Thanks. There are maybe 150 here—we need to recruit at least twice that number more to make the Project really work, so more on that later. Okay, why have this meeting at a nudist resort? Simple, to get you used to being nude in a public setting, so you can see that there’s nothing scary about being nude. When we were thinking about how to organize to take over the Program, we came up with a slogan for going to school starting this fall: ‘Nudity is the New Normal Now.’ You like that?”

Applause and laughter.

Now Wilma took over again. “Sherrill came up with that one, guys, and it’s how we’ll fight back against the Program’s abuses—we’ll get to those details real soon. Now, there are a couple ways to fight the Program that we know of, so let’s go over them. First, and foremost, there’s total refusal to cooperate. Next, getting an exemption. And then, there’s what we plan, the Project to Oppose the Program. I suppose the Project is actually malicious compliance, in a way. You’ve heard of that? That’s when someone follows rules or orders exactly, even though they know it will have a negative or unintended result. We’ll go over those fighting points in order. First, can you simply and totally refuse to strip when you’re told that you must? Here’s someone who did just that. Sam’s family is from England and they’ve been nudists for as long as Sam can remember. She can tell you her Program story.”

“Hello, you blokes,” Sam called as she took the mic. “I was here at this very resort last year when my honorary sis, Emma, who’ll you’ll meet soon, told a bunch of us kids how she stopped the Program at her high school. Bad job that her methods won’t work here, though. Anyway, after hearing what she did and how the Program forces kids to get naked, I decided that any physical forcing wasn’t proper, so when I started as a fresher in my school, I went around telling blokes



Sam, Sherrill, and Wilma addressing GBH kids in the Pavilion

that they didn't have to strip starters if they didn't want to do that and nobody was permitted to touch them to pull off their togs. That's because it's a felony for anyone to touch you without your permission and if they try stripping you, it's sexual assault too.

"Of course, the prats who ran the Program at my school decided

to punish me by picking me to do it when they started it off at an assembly on the first day. They had me go up to the auditorium stage with the other pupils that had been chosen to do the bollocks-naked stripping show, and I took that chance to tell the entire school that they all had the right to keep their kits on; the right to resist having to get starters; that I myself was not doing it, and that if I were forced-stripped, I would lay felony charges with the police.

"Okay now, you blokes could certainly try outright refusal, but to do that's a bloody difficult job because they'll keep at you to obey them. To keep resisting takes a strong will. At my school, it's down in Prince George's County, out of every ten kids who first refused, six eventually gave in, and in the Program's early weeks, they got punished for their initial refusing by getting extra required naked time—and that's when they all refused for good. So totally refusing works but to be able to sustain your refusal to participate, you need an iron will to stand up against the officials who will try to break you down. That's why I think that your malicious compliance idea is brilliant. You blokes just have to decide that you will band together and make a go of it."

"Wow, that was super, Sam," Wilma said as the kids all applauded Sam. "Now I mentioned getting an exemption. Currently, you can't, with very limited exceptions. They weren't giving any exemptions at first, unless you weren't a U.S. citizen. Then, maybe eighteen months ago, a major court case created Program exemptions for religious reasons—and I've been seeing on the news that medical exemptions might eventually be allowed because of the hundreds of court cases that have been happening around the country. Here's someone who knows all about that religious exemption. Drew's family just moved to this area from Pennsylvania and she'll be going to GBH as a senior. Back at her former school, she got a religious exemption; so here she is to tell you what happened."

There was a flurry of exclamations and surprise at hearing that as Drew took the mic from Wilma.

"That was an eighteen-month battle too, getting the exemption," she began. "And as Sam said,

those who first claimed it needed iron wills to withstand the coercion that they faced. You can see that, unlike the others who just spoke to you, I'm wearing a cover-up. I have serious problems with public nudity since I was attacked and was almost raped when I was in middle school. [Gasps from the kids] And then when I started high school, the very first day, they were forcibly stripping kids on the auditorium stage. That was just my *first* Program school—I escaped from the Program there when I went to Pennsylvania, where I found myself facing the Program in my *second* school. [More gasps] And here, this will be my *third* school with the Program.”

Now kids were shouting, asking how that could happen. Drew briefly explained, telling them of her high-school experiences and she related to the group how those experiences had led her to associating nudity with sexual violence after seeing the abuses at two different schools. She told them how the group she had organized worked to combat the kids' forced stripping in her Pennsylvania school, and about how the area churches had combined to win the religious-freedom exemption.

“But I can't see any of you guys getting exempt like that here. Back in PA, the entire region was fundamentalist Christian and there were so many sects that I couldn't keep track of them all—maybe half of the population is observant to one degree or another. That's not true in this area, and you need a critical mass of observant kids to make claiming that exemption believable. Just like you need a critical mass to make the Project work, right?”

The kids listening made muted sounds of agreement but then Connor got up and took the mic that Sherrill was holding.

“Listen, I gotta say something 'cause Drew's far too modest. I'm Connor and Drew's my bae. Both of us have gone through the Program crap way back to where we met as freshmen in our first high school. What we saw happen there would scare you stupid. Girls, boys too, being attacked or abused. Or both. Drew herself rescued two girls from being attacked. Put one boy in the hospital when he tried to assault her and she wasn't even in the Program—she was trying to help a freshie Program girl when she was attacked. And then, when that freshie girl became a prop for a totally humiliating sex demo in our Bio class, and had her pussy so badly roughed up by a bunch of jerks who were clumsily trying to get her off, Drew again came to her aid. Despite the teacher's threats, she stared that teacher down and stopped the mauling of that poor kid. She's no wimp, believe me.

“Then, at our next school in PA, when we heard that the Program was coming, here's what Drew did. We were very lucky that a local lawyer had befriended us since her father had basically abandoned her and I'm an orphan... [gasps] She got the lawyer's help in warning the school officials that it's a felony to use force. She organized groups of kids from every grade to try to resist, especially to resist being forced to do anything humiliating. And the biggie was her getting our pastor to organize all of the clergy in our region to preach about how the Program forces the kids to sin and how the Bible condemns public nudity and licentiousness.

“All that summer before school began, those messages went out from almost every pulpit in about five or six counties. The result was that kids in sixteen school districts got the message that the Program's rules violated their religious freedom. A couple of larger churches soon took up the gauntlet and went to court to get an injunction, with the result that, maybe fourteen months

later, the national Program office was forced to honor religious exemptions. And now they learned exactly what being *forced* felt like.”

Laughter, then applause and cheers.

“I told her to tell you what she accomplished, basically all by herself, but...”

Emma had gotten up there and grabbed his mic from him.

“All you blokes, I’m Emma and was to speak in my turn, but this bit of info is too brilliant to be told without more background. You see, I faced the prospect of having the Program begin in my own high school—but that was a spacky idea because the school was in balmy Fairbanks, you guessed it, Alaska.”

Cries of disbelief sounded.

“No, believe it. Up near the bloody Arctic Circle it was, in fact. Well, I wasn’t about to let that happen, so I organized a plan to stop it—I love to say, to stop it *cold*. I love puns. [Audience laughter] I was quite fortunate that the kids in my school got their folks involved and the community came together and all of us, working as a big team, an army if you will, got it stopped. Never even got to begin, innit.”

Applause.

“And now I hear that Drew... you said she was working alone, Connor?”

Drew was shaking her head “no” while Connor said, “She was the mastermind and operator too. A whirlwind. I just hung onto her coattails and helped where I could. You said you made your community into an army; well, what Drew did was to get *two* armies formed. One was of the kids who promised that they’d try to resist being forcibly stripped and that cut down greatly the number of kids that the school could coerce into stripping. But the other army was simply huge because it covered the region. Most of the conservative church-goer kids were in that, and the entire lot of them—half of the students in the school—boycotted that first Program assembly we had and they all refused to go to classes where relief sessions or demos would happen.”

Applause and cheers.

“It was almost like a student strike; their parents actually threatened one if their kids weren’t given the right not to be forced to see sexual stuff. I told Drew that what she did was not simply to organize those armies, but to also use those armies to kick off a whole frikkin’ crusade—a crazy children’s crusade, if you know your European history.”

Applause again.

“So as of this June, there’s no Program running in all of central PA, and that started with Drew’s organizing work.”

Cheering.

“Now, you guys have the option of totally resisting the Program official’s request to strip when it’s your turn, or you can join in with your friends and classmates to participate in an awesome,

massive malicious compliance. But just think of it—if this one girl could accomplish all that she did while working alone, just think of what we can do all working together. Will you do that?”

Shouts of “Yes!” and other affirmations sounded.

“Can I talk now? Please?” Drew asked plaintively.

Both Connor and Emma went to her and hugged her to the sound of more cheering.

“Connor’s being a bit overly enthusiastic about saying it was all me, you know. He played a really big part too and he’s downplaying it. All right. Thanks, Emma, for the compliments about what I did; your own story is the stuff of legends. I told you guys my moral beliefs about public nudity and sex and those were shaped by the community where I lived, my church, and my personal experiences. So I don’t have the desire to get naked, I don’t have the need to get naked, and my religious exemption from participating is part of my school record, even here in Maryland. But I’m still compelled to help others avoid the Program’s abuses. I’ve seen enough really bad things happen when the Program’s running to make me want to have that crap stopped.

“My preferred way is simple refusal, but as Sam so eloquently pointed out, it’s really difficult to do—first, you’re kinda alone doing it even though other kids may be refusing too, and the officials can try ‘divide-and-conquer’ methods to break your resolve. And lots of us kids find it very difficult not to obey authority—isn’t that so?”

There were a lot of affirming nods and exclamations at that.

“Sure, it’s very tough facing down an authority figure who’s in your face, insisting that you must do something that you totally hate to do. That happened to me and I wasn’t aware that I could refuse back then—so I had to run away and my bae, Connor, saved me.”

Gasps and a smattering of applause.

“That’s why I thought of bringing the nudist resort model to the school. The Project to Oppose the Program. The Project that Wilma and Sherrill are trying to shape into reality can take all the bad stuff out of participating as an involuntary naked student—and there’s plenty of bad stuff. Let me tell you about that.

“The bad parts are the student requests for touching and posing, the classroom demos, and the restroom, locker, and shower rules. Those are the sources of virtually all of the abuses, humiliation, and injuries. We’ll take those in order. Do you all know what the ‘Reasonable Requests’ are? Hands up if you know... Wow, fantastic; looks like everyone. The problem is that both words, ‘reasonable’ and ‘requests’ are mostly ignored. I personally saw a guy attempt to finger-fuck a girl while she was being restrained by another guy.”

Gasps.

“Not reasonable. Not a request either. No way. That was just one out of a dozen or more similar incidents Connor or I saw in just one single week. I saw a gal get a boy into a bent-over butt-up pose, with his legs spread—but then she took a pencil and tried to stick it into his asshole.”

Again, gasps.

“Where was the reasonably there? Or the request? Okay, done. With the Project, those ‘Requests’ stop. If there are dozens of naked kids in the school halls, all the targets are instantly gone, right? Can we legally do the Project? You bet we can. If you read the Program booklet, at least the ones we got in our old schools, it says that kids can be naked even if they’re not participating—and they aren’t subject to the Program rules. I’ll quote what it says; I have a copy here. ‘Nude individuals, including fellow students who choose a nude lifestyle, are not subject to the rules of the Program and should not be treated as such.’ That’s straight from the Program’s gospel. Sorry for the religious reference; it’s kinda how I think now. So when the Project is operating in the school, it’s completely within the rules of the Program as the rules booklet describes. That’s point one.”

Applause.

“Next, classroom demos. Here, it’s the teachers who are the problem. You all know what sadism is, I assume. Giving pain to others is what gives a sadist their jollies. Well, there are sadists who get off on giving or seeing other people’s misfortune or humiliation. Some even enjoy just hearing about other people’s humiliation—reading about it too. I’ll show off by telling you the term for that fetish—it’s called ‘schadenfreude.’ Joyful damage, it’s from German. What’s the purpose, after all, of using a live human subject in a classroom to show the students how a boy ejaculates? Or trying to measure how big a girl’s clit gets when she jills off? [shocked expressions] Sure, those are examples of things that happen in those demos, and worse things happen too, and they are completely devoid of any teaching value. Of course, having live models in art classes is essential—but that’s only in life drawing, a very small part of an art program and usually for advanced kids.

“There’s more bad stuff. In my two schools, they also videoed, or planned to video, classroom demos, and put them on the school’s website. Hey, you know that child porn is a huge felony? But not for the Program. The law exempts videos and photos like that and the law says, quote, ‘when used for educational purposes.’ Unquote. But put one of those videos on your phone? Jail time, baby.”

It was dead quiet; the audience was listening raptly.

“With the Project, having at least half of the class naked would completely remove any thrill that the sadistic teacher might experience, because all those volunteer naked kids could team together to protect any Program kid in that class from humiliation. The Program kid would have the moral and physical protection of his or her classmates; any retaliatory threats that the teacher could make could be construed as extortion—and thanks for that suggestion, Emma; our lawyer told us that your comment about extortion in cases like that was exactly right.”

Applause as Emma waved her thanks.

“Let’s see... next, there was the use of the opposite sex’s facilities. What’s the purpose of that idiotic rule, other than a gift to voyeurs and to increase the kid’s level of humiliation? I asked what the purpose of that rule was. The answer? Reduce any modesty in performing bodily functions. Come again? Are you kidding? That’s pure fetish material, not educational at all. And the switched-sex locker room use creates a huge personal safety problem too. My friend from

back at my first school told me about one incident involving a Program girl in the boys' locker room. Some boys had managed to get the supervising teacher distracted and they trapped a girl in there and she got not-quite-raped."

More gasps and questions about what that meant.

"Sure—when is a rape not a rape? How about this? The boy had his cockhead pressed against her hymen when he came. Almost no penetration—but she got pregnant anyway. The shot? She was allergic and couldn't tolerate the hormones. And hey, boys get raped too. I did hear of one case where that happened. Four girls got the boy restrained and used a dildo on him."

The expressions of shock increased. The reality of what lay ahead was setting in for the group.

"With the Project, who cares which locker room you use? So if there's a large number of naked kids, boys and girls, in the locker rooms, you can watch out for and protect your fellows. Connor and I saw some disgusting and frightening stuff in both schools where we saw the Program running and we don't want anything like that happening here at GBHS. A final point. Participating in the Project is important for our solidarity, but it doesn't preclude outright refusal. Your name gets called and the Project is running. Just don't go; don't strip; no one's the wiser. But we need the Project's solidarity for that to work. So that's my part. I think that Wilma will talk about Project details now."

Drew got a standing ovation and she was mobbed by Connor, Jennifer, Wilma, Sherrill, Sam, and Emma, who all hugged and kissed her.

"Wow, Drew, that was just amazing," Wilma said as she stepped onto the platform.

A little further applause showed that the teens in the group agreed.

"Okay, Gophers gang, it's time for you guys to learn how you can keep the crap that Drew told you about from happening here. Show of hands, how many of you have heard of stuff like she described happening in schools you know about—like a cousin's school or other kids you know? ... Okay, a fair number, maybe thirty. That's a fifth of you, or two out of ten. That's about how many kids get badly mistreated during their time in the Program, according to our very unscientific survey we took from among this little group of us speaking to you.

"To stop most of that abuse, when they start the Program—most likely just by naming kids to go somewhere to get stripped, probably the field house, since they'll need to call at least thirty kids every week—then what we all need to do is to just simply strip off our clothes and just stay put in the classroom. Since they almost certainly wouldn't want to pull kids out of an instructional class—our Period 1 class, they'd need to do it during home room period ..."

There was a hurried discussion between several people near the platform.

"Sorry. They said I need to elaborate. Different counties in the area have different school schedules. Sam points out that at her school, there's an advisory period first, kinda like a home room. We don't have a home room first, as you all know... oh, our newcomers, Drew, Connor, and Jen. You guys don't know this—there are four class periods, a short home room after Period 1, and two flex periods for lunch, clubs, admin stuff, and other things, following Period 2. Okay?

So the chosen participants will most likely not get called during Period 1, a subject period.

“We tried to brainstorm how things would work here, based on what Drew told us about her other two high schools and what we’ve heard from kids in other counties and these are our best guesses. So all of the Project kids will stay nude and protect the selected kids; everyone keeps their clothes with them so there’s no morning strip-tease outside like we heard lots of schools do, kids use whatever rest room and locker room they want, and the Reasonable Requests just disappear. But this takes everyone’s buy-in. Either we all do this together, or we suffer a week in the Program alone, to be humiliated and abused. How can you help all of us to succeed? I want each of you to recruit three to five more kids who’ll agree to be nude to support the Project. Then we all win and the Program loses. Right?”

Cheers.

Wilma turned to Sherrill and invited her to do the next part.

“We’re almost ready for the fun part, but there are two more items to discuss. The first one is about how one gets used to being naked—we nudists prefer the term ‘nude’ ‘cause the word ‘naked’ seems to have the sense of defenselessness or vulnerability. Nude is simply a state of being. We invited you here today to try nudism in a safe and secure place with your friends. And if enough of us are nude in the school, it’ll feel sort of similar to what you see here—except for seeing the walls in the classrooms and hallways.”

Chuckling.

“Another way to get used to nudity is by being nude at home. Sleep nude—doing that feels great, actually, and if you’re really brave, go with a group to a shopping mall like Arundel Mills. There are always nude kids there, hanging out in bunches, so you’d blend right in. Now, to help you get used to nudity, and this offer applies to the kids you recruit too, Emma has an offer which is way too good to turn down.”

Emma got up on the platform and took a mic. She looked out at the group and smiled; Connor leaned over to Drew and whispered, “Jeez, that smile—it’s like she’s projecting energy with it!”

Drew nodded at him.

“Greetings again, you lot. My fam, that’s Andrew, Sam, Abi, and their parents, Stuart and Gerry, all want the Project to succeed—Sam in particular...”

“Bloody right!” Sam shouted to the kids’ laughter.

“...so I made an arrangement with the resort’s management. Like today, and for the rest of the summer, any Glen Burnie pupil gets free entry; if parents come with, the family fee is just \$10. To compare, the usual day fee is \$50. Stay overnight in a tent, no charge doing that for everyone. Cabins, when available, can be rented at the usual rate. For free entry, the office just needs to see your school ID and for incoming freshies, your middle school one.”

Applause and cheers.

“Now if you come without an adult, you need to take special steps. You’ll need to get a form

from the office that your parents need to sign and get notarized, giving you permission to come. You'll need to sign a pledge that you promise to be respectful, behave safely, and of course follow the rules of the resort. And you'll have an interview with one of the managers, who will assign you to a volunteer adult who's agreed to mentor the Glen Burnie pupils. Most of those adult volunteers live here during the summer. You'll meet one of those adults so they'll get to know you, but, and this is a huge but, you misbehave in any way, you'll get banned. They will not tolerate any poor behavior, will they. And as well, you can come as many times as you want. Anyone have a question?"

One was, "Can sibs come?"

"Certainly. All immediate family members can come for the \$10 fee. The free deal is for the high school students, though, when they come alone. They're essentially free with the family rate, anyway. But you can't bring in your aunts, uncles, cousins to the sixth degree on the reduced family fee, however."

Laughter.

"How about my girlfriend from another high school?"

"You'd be free, but the girlfriend, if she's under eighteen, would need her parents with her and their fee would be \$50. Over eighteen, the young-adult daily fee is \$25. No more? Excellent. Now Sherrill has the last bit of info for you all. Enjoy your day here."

She got some applause.

"Thanks, Emma," Sherrill smiled at her. "As Emma said, their family wants us to succeed, so Emma's subsidized all of your resort reduced daily fees for the summer, so let's give her our great thanks!"

Standing ovation.

"Here's the last item," Sherrill told the group. "It's to have fun here today. And it's time to get nude now—we strongly suggest your just jumping right into it now and it's why you all came, right? Sure it is. After lunch, the girls' soccer team wanted to come out here to try nudism, but they plan to do a brief scrimmage and sorry, they told me that they weren't doing that nude. But maybe after the scrimmage, some may strip to try nude soccer. Hey, we play nude volleyball here, so why not soccer? There are piles of handouts over on the two tables outside the Pavilion and they list what we discussed this morning and have the instructions for your future visits here. Take a few and use the material in them to recruit more of us into the Project. Now go get nude and enjoy the resort!"

Cheers and a big round of applause.

Chapter 19 - Naked Soccer?

After all the kids had begun to filter away, the meeting's organizers engaged in a bit of self-congratulation. Emma, in particular, was very complimentary about Drew's presentation.

"Blimey, girl, your part was the dog's bollocks!" she praised, and at Drew's puzzled expression, clarified, "Ha, Brit slang. Means extremely good. Your Program experience was so similar to mine, then, and you responded in the same way as well. To organize a resistance. I got in trouble for my part, so tell me: did the authorities twig that you organized the opposition?"

Drew grinned. "If 'twig' means 'find out' and not something from a tree; no, somehow I was never linked to anything I did to get the anti-Program movement going. Possibly 'cause I was just one of hundreds who submitted a declaration of my religious beliefs. I didn't do what you or Sam did, which was to publically speak out or do my organizing in the school. I was very lucky too—the culture in that region is so conservatively homogenous that it was easy to get lots of kids who all thought alike and were willing to resist—and they had their parents' backing too."

"Brilliant... oh look, there are some gals who look like that want to talk to you, Drew. Let's plan to continue our chat sometime later; will that work?"

"Oh, sure, and I want to get to talk to Andrew and the sisters too. You all have some really interesting stories to tell, and I want to talk about how you came to become a nudist too, even after a potentially bad Program experience."

They arranged to meet after dinner. Then Emma left and some girls, who had been hovering nearby, came over to greet Drew. Drew looked to see where Connor, Jennifer, and the others were, and saw them at the other end of the Pavilion, talking to a number of adults.

Wonder who those people are. Maybe parents. she thought.

"Hey, Drew, right?" the closest girl asked. "That was an amazing session, but you were just staggering. I'm Leia, on the Gophers soccer team. A senior, and team captain, so that means I'm the spokesman for this crew."

"Hi, Leia. Great to meet you," Drew replied. "How many on the team came today?"

"The varsity has twenty-four members. Twenty-one could come. And seventeen from the JV came too. Coach told us about you, that you were an excellent all-around player but a D wizard..."

Drew interrupted, "I don't embarrass easily, but I do when folks brag on me. I love the game and think I'm good at it. You can get to see how I play if you let me scrimmage with you."

"That's why we came by, to see if you'd join us. You have your gear? We brought extra black and white jerseys so we can tell the teams apart. Hey, let me introduce the guys here."

There were twelve girls in the group, eight incoming seniors and four juniors, and Drew learned that they were among the Project organizers for the girls' sports teams.

Kylie, another senior and the midfielders' captain, told Drew, "Most of the female athletes aren't scared of the nudity but hate the sexual crap and other shit the Program has. So they're backing

the Project. We've got almost 100 percent of the swim team, volleyball, lacrosse, track, softball, basketball, and cheer teams. Maybe half the football team—not sayin' why only half," she grinned. "And we heard that the Program rules say we have to play naked, but absolutely no one on any team will agree to that."

"I think that the different sports' uniform rules supercede the Program. That's what I learned at my past schools," Drew told her.

"Damn, that's good to hear. Say, here's Gemma; she's the D captain and you'll be playing on her line."

"Hi, Gemma. This bunch of gals really look like players—you all got that heavy-duty athletic look. Hey, you know that I'm a coach at the Nike soccer camp with Coach Adcock?"

"How'd you score that job? They only hire college kids, I thought," Gemma said.

"Not to brag, but Coach saw some clips of my playing and spoke to my coach of my PA team. Coach Adcock told me that she was told that my skills match or surpass most college players. And I've been teaching skills to my teammates, so she figured I could do the coaching gig. The first week was a blast. There's a good camper group attending and I'm having fun."

"Oh shit, I wonder if she's gonna shake up the D line now with you being here."

"Hey, I wouldn't worry. Coach said she's gonna try new formations. One is a 5-3-2 that has me playing in center, close to the D line. Another is a 3-1-3-3, where I'd play stopper, almost in the midfield. She thinks that will work really well, 'cause I can set up or even run attacks from the backfield; I'm really fast on breakaways. I play D, but on lots of plays, I'll run an O attack. It sure confuses the hell out of the opponent 'cause they don't know how to mark me. I'm slippery—you'll see when we scrimmage."

A good part of the people at the resort had heard about the scrimmage and many came to watch. Drew consulted with Gemma about how she wanted to run the defense.

"Gemma, you're the captain so you decide. I'm the newcomer here. You know how your mates play."

"How 'bout we try your 3-1-3-3 lineup on our side? We're going against the varsity's O starters."

Drew chuckled. "Oh good, a challenge."

Drew's team was designated "home," so they got the dark jerseys, and the "away" team got the ball first. When they began their attack, their first attack crossed the centerline with a give-and-go pass between a winger and their striker, Leia. But Drew was watching closely and she anticipated the likely "go" pass. As the winger's foot began to strike the ball for her pass back to Leia, Drew, who was already moving toward Leia to block her, accelerated to her top speed and intercepted the pass as she raced between the two players, and without breaking stride, she carried the ball to within ten yards of the opponent's box as their fullback came out to challenge her and to cut off her shooting angles.

Running now at half-speed, Drew rouletted to the left around the fullback's strong side, leaving

the girl wondering what had happened. This gave her a possible open shot at her right side of the goal. The other two defenders, taken by surprise at the sudden new direction of Drew's travel, saw the same opening and, as one ran a few steps to her left to try to block a shot to Drew's left, the goalkeeper came out to block the angle Drew had to her right. All this happened in about three seconds before Drew, still without breaking her stride, chipped a short lob right over the goalkeeper's head—a so-called Messi chip—and the ball bounced softly into the goal.

Every player on the field watched this, stunned at how quickly Drew had converted her interception into a goal, and the bystanders erupted into applause.

Leia, the striker who was the pass's intended recipient, jogged over to Drew.

"Tell me that was a fluke, right, Drew? No one's that fast—how were you able to catch up with Jordan's pass to me like that, anyway?"

"It's just my secret invisible jet-packs, Leia," Drew joked. "I am kinda fast, you know."



Drew playing in scrimmage at resort



Drew playing in scrimmage at resort

Play resumed, with Drew continuing to dominate the zone in front of her defensive line. In the first forty-five minutes of the scrimmage, Drew had two more interceptions, three stolen balls, two assists, and one additional solo goal.

When they broke for a rest, most of the girls tried to talk to Drew all at once but then Leia called them to back off.

"Give the gal a chance to catch her breath!" she called. "Okay, team, we need to talk before we resume play. We've never played against someone like Drew. In fact, I've never heard of a high-school player who can do the stuff she does. Um, one sec..."

An adult had trotted over to the girls and spoke to Leia.

"That was my dad. He said that Drew's a ringer."

The other girls got shocked expressions and one asked,

“How could she be a ringer?”

Leia laughed. “Dad looked her up on a prep-school soccer app. This gal who we’ve been playing against has been selected as a Pennsylvania all-state first-team player two years running and was recently named as one of the top ten high-school defensive players nationally. No wonder she’s been running our O into the ground! All right, Drew. Cut the modesty and tell us about yourself.”

Drew shrugged. “What’s to tell? I’ve been playing for years now and I’m proud of my skills. I practice my ball skills year ‘round and keep up my strength and conditioning. I’ve studied pro soccer game clips and learned the moves. Maybe you should just ask me questions about how I did some of the plays I made. And yes, I’ll teach any of you who wants to learn. But you’ll need to fine-tune your basic skills first. Some of you are quite good. Others, not so much. I’m sure you know who you are.”

For the next ten minutes, Drew answered questions about her playing. Most of her opportunities for steals and interceptions were based on her anticipation of likely players’ movements or on a player’s body language—their physical tells. That, combined with her mentally keeping a constant overall picture of the entire pitch, the players and their movements, and the game’s tempo, frequently enabled her to be in just the right place to make an important play.

When the game resumed, Leia made a change; instead of playing with the varsity starting defense, Leia moved Drew to the visitor’s team where she’d play with the backup and JV defensive players.

“Want you on my team,” Leia joked. “Actually, our subs watching you play in front of them would be a good experience for them, and I want to see if our starting D line can stop you.”

It turned out that they couldn’t. Now playing with the team’s offensive starters, Drew scored on the defense three times and had two assists, plus numerous steals. It was those steals, deep in the opponent’s side, which led to her goals. After the game was over, Drew told the team what she had seen.

“Here’s what happened—I had spotted all of your weaknesses during the first half and simply exploited them in the second. And much of what I saw should be simple to fix, actually. You guys are good—no cap, much better than my PA team. But you unit captains, you need to get your people working together better. Like, here’s one for Kylie: who’s the team’s quarterback? The field play-caller? That’s usually the center midfielder but I didn’t see that in the scrimmage. Coach can’t see the pitch like a player can. True, it’s important to have set plays, but when an unexpected opportunity comes up, someone needs to recognize that and start a play to capitalize on the opportunity.”

“Damn—can’t wait for the season to start, Drew,” Kylie told her. “I’d love to see how you handle the teams we play.”

The others nodded enthusiastically.

“Who’s gonna stay here for a little naked soccer now?” Celeste, a sophomore backup midfielder asked.

Fifteen of the girls decided to stay and they spent a half hour playing seven-on-seven nude, just kicking the soccer ball around. But they unanimously decided that actually playing soccer games nude wasn’t going to happen, at least with them.



Naked scrimmage at resort pitch

Drew, Connor, and Jennifer spent the evening with Emma’s group, trading stories and learning about Sam’s anti-Program blogging campaign [as told in *Emma Comes in from the Cold* and *The Vodou Physicist*].

On Sunday afternoon, as the Ritters returned home, Eva asked Drew and Connor about their first nudist experience.

Drew chuckled a little and then told her, “Eva, I don’t think that what we did qualifies as ‘nudist.’ After all, I wore coverups the whole time and Connor wore those pareos. I must say, though, the ones you gave me are quite lovely, so thanks again. And Connor looked so good in Frantz’s pareos—like a men’s fashion model.”

“Yes, you both did look very elegant. And I heard a number of folks saying how nice it was with all the high-school kids there and how well behaved everyone was. Did you know that there were over forty sets of parents that came?”

“No, we didn’t know that it was that many,” Connor answered.

Frantz replied, “I was speaking to the general manager; she’s delighted with how many families came and about a dozen signed up for a seasonal membership. She told me about the amazing deal that Emma had arranged—instead of the \$500 cost to the family, she’s subsidized it to just \$100 for this season.”

“I didn’t know that Emma’s really wealthy, Dad,” Jennifer said. “That’s what we found out when we were talking on Saturday evening. So she said that she had no problem affording how she subsidized all those day fees. She told us how she had inherited her family’s estate. Her grandfather was some kind of really important industrialist in England, so she owns a bunch of companies there. She has other people running them, though, since she does physics research here at Hopkins.”

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The following week at soccer camp was a welcome relief for Drew since she didn't have to worry about clothes—or the lack of them. Her regular jersey and shorts and soccer stockings were the only clothes she needed and they felt perfect to her. Drew's challenge to the advanced campers for any of them to keep her from stealing the ball during dribbling drills hadn't been met by Wednesday, so on Thursday, Drew worked closely with that group to show them defensive techniques to keep their bodies between the marking opponent and the ball, and how to react when a player challenged them from their front.

On Friday, Connor and Drew decided to visit the local mall, Marley Station Mall, with Jennifer, Wilma, and Sherrill.

When the group picked up Wilma at her house, she looked into the car and joked, "Connor, will you be safe at a shopping mall with four girls?"

"Not sure about it being safe, but it gives me lots of nice eye candy to watch," he retorted and the girls all laughed.

"Good comeback, Connor," Sherrill told him. "Soon you'll be able to survive my own digs."

They laughed again.

"So what's at this mall, anyway?" Jennifer asked.

"It's not a big one, like Arundel, but it has some cute shops," Wilma said. "Also, it's right between our two local high schools, us and Old Mill. Neutral grounds there, like," she laughed. "Last school year, when we went, we'd see the Old Mill Program kids doing Outreach there. You know, some of the shops gave a small discount to the naked kids. Said it brought in business."

They spent a few hours going shop to shop. Connor found a video-game store so he spent time in there, and then found an electronics shop and a bookstore. He did notice groups of naked kids too—mostly girls, but some boys too.

*Jeez, schools' out, no Program, so what gives there?* he wondered.

He found out when he met the girls for lunch at the food court; they were with six naked girls, talking.

"Hey, Connor honey," Drew called to him as he walked over, wondering what was going on. "Meet our new friends from Old Mill," she said and introduced the six. "They say they're doing an



*Advanced Outreach at the mall*

advanced Outreach session,” and everyone laughed.

“Yeah, Connor,” Kim, one of the girls, said. “We were in the Program this spring; it was horrible, and they made us do this Outreach as part of it. But it turned out that we liked doing it—especially how it horrifies the older ladies here and how the adult guys react when they see us. So funny! So are the people who stop us and ask us to pose for pictures for them. They stammer and stutter before they can give us their request. So yeah, we like doing this, and we’ll go naked shopping a few times during the summer, just for fun.”

“But you were telling us that you hated the Program itself,” Drew said.

“Right, it was sooo nasty,” Joan told her. “Especially a demo I had to do in my psych class. The teacher had a thing like a lie detector machine and hooked me up to it and had a kid grope me all over, my pussy too, trying to stimulate me and the machine was supposed to show that I got aroused.”

“Did it work?” Wilma asked.

“No idea. I didn’t feel aroused; I was so humiliated and the boy was too rough. After maybe ten minutes, I guess, the teacher stopped and was trying to show wiggles on the screen and explain what they were. Looked like just wiggles to me.”

“But you come here naked still?” Wilma pressed.



*Advanced Outreach at the mall*

“Um, I kinda find it turns me on... being looked at... as long as there’s no touching. Now, that was an awful experience, the groping. A girl I know got a bladder infection from being groped and she said it was really painful. And another... oh, here come the boys... gotta go. Nice seeing you all; got your contact info so we’ll keep in touch. Good luck when you start the Program at GBH.”

Six guys walked by and the girls joined them. The boys were naked too.

“Now that was totally surreal,” Connor observed as he sat down. “So they hated the Program but go out naked anyway?”

“Funny, right?” Sherrill replied. “They became exhibitionists. And their boyfriends did too. You know what they told us? They all have sex together; they call it Program sex and say that’s just sex with no strings attached. I can’t figure out if I’m envious or disgusted by that idea. Shit.”

As they left the mall, Drew commented, “Look over there; another naked teen group posing for pictures.

Shit, I could never do that... say Wilma, you and Sherrill said that you're exhibitionists too. At our resort meeting. Do you guys mean that you'd want to come here naked too and just walk around like those kids did?"

"Sure. You think that's so terrible to do?" Sherrill asked.

"Unh... no... but it's just strange for me to think of doing something like that being fun, that's all."

"I don't know why I like showing myself off like that," Wilma said thoughtfully. "Maybe it's because I think that nudism is so dope that I wish everyone could do it. Maybe if there was a law allowing nudity everywhere; I'd love that. Like I saw on cable TV, a French show, where the government passed a law that made wearing any clothes a crime and everyone had to be nude all the time. I don't know French, so I don't know what they did about clothing when the weather got cold."

"Sounds like a weird plot, anyway," Connor said. "Ha, if that happened in real life, it would destroy the French fashion industry, right?"

They all laughed.

When they returned home, Drew opened one of her bags.

"I bought some new curtains I want to put up on the front windows, sweetheart. The ones there are kinda faded. I think that the current hardware will work fine with these, but I'll let you know if I need help."

"Okay, honey. I got a GoPro camera for the bike that I want to install. There are a lot of stupid drivers around here and I saw on line that if there's a traffic incident, having a video backup to show would be important."

"Okay, that sounds like a good idea, actually."

The Ritters had decided not to go to the resort that weekend, but Emma was there, and she texted Drew that a bunch of kids who hadn't been at the previous week's meeting showed up.

*"Looks like your recruiting effort is making progress," her text read. "Sam, bless her, went around speaking to lots and word of your Project is spreading."*

*"That's good news. Thanks for the update,"* Drew responded

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When Monday arrived, Drew and Connor got ready to leave for their second week of soccer camp.

"We'll see how many kids took the time to look at the videos I told them about," Drew said as they dressed for the bike ride. "And I'm glad you've insisted that we wear our leathers over a bulky sweatshirt, 'cause remember last week when that truck's tire popped that rock at me? If I had been in light clothes, that would have given me a big bruise."

"Yeah, that was a freak thing to happen. That's why I like to have extra padding when I ride,

especially around truck traffic. Something Dad told me to do.”

They went out to the garage and as Connor was opening it, Drew was looking around, enjoying the scenery. Their house backed up to a creek which eventually led to the Patabasco River and she could see the water beyond the trees. Then she noticed a strange car parked a few houses away.

“Look down the block, honey—see that black SUV parked in front of the gray house?” Drew asked Connor. “I think I see movement inside it too.”

“Yeah. Doesn’t look like the cars we’ve seen on the block before.”

“And I recall seeing a black SUV looking like that riding past our house a couple times on Friday, too. After we got back from the mall, when I was hanging the curtains. Our street’s just a loop, so why would someone be riding around it? You know? I’m suspicious. Let’s watch and see what they do. Ride out past them slowly. Maybe I’ll get a look.”

Connor pulled the bike out of the garage and they mounted it. As they passed the SUV, Drew glanced at it.

“Jeez, the side windows are so dark I can’t see inside,” she said, using their helmet communicator. “Oh, it’s turning around. Connor, they’re following us!”

“Shit; well, I’ll surprise them. Let’s see if he follows us through the side streets. Then there’s always a lot of traffic on Ritchie Highway going past the school.”

When Connor turned off onto a side street, the SUV followed, keeping back a fair distance.

“Yeah, he’s following us. Okay, let’s shake him.”

Connor sped up to 35 mph—residential streets had a 25 limit, and he quickly reached Ritchie. The SUV had matched his speed through the side streets. But on the main, two-lane road, filled with vehicles and with traffic lights every quarter mile, he lane-split between the stopped vehicles at the lights and within less than a mile, they had lost the trailing car. Then they turned off Ritchie and continued on to the soccer camp.

“Wonder what the hell that was about, sweetheart,” Connor said as their pulses settled down.

“Whatever it is, we need to keep alert,” Drew advised him.

“Totally.”

That evening, they told the Ritters what had happened.

“And Drew saw that car on Friday afternoon, riding around the loop,” Connor said. “She said it made two circuits.”

“Let’s keep an eye out the next couple of days, then,” Frantz said. “If any of us sees them again, call the police and report a suspicious vehicle.”

On Tuesday morning, when the teens left for the camp, the SUV wasn’t there, so Connor took his usual route. But as Connor approached a strip mall and began to slow down for a turn, motion to Drew’s left caught her eye and Connor cursed.

“Shit, looks like they’re gonna cut us off.”

Sure enough, that black SUV had pulled up beside them on the left, and as it passed, it edged over to the right, forcing Connor into the entry drive to the little parking area and not leaving room for Connor to pull around the SUV without jumping the curb.

Two men leapt out of the SUV and one called, “Federal agents! We need to question you!”

Connor shouted back, “Prove it! FBI, whatever you are, show your ID badges!”

“Kid, we don’t have to prove anything to you. Get over here and into the vehicle now!”

“Like hell we will,” Connor shouted and began to turn his bike to angle around the SUV in front of him, when both men pulled out yellow pistol-shaped objects and pointed them at Connor.

“Get off the bike or we’ll Taser you—now move!” one shouted.

That was when things began to happen quickly. Drew hopped off the back seat, and with a quick motion, she threw a bright yellow object at the closest man, hitting him in the forehead, and he dropped unconscious to the ground. The other man, seeing his partner drop, reflexively fired his Taser. Meanwhile, Connor had noticed that Drew had jumped off the bike, so he started to drop the bike’s kickstand, when the darts impacted his chest. Then Drew let go with another yellow object. Her aim was not as good this time, because she hit the second man on the side of his jaw. He screamed, dropped his Taser, and sunk to the ground, clutching his jaw. Connor dashed over to the unconscious man while he yanked the barbed darts out of his heavy leather riding jacket and dropped them on the ground. Then he grabbed the first man’s unfired Taser and a cube-shaped object lying next to it. He ran back to the bike and started it as Drew, grinning widely, was getting back onto it.

As they rode off, Connor spoke to her on their helmet communicator. “What in the effin’ *hell* did you do back there?”

Drew laughed. “Better than throwing rocks. Lacrosse balls. Ideal throwing size too; I perfected my technique back at Etown High using the football passing target the team has. I can do three bull’s-eyes in six seconds, too. Got the baseball trainer to clock my throws with their radar and my throwing speed is about 60 miles per hour. I can throw faster but lose accuracy. Ha, I even retrieved the balls I threw,” she laughed. “How come you weren’t shocked? I saw you get hit.”

“I guess the leathers, plus the bulky hoodie I’m wearing underneath, must have stopped most of the shock. Maybe my distance from them didn’t let the darts hit as hard. I did feel a big kick, but nowhere enough to bother me. What happened to those idiots, anyway? Where did your balls hit them?”

“First one hit where I aimed, the forehead. I bet he’s got a concussion. The second was moving as I threw, so I think his jaw’s busted.”

“Awesome. Damn, that’s amazing throwing, but what if you missed?”

“Got three more balls. Carry five,” Drew laughed. “So you liberated a Taser, I saw.”

“Yep, and an extra thing that snaps on the front—that guy had it in his hand when he went down.

And now I think I know who those jerks must be. Jerks who claim to be federal agents and attack kids with Tasers. Give you an idea?"

"Oh, fuck. Sure. Those Program enforcer morons. But why did they track us down?"

"Maybe this. They must get reports from all the schools, and remember how we shut down those two interviewers? And they must have gotten your name from Memorial High as someone who got picked but ran away. Maybe they linked those things somehow. Emma said that the people who run that office must be incredibly vindictive, so maybe our dissing those interviewers ticked off somebody in power there."

"Okay, your reason is better than mine, anyway," Drew admitted.

"Which is?"

"Absolutely no fucking idea," and she laughed. "We're here, so let's shoot soccer balls instead of lacrosse balls..." Drew began.

"...or Taser darts," Connor finished and they both laughed. "I think I'll ask Frantz for his opinion about whether Jay should look into why the Program people are harassing us. We need to check what the GoPro camera caught too."

That evening, when Frantz heard the story of their encounter, he got Jay on the phone immediately, and Connor related what had happened without going into the blow-by-blow details.

Jay responded to Connor, "So it appears that the first you were aware of that surveillance was when the vehicle passed by your home several times. Then they tried tailing you. And then they pulled a dangerous move by cutting you off. Doing that to a motorcycle rider has been legally held to be negligence. Were there any witnesses?"

"None, but I have a GoPro video of the car cutting me off. You can read the plate number too."

"That's excellent..."

"...but after we stopped, the camera was pointed away from the SUV but the audio was still running. I can hear what they were saying on it. Oh, and I picked up a Taser one of them aimed at us."

"Good—let me give you my email; send me that file and I'll look into the incident. It could be a case of negligent operation of a motor vehicle and an attempted kidnapping. I'll let you guys know what I find. Don't use the camera and put it somewhere safe. And hold onto that Taser... ah, it must have your fingerprints on it too, I assume."

"Was wearing riding gloves, so no prints. Thanks, Jay," Connor said and the others echoed their thanks.

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At the OSA headquarters in Suitland on the afternoon of the same day, Ross Gerberin, the director of Program compliance and head of the Enforcement Division, was speaking by phone

with an agent.

“The docs say that Turner’s got some brain swelling and a severe concussion and is being kept sedated,” the agent was saying. “Wilson’s jaw is broken in two places and he’s lost a few teeth. To get access to the medical people, I had to use my federal enforcement supervisor status, which you know, doesn’t count very much with the local cops, who are really pressing me to explain what happened, since Wilson’s jaw is wired closed and he can’t speak clearly.”

“Could you find out anything at all about what happened?” Gerberin asked.

“A few things. They cut off the motorcycle the subjects were riding and tried to get them into their vehicle. Wilson shot one with a Taser and it had no effect, and they both got severe head blows. The cops want to know why there was a discharged Taser there; its barbs had traces of leather, so they figure that it was used against someone. The cops want to know about that. They said that they only found one Taser at the scene, so it appears that one is missing. But any passerby could have taken it, because maybe ten minutes must have passed between the first 911 call and the police response, and I heard that there were a number of bystanders when the cops arrived.”

“So a Taser is missing. Go on.”

“Next, Wilson’s trying to communicate in writing but with the pain meds and all, that’s not working very well. What I understand is that the agents intercepted the subjects and tried to detain them, but, and he’s completely unintelligible here, the two subjects moved so fast to slug both him and Turner in the face, that he couldn’t even see who hit him or Turner. And he wrote that he’s sure that he hit one of them with his Taser but it had no effect, either.”

“Are you saying that two high-school kids could overcome two experienced men armed with Tasers?”

“Just reporting what I could find out, boss. The cops want to interview me, so how much do I have to tell them of their assignment?”

Gerberin thought for a few seconds. “Okay, we can’t say that this was a botched pickup. The cops in that area recall that nudist park incident from last year all too well. Were the cops there when you were trying to get info from Wilson? Or did they see his notes?”

“No, I was alone. Destroyed the notes.”

“Good. Just tell the cops that the best you can understand from your man is that they were on assignment and stopped to aid a cyclist at the roadside who seemed to need help. But the guy attacked them with a club or something and that’s when the Taser got used.”

They disconnected.

## Chapter 20 - Aftermath

At camp on Wednesday, Drew was seeing a fair amount of improvement in her advanced campers, even though a number of them had been grumbling about the number of times that she insisted the moves had to be repeated, over and over.

“Listen up.” she told them at one point. “You need to develop the muscle memory for those moves, so your body can do them automatically, no thought involved. Your *body* needs to react to a defender’s moves, ‘cause if you have to think about what to do, you’ve already lost the ball. You’ve gotta get to the point where your *feet* know exactly where that ball is without your having to see it with your eyes. Is that clear? That’s why all the reps. Okay, here’s the next drill. Fifteen minutes and then it’s time for our wind sprints.”

They all groaned as Drew smiled inwardly. *These guys are shaping up nicely*, she thought, as she showed them the next drill.

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When Friday morning came, Drew and Connor were glad for the break. They had had an intensive week, not to mention Tuesday’s excitement. Both Drew and Connor had ramped up the intensity of their camper training, and since they worked right alongside of the kids, they were getting the benefit of the intense activity too. But their bodies needed rest now, so when the Ritters had suggested that they pay a visit to Pine View, the two teens agreed. To Jennifer’s total delight and glee.

The two of them felt that they weren’t ready yet, as Connor put it, to “shed threads,” but Drew told Jennifer that she felt that she needed more “exposure therapy” time to get her to the point where she could do her own “personal exposure,” as she put it.

They spent the day in various activities and then, when the entire family returned to their cabin just before 5 p.m. to get ready for dinner, Frantz checked his phone for messages.

“Hey, kids,” he called. “Text from Jay. A lot of activity happened today, fallout from Tuesday’s affair. Jay said to call his cell anytime when we get this message.”

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It was Friday afternoon at the OSA offices. Gerberin was surprised when two state police officers entered his office and one announced that he was under arrest for being an accomplice to an attempted kidnapping and began to recite the Miranda warning, when an attorney from the OSA legal branch ran in.

“What are you doing, officers? The director wasn’t involved in anything like a kidnapping!”

One of the troopers responded, “Sir, we have a warrant issued by the Glen Burnie District Court at the request of the district attorney of Anne Arundel County, who provided sufficient evidence to the court that this detainee was involved in a felony. Now please don’t interfere; I’m sure you know what will happen if you do.”

They led Gerberin out to transport him to the Glen Burnie courthouse for arraignment.

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When the Ritters called Jay back, he told them of the arrest warrant and that the OSA official had been arraigned and released under his own recognizance at the request of the prosecuting attorney, who requested that bail be waived, despite the nature of the charge.

“It’s likely that Gerberin wouldn’t get convicted in a jury trial,” Jay told them. “Because even though he ordered the contact with Drew and Connor, he didn’t order that they be detained. And even though he told that local agent to lie to the police, *he* didn’t lie to them. Here’s how things developed. First, the county DA certainly recalls very clearly what happened at Pine View last year involving employees from the same enforcer organization; she’s been involved in the attempted kidnapping prosecution of those four individuals, and when I told her of this current incident, she was livid.

“The police had impounded that SUV, and after a search warrant was obtained, the police and an assistant DA found a directive, from Gerberin, giving those agents instructions to, quote, contact and question, unquote, and names Connor and Drew with their address, about their activities and all contacts they have had since their arrival in Maryland...”

The listeners were outraged and expressed that.

“Sure, it *is* outrageous. They have no legal right to do that and that’s why Gerberin was arrested and charged. But he didn’t order that the teens be detained, just contacted. The decision to detain was the agents’ idea and they’re being charged, based on that video Connor sent—by the way, the DA needs the physical device, Connor—I told you not to use it after you sent that video to me and you didn’t, right?”

“Nope. It’s back in its packaging box.”

“Good. I’ll tell you where to bring it, and the Taser too. The DA has gotten warrants for those enforcers for attempted kidnapping. And endangering, given that stupid driving move cutting you off. She’s also been consulting with various legal people and someone on the state court of appeals staff—that’s the top court in Maryland—about getting a restraining order or injunction against any Program enforcer activity in the entire state. She’s totally fed up with these dangerous activities—including using Tasers against teenagers, come on, is that not detestable? Anyway, that’s the summary of today’s events.”

“Thanks, Jay. Is there anything we need to do—and are we in any trouble for injuring those jerks?” Connor asked.

“You might need to appear at their trial, but perhaps a deposition will be the only necessary step. And their injuries were sustained while committing a criminal act; you were legally defending yourselves. Not to frighten you, but it’s possible that one or both may try to bring a civil suit for their injuries, but if that happens, it could get dismissed easily. Oh, tell me—everyone is completely mystified about how they were injured. The perps claim that you moved so fast that they never saw who hit them. And Connor, you took a Taser shot with no effect.”

Connor chuckled, “That was all Drew. She has an amazing athleticism which includes throwing lacrosse balls really fast and hitting tiny targets with great accuracy. ‘Nuf said?”

Jay laughed and answered, "Enough. And the Taser?"

"Well, either the device didn't work so well or my riding leathers and thick sweatshirt under it stopped most of its effect. I did get a jolt, like a punch in the chest, but otherwise it didn't affect me."

"Ah. Okay. Listen, to keep it simple, if you're asked, just say that you reacted to being Tasered by punching them out and with the jolt you got, you don't recall much. That will stop any further questions, like about the use of a thrown weapon."

"Got it; many thanks, Jay."

The others gave their thanks too and they disconnected. Frantz turned to Drew.

"First stones and now lacrosse balls?" he chuckled.

Drew blushed. "I never wanna be defenseless, you know? Besides, when I'm with Connor, we can play defense zones. I can stay back and handle the artillery and he can be the close-in shock troops."

The others laughed at hearing that.

Later, Jennifer was talking about the incident. "Hey, remember that I told you that if you keep doing things against Program officials, you'd catch up to Emma's record? I'd say you're closing in on it now, wouldn't you?"

Drew snorted, "Please. She can keep it, for all I care. Just let those cretins stay away and I'll be happy to let them be."

"How'd you get so good at throwing stuff, anyway?" Jennifer asked.

"Just stones and balls. Haven't tried larger things, like kitchen sinks or automobiles. Hey, I'm not Supergirl, y'know. How to get good? Easy. It's all just practicing till you're competent. So what's up for tomorrow?"

Jennifer picked up the resort's events flyer. "Usual weekend activities, like water volleyball from 10:30 to noon and the other sports like tennis and pickleball are popular. There's a DJ playing music on the pool deck. Then there's a potluck dinner and a live band concert with dancing in the evening. The bands they bring in are dope. I remember this one; they played here last year."

"Sounds nice, a quiet day. I think I'll look for kids coming for the Glen Burnie discount; see if any are first-timers," Drew said.

Then Connor came in with Timmy.

"Hey, sweetie, where were you guys?" Drew asked.

"I found out that they have a little gym here," Connor answered. "One of those combo functional trainers that has a bench press and squat rack. Set of dumbbells, elliptical trainer, treadmill, and stair-stepper. Timmy asked about how I got ripped, so I showed him the exercise routines that I began with, and he promised that he'd keep it up. Right, Timmy?"

“Oh sure. I want to look like you, Connor. I see all the girls looking at you all the time.”

Connor chuckled at that. “So you wanna be a chick magnet? That’s fine. Looks help, for sure. But way better is to be a good person, respect everyone, be polite. When you talk to girls, let them clue you into what they think is important. Don’t spill the tea about them and don’t try to impress them either; makes you look like a jerk. And building muscles takes dedication and patience, so you need to stick with it. Got that?”

“Yeah, Connor, thanks!”

He ran off somewhere.

The following morning, after breakfast, Drew decided to camp out on the pool deck and watch for any newcomers. As she thought, *I figure that any kid—kids—who look shy or uncomfortable are probably noobs*. But first, Drew wanted to take a further step in her personal “exposure therapy” plan. After a quick stop at the cabin, she returned to the pool. Connor had found several kids who were members of the school’s swimming team, so he was off somewhere picking their brains about the swimming rules and what happens at the team tryout.

Jennifer had been off with Sam and Abi; Sam had found a willing person to be a sounding board for ideas Sam had gotten for some of her blog posts.

Then a small group of teens arrived with two sets of parents and they all looked uneasy as they came into the pool area. The girls were wearing swimsuits and the boys and adults were dressed in shorts and tops. The kids all looked young.

Drew, thinking as she walked over to them, *I’m gonna be such a hypocrite; look at me, talking about nudism*, and came up to them.

“Hey there, you all here for the Glen Burnie High special?” she asked.

The group looked over at her and a woman replied, “We are; our kids and their friends are starting in the high school in the fall and they—and we parents—are very concerned about the Program and the bad stories we’ve heard about it.”

Drew smiled. “Well, that’s what the special day rate is for. I’m Drew, and a rep for the Project to Oppose the Program. Hey kids, gather ‘round,” she called in her “coach” voice and the kids immediately obeyed.

One of the men laughed and asked Drew, “That was good—can you teach that?”

“Sure. Just start coaching kids in a team sport and learning the command voice comes easy,” she told him, grinning. “Okay, future high-schoolers, listen up. You’re here ‘cause you want to avoid the nastiness that you heard about in the Program and believe me, I’ve seen the Program running and there certainly is nastiness. There are eight of you here. We figure that two or three of you will get picked to be naked this coming school year. About thirty percent of the freshmen class will be picked this year, we calculated.

“Do you all know what we’re gonna do with the Project? To overwhelm the school with non-Program nude kids?”

They all reluctantly agreed that they knew.

“So how do you feel about doing that?” Drew asked.

“Scared,” one girl ventured.

“Uncomfortable,” a boy declared.

Drew chuckled, “And that’s because boys won’t ever admit to being scared, right?”

The people in the group laughed and the boy shrugged.

“Okay, if you saw the little flyers we’ve been using for recruiting... have you?”

They all nodded.

“That’s great. Here’s the scoop. Those flyers say that if we get a large bunch of kids—we hope it’s a majority of the school—in the Project, then we overwhelm everything that the Program coordinator can try. The nasty posing and groping are gone, the class demos are gone, attacks in the showers and locker rooms—all stop. But if many kids don’t join in or back out of helping the cause, then the Program will make every one of you experience just how bad it can be. Now, there are parts, I’m told, that aren’t bad, but in general, if someone can get raped in the Program, and rapes are indeed happening, believe me, then the whole thing is bad.

“So now you guys are here and you’re nervous. Hey, it’s totally normal to have some anxiety about being nude in mixed company for the first time. Stripping and being around people you don’t know can be a scary experience, but consider what you’ll feel like when you’re forced to strip in school and have to face all the clothed kids and have them groping you. Your experience today will help stop that from happening. If there are more nude kids in school than clothed ones, you’ll be just like the majority; nobody’ll even notice you.

“Okay, but you’re thinking, ‘I’m here right now and can I actually do it and get nude?’ I think that the biggest concerns for noobs come from two issues, first, how most people were raised—you’re not supposed to let others see you naked, and second, your personal body image. Hey, both of those can be tough to overcome; I know that for sure. For the first one, you just need to tell yourself, convince yourself, that you can do it so that you can survive being in school for the Program. Because all your friends will be helping you and you’re helping them.

“Dealing with the second issue, body image, can be helped in a huge way when you’re here at the resort and you see that other people around you will accept you for who you are—not what you look like. Nobody will stare at you, humiliate you, or belittle you here. When you see that, you’ll soon see that any self-consciousness you may have will go away. And having that feeling and the knowledge of a strong self-image will empower you when you’re in school too—you’re in charge! You’re the boss, and nobody will be able to humiliate you ‘cause you know that you’re in charge.

“You should try to get nude soon and enjoy the pool—see, there’s a bunch of teens arriving now, so just join them and get acquainted. They’ll accept you right away, no cap. And all my nudist friends rave about how awesome it is to swim and lay out while nude. And they say that feeling the breezes on your bare skin is so soothing too. Now’s when your resistance to that naked

Program starts. And you'll all make it work, joining all of the other naked kids in school. Instead of being humiliated by being naked all alone, everyone around you'll be naked—just like here at the resort—so no one will stand out and stand alone. And let your other ninth-grade friends know that they should join the Project like you guys are doing here.

“Okay, I'll be around the resort today; if you have any questions, I can try to answer them, or we have other upperclassmen around here today who are also organizers who can answer what I don't know. So have fun and enjoy the resort!”

Drew waved at the vacant loungers and the pool, then waved at the group, and returned to her own chair. The kids in the group looked at each other uncertainly and then began undressing slowly and in a few minutes, several nude kids began heading for the pool—but a couple of nearby adults stopped them and pointed to the showers at the side of the bathhouse. Soon, all the kids were showering there and then they trooped over to the pool to join the others there.

After the young teens had showered and had begun talking to the group at the pool, Connor came onto the deck with Jennifer.

“I got some good info about the swim team,” he reported. “So I'll be trying out for the team in September. I think I can do the conditioning gig for Coach Adcock and do the swim team too. Say, I see a new bunch in the pool, They noobs?”

“Yep. And I gave them a way cut-down version of the pep-talk I gave here a couple weeks ago. They're incoming freshies. The parents are over by the back fence, trying to look invisible... say, look at that... no, don't look now; they look like scared rabbits. I guess they're actually trying nudism out themselves, so cool.”

“Um, Drew?” Jennifer said tentatively. “You, um, the pareo... nothing under it?”

“Really?” Connor asked. “Took the next step, right?”

Drew blushed. “Yeah. Pushing myself.”

Squeal! Jennifer grabbed Drew in a

hug. “I'm so so so proud of you!” she enthused. “Let's go talk to the new adults,” and she grabbed Drew's hand, pulling her along with her.

Connor followed them, grinning.



Resort noobs skinny-dipping at the pool

“Hey, I wanted to welcome you folks. I’m Jen, and my family’s been a member here since I was little. Thanks for bringing that bunch enjoying the pool—you’ve helped them lots to be able to adapt to nudity when they start school.”

One of the women replied, “You’re welcome, I guess,” she chuckled. “I’m Ronnie, my husband’s Chuck...” he waved “...and our friends are Miriam and Richard. We’re still getting used to, ah, this new wave in society. Not wearing clothes. You know, there are even kids who go to the malls and other places naked... I’m sure you do know. Sorry, I’m babbling; I’m nervous...”

“You’re doing okay, dear. And you, miss... forget your name...” Chuck started.

“It’s Drew, Chuck.”

“Thanks. Drew, you gave our kids and their friends a really good pep talk just before and that motivated us to strip too. We wanted to support our kids—that’s why we came with them, but we didn’t know if we’d be able to get naked too, so your speech really helped to motivate us too. You said you coached kids? I guess that’s where you got your motivational skill from.”

“Thanks, Chuck. Say, if you want to help the kids, here’s a thing you can do. Get involved in a parents’ auxiliary. You’d need to get one started, though...”

“Drew, that idea’s a killer!” Jennifer exclaimed. “Like parents back in PA!”

“My thought exactly, Jen. Folks, here’s the background. The three of us just moved to the area in early June; we lived near Hershey PA before. The kids in all of our local area high schools organized to oppose the Program there on religious grounds... Did you hear about that?”

“Sure we did,” Richard replied. “No way could we do that here, if you’re suggesting...”

“Oh, we wouldn’t go for religion here. You’re right, it wouldn’t fly. No, what I was getting to was that the parents backed the kids in their refusals and a large group of them confronted the school board and threatened a student strike unless the board allowed the students to follow their moral precepts. The board gave in to the parents’ demands. They were based on the Bible, but still, they were moral beliefs. Since you’re here today, you know what our group wants to do—overwhelm the Program with so much nudity that it can’t function like it’s designed. The Program rules specifically allow us to do what we plan, too.

“So I think that in response, the Program coordinator, or whoever’s in charge, will try to change the rules or maybe try to get the Program kids to wear, I don’t know, an arm band or a dunce cap or...”

Laughter.

“...yeah. Some kind of identifier. So we’d counter somehow, like everyone wears the same thing. Where the parents could get involved is to support the kids. I’m sure, when this goes down, the parents *will* get calls. Asking, maybe, to make their kid wear clothes at school—now *that* would be totally funny, right? Or to make the kid obey a random rule that they might try to put in place. If you parents back your kids, they know that they have the moral backing to continue their Program opposition. And if you band together as, um, what I called an auxiliary, you’ll have a lot of influence with the school and the school district too. Maybe even the press. They’d love the

story that this opposition would make. So could you get your friends to be involved? Hey, no nudity would be required either,” Drew laughed.

“Goodness, Drew,” Miriam exclaimed, “what a speech—you have a career in law or politics with the way you think and your speaking style. Listening to you, I want to saddle up my horse and go off to war!” she laughed. “A real call to arms.”

“Do you have a way to contact other parents? And are you willing to at least kick this off until someone steps up as the leader?” Connor asked. “Oh, I’m Connor, Drew’s BF, and we’ve been fighting the bad effects of the Program since we were freshmen.”

“Ronnie, didn’t we get a parent’s association directory for the middle school when Darcy started?” Charlie asked.

“Ah, oh yes, we did. Are you thinking...?”

“Maybe this is actually a way to support the kids directly,” he commented. “I’m on the board of the local Boys’ and Girls’ Club. Supporting children is our mission and I’m sure that our board will let me use our facilities to organize parents. They might even get involved too. The Program is a danger to our youth but with the power of the government, there didn’t seem to be a way to challenge it. Until you showed a way, Drew. So thanks.”

“Maybe the high school parents’ association has a directory too,” Jennifer said. “I’ll ask my friends.”

“They do; I have one from my son’s high school. He just graduated this spring,” Miriam said. “Most of the contact info should be good. We would only need the Marley directory.”

“That’s my brother’s school,” Jennifer said. “Maybe we can get a copy.”

“Let’s exchange contact info, Drew,” Charlie requested. “We can share updates as needed.”

Lunchtime was coming, so Drew and the others said their farewells and went to meet Emma’s group; she and Andrew were to arrive about this time. Sam and Abi had been at the resort since Friday morning. As they ate lunch, Drew related the story of their enforcer encounter.

“Now you mustn’t spread this news around, Sam,” Drew told her. “We know how you like these juicy stories, but publicizing the details of what happened might affect the prosecution.”

“Oi, I did hear about the arrest of two people for attempted kidnapping,” Sam said. “If it’s in the news media, then I can use it when I blog, right?”

“Well sure, I guess. And anything that links them to the Program, I suppose.”

“And there’s another new development in the Project, again thanks to Drew,” Jennifer told them.

“Oh, Jen, please...”

“Hush. It’s a great idea. Drew’s created a parents’ auxiliary to support and back up the kids who get naked for the opposition.”

Then Jennifer explained what the parents would do for their supporting role.

“Blimey, that is brilliant,” Emma exclaimed. “Again you’ve done something similar to my own anti-Program campaign. Many parents, family and friends too, assisted us, didn’t they. Bucket truck operators, a heating contractor, plumbers, mechanical contractors, police, security workers, school district workers, they all pitched in to help us defeat the Program officials. Well done, Drew.”

“Thanks, Emma. While I was talking to those parents about how they could help, I suddenly realized that if several hundred kids suddenly got naked, there’d definitely be a response by the Program official,” Drew explained. “They might try to make the selected kids wear some kind of identifying item. It would need to be highly visible, I would think. But such a rule isn’t in the Program booklet, so maybe it could be ignored or challenged. Or have everyone wear something like it. We’ll need to come up with strategies for the various things they could do to somehow make the selected kids stand out.

“Let’s say it’s an armband. With hundreds of kids milling around, the Program kid could slip it off in the hallways and no one would be the wiser, right? Or this: kids must obey a request. So make a request that they give away the band or whatever the thing is. If the Program official makes up a rule, we challenge it, or ... yeah, do a malicious compliance of it somehow. That’s what I thought of when I was talking to them, and if the Program official starts coming up with rules, we can get the parents to make formal complaints that the Program is being run in a random, vindictive way. That was my idea.”

“Crikey, Drew, that’s how solicitors... erm, lawyers are supposed to think,” Sam told her. “They try to think of all possibilities when they write contracts. Lawmakers too, well, not so much, which is why so many laws are really badly written, innit. Your idea is ace, though. How will you let the kids know when you have to change your responses if they try jiggering the rules?”

“What we did back in PA, I guess. A texting tree. We divided the classes into divisions and then units of ten kids, so one person only needed to send ten texts and everyone would get the message. That was the top-down tree. The bottom up one was each kid had the division leader’s number. If they had an urgent message to go to everyone, they only needed to send one text and that could trigger the whole tree. You know, you can set a phone to do group texts so setting that up wasn’t a big deal.”

Emma chuckled, “Cor, she created an army with a communications corps too.”

Drew laughed, “Well, it worked. We used it a few times to warn kids of problems—the school tried nasty stuff and we could respond within one class period.”

Jennifer was nodding her head. “Yeah, Emma, remember we told you about that sex-ed hygiene class where the kids were supposed to give each other oral sex or they’d fail? And you told us that was extortion?”

“I recall that very well, in fact,” Emma replied.

“So when they sprung that class on us, we put the warning out on the texting tree and got all of the sex-ed class sessions basically shut down. Almost everyone who got texted just cut the class, went to the office, and told them that they weren’t going to go to that class. Drove the assistant

principal crazy trying to figure out how the word spread so fast.”

“Impressive, you lot,” Emma complimented them.

“Thanks, Emma,” Jennifer said. “Hey, you know if the resort has any more new seasonal members that are using your discount?”

“Erm, I think this weekend’s close to the last where the seasonal fee makes sense. There were fifty-eight as of last week. The manager is chuffed by the favorable response and they’re trying to organize how to keep all those new members so that they join next season. I told them my subsidy this season was a one-time deal.”

“That’s a nice bump in membership,” Jennifer said. “I have noticed that it’s been busier this year than ever before. Nice seeing it busy, too.”

“That’s true,” Emma agreed.

The conversation turned to other topics.

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The summer passed, and with the end of the first week of August, the soccer camp came to a close. Drew and Connor had enjoyed the coaching immensely, and now both were feeling seriously fit from the constant activities. Drew, in particular, found that by teaching and demonstrating her ball-handling techniques, her own play was becoming sharper and more focused. And Connor noticed that his own agility and reaction time had become greatly improved.

The camp held a little graduation ceremony at which the coaches presented awards to the campers for accomplishments like “most improved,” “high scorer,” “fastest 60 meter runner,” and similar achievements. Connor told Coach Adcock that he would take her offer to be the student conditioning trainer.

Connor was now in the market for a vehicle. He had been using an automobile locator app to look for something, but was undecided whether it should be an SUV or a pickup. While he highly enjoyed riding his bike, he and Drew weren’t very enthusiastic about riding it in winter weather, especially after they heard how wet and sloppy the roads got during and after the messy mid-Atlantic winter weather that the region experienced. He decided that Drew should have the deciding vote on car or truck, so he asked her.

“Sweetheart, got a car question.”

“Oh? You decide?”

“Nope. Still can’t. SUV or truck. Found a couple possibilities in our price range, though. Want to look?”

“Sure.”

Drew sat down with him and he scrolled through the ones he had saved.

“I like the truck idea ‘cause of the hauling ability, and it could be used to take the bike

somewhere. They can tow or haul heavy stuff too, but we don't currently need that particular ability. I'm kinda partial to trucks 'cause Dad had one all the time while I grew up. The bad part is fuel economy. SUVs are okay, there are lots of styles, and there are hybrids too. So I decided to leave the choice to you."

"Really, Connor? That's such a personal decision and it's your..."

"...no, it's *our* decision, honey. Both of ours."

"Well, I'm sorta partial to trucks, maybe because my father had one. I like being up high when riding too—I don't really like the Ritters' SUV very much somehow. So I'd vote for a pickup. What did your father have again?"

"The fire destroyed his Chevy Silverado. It had a crew cab and was roomy. See, these three are like his. One's a year older and two are two years newer. The insurance payout would cover about 80 percent of the cost, too."

"Ooo, I like this deep blue one."

"That one has nice features but the mileage is on the higher side. But the listing says it's mostly highway miles. It's a private sale; close enough to get out there too. Forty miles from here."

Some phone calls were made, a visit arranged, a mechanic's inspection performed, and then Frantz drove Connor and Drew out to do the deal and drive the truck home. They decided that as long as the weather cooperated, they would use the bike to get to school. Jennifer had her own car at this point, so she didn't need a ride to school.

Jennifer and Drew had been keeping in touch with Chuck Gardner, the parent whom they had met at the resort who had become the unofficial contact and organizer of the parents' auxiliary. Several hundred parent-families had joined the texting tree that Gardner had organized, following the model that Drew had described to him.

## Chapter 21 - The Program Starts. Again

At the OSA headquarters office in early August, Ross Gerberin stopped into William Garcy's office. Garcy was his counterpart in the agency, Gerberin being the compliance director and Garcy, the school operations director.

"Hey, Bill," Gerberin greeted Garcy, "got something you can do for Enforcement."

"Hi. Heard they dropped your kidnapping charge. That was good news. So what's up?"

"Yeah, my charge was dropped. Since I never told the agents to take those kids into custody, they couldn't call me an accomplice. But that DA is really pushing to get my agents convicted, like she did to the four agents involved in last year's nudist park attempted detainment. Well, I want those two kids to pay for our difficulties with that county. They did serious medical damage to my men and it's likely that their appeal of their conviction won't work. The Program starts at those two kids' high school this fall term and I want you to arrange to put them into the Program for a month, Bill."

"Their school records have declarations of religious exemption, Ross. We can't do that, plus they have no Program infractions to justify a Program punishment."

"Fuck that, Bill. Have your coordinator there—what's his name, Werthur?"

"Don Werthur, right."

"Just have him get rid of those declarations. Besides, religious exemptions aren't accepted in this area—it's not like over there in central Pennsylvania. And infractions? They failed to participate in their former school when they were selected, and then, in their interviews with my agents, they failed to respond to the questioning. Those actions of theirs call for a strong punishment. So on the first day of school, have Werthur put them in the Program. And if they resist, I'll have enforcers standing by."

"Let me check ... okay, the first day of school is August 25 but the first Program week isn't scheduled until September 12. That's when the Program begins at that school."

"No matter; this is a punishment participation. It's to be all month, to the end of September."

"All right, then. On your authority?" Gerberin nodded. "Send me a written request and I'll let Werthur know."

"Thanks, Bill. I'll send you the memo."

He left the office.

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The second Monday of August brought the dreaded, but expected notice from the school that the Program was to begin on the second Monday of September. As had occurred in prior years, the Ritters were spending two weeks plus at Pine View, while Drew and Connor stayed home; soccer tryouts and team practices began on that same Monday. In each student's orientation packet, there was a welcome letter from the principal, schedules of various types, club and sports notices,

drama and band performance details, and parents' information about the Program.

"Looks like the same kind of stuff about the Program that they sent back at Etown, sweetie," Drew said as they looked the papers over. "Nothing about any Program assembly. Call kids' names during home room after Period 1, just like we figured. Random selections and... interesting... not twenty seniors each week, it's twenty-four. Ten juniors and six each sophs and fresh. Forty-six kids. That's, um, like fifty in 2500 is 2 percent. Two out of every hundred kids naked. They'd all be targets for damned sure."

"So true. They'd stand out for sure."

"I'm so glad we're gonna do the Project, we'll get maybe thirty to forty naked kids per hundred, judging by Sherrill's latest numbers."

"I hope it goes up to half—maybe when the rest see what's happening, they'll join in. And here's a consent form and a waiver of liability too; looks very similar to the ones from Etown. Hey, let me call Jay and see what he thinks of this waiver."

Jay wasn't impressed.

"I strongly advise not signing anything. Waivers like that are extremely common, but that doesn't mean that the courts like them. For schools, the officials have a duty to students to provide a safe environment, so if it turns out that an injury resulted from the failure to properly supervise students, then the parents can sue regardless of the existence of a signed waiver. But why take that chance?"

"There's an additional factor here in Maryland too. State law maintains that such waivers can be invalid if one party has grossly unequal bargaining power over another, which is certainly the case of a school over a student. Maryland courts have ruled that waivers like that—they're actually contracts—would put the weaker party at the mercy of the stronger one's negligence."

"Also in this state, courts have ruled that since parents have the responsibility to make decisions pertaining to their children's welfare, decisions which are supposed to be in the child's best interest, the existence of a signed liability waiver might not prevent a parent from recovering damages in a lawsuit. Parents must make decisions on behalf of their children in areas including health, education, and religion, and these particular waivers could prevent the parent from protecting their child's interest in the first two of those areas. So no, don't sign them. There's no penalty or limitation attached to school participation if they're unsigned, like sports participation waivers. Unless those are signed, the child can't play. Long-winded explanation, right? That's a lawyer for you. But you got the message."

"Sure did. Thanks, Jay. Say, you guys going to the resort this coming weekend?" Connor asked.

"I'll be there; Delia's there with Wilma and Tracy this week but I had to be in the office."

Connor texted Frantz about the Program waiver forms and Jay's response and told him that he and Drew would bring them out that weekend.

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Soccer tryouts were done and practice had begun and Drew and Connor once again got caught up in their team activities. Connor had developed and adapted a number of agility exercises which were becoming very popular with the team because he had set them to several current popular music tracks. And he was leading the team members in strength and endurance drills too.

Drew, now reconnected with the junior and senior members of the girls' team, with whom she had scrimmaged with at the resort early in the summer, was learning the team's set plays and working out with them. She had noticed that, for the current season, only one sophomore had made the varsity cut, so she reserved extra time to work with the JV girls to try to improve their skills so some could move up to varsity next season.

There were two non-league scrimmages set for the week before school began; the second was on Saturday, so Drew and Connor didn't go to the resort that weekend. School would begin in several days.

Tuesday arrived, the first day of school. The day would be sunny and a little cool, a sign of fall's approach. Perfect riding weather, but the trip to the school was quite short. The teens headed out to the motorcycle.

"Well, off to school, first day," Connor said as he rolled out the bike. "Great perks, being an athlete and a senior. Got really convenient lockers too, one in the school and one at the field house gym, and our class schedules are set to allow practices and games."

"I like what you're doing with your conditioning program, sweetie. You learned some good stuff doing the soccer camp and the agility drills you put together are really clever."

"Yeah. Work well with a large group too. Okay, let's go."

Connor parked the motorcycle in the motorcycle area of the student parking lot and he and Drew hopped off.

"It's interesting to see that a fair number of kids here ride their bikes to school," Connor observed, looking around at the other parked bikes. "Let's store our riding gear in our school lockers instead of stuffing everything into the trunk and saddle bags."

"Okay, good idea. First day, new school," Drew said. "At least we spent a day last spring going around to classes here. And I'm thrilled at the size of the Project now. The texting tree has almost 900 members! I hope that they all will get nude when the time comes."

"Sherrill says that she's sure that they will. Damn, she's really become a great field commander. And Wilma is a good tactician. And you, Drew, you're our strategist."

"And you, sweetie? Where do you fit in?"

Connor laughed. "Foot soldier," he responded.

"No, shock troops, more like," Drew chuckled.

They went into the school and stored their gear in their lockers, then went off to their first period class. Ten minutes into the class, Drew and Connor were paged over the PA system.

*“Drew Harper, Connor Martin, please come to the school office.”*

Connor looked at Drew. “Wonder what that’s all about?”

“Dunno, but I have a bad feeling,” Drew muttered. “Get premonitions. I think it’s why my soccer sense is so good. I can sense some things about to happen.”

When they arrived at the office, a man was waiting there behind the counter.

When they entered, he went to the counter and asked, “Harper and Martin? Are you the ones we paged?”

“And who might you be?” Drew asked. “Why were we paged?”

“I want you to follow me to my office...” he began, but Drew stopped him.

“I don’t know you. I know the principal, my assistant principal, and my counselor. I don’t know who you are.”

“I see that you’re going to be difficult, miss. I’m Mr Werthur and the federal Program coordinator. Now I insist that you come with me.”

Connor spoke up. “Not on your life, mister. We’ll have nothing to do with you and your Program.”

“I insist, kid; I can make your life very difficult...”

Their voices had been getting louder and that brought the principal, Dr Petersmith, out of her office.

“What’s this disturbance... oh, I remember you... Drew, is it? Coach Adcock showed me some videos of your soccer playing. I’m looking forward to seeing you play for the Gophers. Now, what’s this commotion about?”

Before Werthur could reply, Drew said, “This person had us paged. Now he told us to go to his office, that he’s a Program official. We have religious exemptions and won’t have anything to do with Program people.”

Petersmith turned to Werthur. “Explain yourself, Mr Werthur.”

“Ah, it’s a private matter. Can we go...”

“No. Right here. Explain.”

“OSA national has determined that these two students are Program violators and must be punished by spending a month in the Program. I ordered them to follow me to my office where they are to strip and begin their punishment.”

Drew and Connor reacted, “No way!” ... “Absolutely not!”

Drew went on, “We have religious exemptions from the Program. The declarations are in our file, forwarded here from our last school.”

“There is no such declaration in either of your files,” Werthur said.

Connor stared at him. “Our guardian has date-stamped copies of all of our transferred school records and that exemption declaration is included in her copies. If the school copy is missing, I accuse you of tampering with school records. Dr Petersmith, isn’t that a crime? Okay. Drew and I will write out another declaration right here and sign it. Under the First Amendment, we have the right to freely observe our religious principles.”

“Maybe you did in Pennsylvania, kid. That doesn’t fly here,” Werthur stated. “Now, the federal rules state that the principal has no authority over Program punishment matters, so if you refuse to come with me, strip, and begin your punishment, I’ll call in our enforcement people and they’ll see that you comply.”

“I’ll need to see you in my office, Mr Werthur,” Petersmith said coldly. “Right now. There will be absolutely *NO* enforcement of any federal rule that says that I have less than full authority in my school, understand?”

“C’mon, Drew, let the turd stew in his own shit, sorry for the language, Dr Petersmith, but I’ve had it with these cretins. This isn’t the first time they’ve caused a problem for us. We’re going back to class now. Let’s go, honey.”

On the way back, Connor told Drew, “We’ll stop at the lockers, sweetie, and get the riding leathers. If enforcers come, they’ll probably have their usual Tasers. When I got hit last time, I noticed that the dart part was less than a half-inch long. It’s long enough to go through most clothes, and even if the point comes close to the skin, I read that it can still disable. I did get a jolt through the leathers and hoodie when I got hit. Let me run out to the bike and get our padded riding gear. We’ll wear that under the leathers. That should be plenty thick to stop the darts. While I’m getting the gear, call Jay and tell him what’s happening here.”

The enforcers showed up at their classroom at just after 1 p.m., during Period 3. Two men entered the classroom and asked for Drew and Connor. The teacher indicated them.

“Miss Hampton, those are criminals and we’re not going anywhere,” Connor said.

Kids in the classroom gasped at that and the teacher asked, “What do you mean, criminals?”

“They’re attempting to take us without our consent. Kidnapping’s a felony, last I heard. These jerks are so-called Program enforcers for the Naked in School Program,” Drew responded.

That caused a commotion in the classroom and the teacher told the two men that they must leave the classroom; she’d call the police resource officer if they didn’t leave. They left.

“What’s happening, Miss Hampton, is that the Program official at the school here told us this morning that he’s punishing us for not participating in the Program in our last school, where we had an exemption,” Connor explained. “What they’re doing now is so illegal that it’s mind-boggling. Thanks for sending them out.”

“Okay, Connor. But I’m certain that they’ll be waiting for you after class,” she said and he acknowledged that.

They were waiting; the teens could see them watching the classroom door, so they crouched down and slipped out under the cover of a group of kids who shielded them from view. And the

halls were so crowded with rushing kids that Connor and Drew were able to evade the two men and got to their fourth period class unchallenged. There, they told that teacher about the enforcers and he said that he'd kick them out if they came into the room.

"We'll have the showdown out at the parking lot, most likely," Connor told Drew. "They're probably gonna watch for us at the student parking lot. Hey, since the football team has practice after school; let's go there instead."

After the final bell, the two left the classroom and headed for the athletic area. And then they saw Werthur standing near the exit door there. He noticed them and make a phone call.

"Looks like they were staking out the school doors," Connor muttered as they went over to the football practice field.

Drew and Connor knew a number of the coaches and assistant coaches of several teams; they had met them during the school's athletic program orientation week when the fall sports teams held their tryouts and the football head coach had recruited Connor as a student coach for agility and conditioning training. Drew went over to the assistant coach who was leading the practice.

"Coach, this is something really weird, but we've got a few guys chasing us who are with the Naked in School enforcement group. They have no legal authority to do what they're doing—basically they're trying to kidnap Connor and me. They're coming out here, we're sure, and they use Taser guns, so watch out. We're gonna fight them if they try anything physical. Please don't let anyone interfere, they can get hurt."

"Jeez, Drew, you sure?"

"Wish I weren't sure... oh, looks like four? Jeez, it's four guys. Okay, Connor, what's the drill for four?"

"Still no message from Jay?"

"Nope. We're on our own here," Drew answered.

"Play it by ear, then, honey."

Two of the men approached and one demanded that Drew and Connor go with them, while the other two hung about thirty feet back, watching.

"Not going anywhere," Connor answered. "I suggest you guys get lost. Touch me or get aggressive, you'll pay. If you try anything, I'll cripple you."

The guy laughed, "Sure you will. Turn around so I can cuff you."

He pulled a pair of handcuffs out of a pouch at his belt while the other guy with him pulled out a Taser and pointed it.

"Okay, that's legal assault and battery," Connor said, raising his arms to the sides, above his head, making a vee to his body, as he got close to the guy who was speaking. "You want me to surrender? See, hands are up; I'm not armed. What do you want with us?"

"We'll transport you to our facility for detailed questioning and a psychological exam."

“In other words, taking us without our consent. Kidnapping.”

“Listen, kid, we’re in charge, you’re not. You’ll go with us voluntarily or we’ll tase you and carry you out of here.”

“That’s all I needed to hear,” Connor grunted as he brought his cupped hands down hard to either side of the man’s head, striking him over the ears.

The double-ear strike momentarily stunned him and shocked him into motionlessness as Connor threw a punch into the man’s solar plexus, doubling him over, and then kicked him in the left knee. He was wearing his heavy riding boots, and the blow wrecked the man’s knee joint as his leg folded back the wrong way. Meanwhile, the second man had fired his Taser at Connor, but with Connor’s rapid movement, only a single dart impacted his side, only to get tangled up in the leather fabric of his riding gear.

Connor glanced around to locate his next opponent, only to see a smug Drew standing over the second man, the Taser guy, who was face down on the ground. And the two other men, about 25 feet away, were down too, their own Tasers lying on the ground. And he saw yellow balls scattered on the ground everywhere around them.

The coach was looking at Drew in undisguised awe.

“Holy shit,” Connor heard him say. “How the fuck did she do that?”

“Hey Connor,” Drew called to him. “Their handcuffs will be useful here,” she said as she took a pair out of the pouch of the guy at her feet.

She secured the guy’s wrists behind him and jogged over to the other two men. Connor shook his head hard and went after her. They found the cuff holsters and trussed the two up. Connor noted that there were huge welts on the side of each man’s face.

“They’ll need medical help,” Drew started to say and then they heard the sound of approaching sirens. “Ah, someone must have called.”

Consciousness was returning to the four men, who began yelling in pain, and Connor’s victim, whom Connor hadn’t cuffed, was clutching his knee and cursing up a storm.

“Warned you, dummy, didn’t I?” Connor growled at him as the coach came over to Drew, who was busy retrieving her lacrosse balls.

“Drew, I don’t believe what I just saw...” he started to say as a few officers came running up.

“Call came in about a possible kidnapping in progress,” the first officer said. “What happened here?”

“These jerks need ambulances,” Connor told him. “They tried to kidnap me and Drew here, but it appears that she stopped them. Jeez, Drew, three of them? Who’s the shock troop now?”

One of the cops called for medical aid while the first began to question the bystanders. The assistant coach gave some orders to the kids on the team.

“Listen up, Gophers! Keep quiet now, till it’s your turn. Don’t talk among yourselves until the

officers get a chance to question you, okay? Everyone, down on the turf now, everyone six feet apart. Do it!"

"Thanks much, Coach," the officer said. "That helps us a lot. Let me record your statement now. Please state your name and describe what you saw." He spoke into the recorder, "Statement taken at the Glen Burnie High School football practice field, 3:56 p.m., August 25. Go ahead, sir."

"I'm assistant football coach Rod Grainger. I was directing a football practice when two students here, Drew something and her friend, um, it's Connor, I think, yeah, Connor, came out from the school building to the practice field. They told me that they thought that several men were coming to forcibly detain them to take them away. Someone here with a cell phone must have heard the guy, the closest one, the one clutching his knee, say something like they would take them somewhere to question them and do a psych exam, and called 911 to report it.

"Then I heard that guy say that unless the two kids went voluntarily, they would tase them and carry them away. Then that other guy on the ground near him pulled out a Taser and aimed it at Connor. When the knee guy tried to cuff Connor, Connor just did some quick moves and put that guy down so fast, I almost couldn't follow his moves. But the closer Taser guy fired the thing at Connor. It didn't hit anything, since he didn't seem to be affected.

"But the amazing part was the girl, Drew. Everything was happening so fast. While that guy was trying to cuff Connor, one of those guys lying on the turf about thirty feet away had aimed his Taser at her. She saw him raise it up and I saw the little lights on it come on—guess they're to aim it—and she threw a goddamned lacrosse ball at him as he must have fired the thing, I think I see the dart ends lying over there. The other guy had pulled his Taser out too and was aiming it at her. I think that she threw about five or six balls at them. One or more must have hit those guys' heads hard enough that they got knocked out. All in maybe ten-fifteen seconds. Then she dashed over at Taser guy number one, who was reloading his thing, I guess—he was snapping a cube thing into its front, when Drew plowed into his chest with her shoulder and I think, slammed the heel of her hand into the guy's temple. And he went down too. That was an amazing thing to see."

At that point, Connor had finished with his own statement and was listening to the coach finishing up. He looked over at Drew and she gave him a thumb's up as she was with another officer recording her own statement. An ambulance pulled in then and a few minutes later, a second one arrived, and the EMTs ran over to check the injured enforcers. A few of the football team members also gave statements; several had been close enough to hear the threats made to Connor and they mentioned the threats.

Connor went over to Drew as she was finishing her statement.

"...and I saw the two, um, backup guys, I guess they were, aiming their Tasers at me. I didn't know how far they worked, but wasn't taking any chances. I have a strange hobby; I like to throw things. I'm a shark at darts. Bocce too. Pretty much any object that can be thrown. So to keep from getting Tased, I threw some balls that I had with me at those guys and the one guy did shoot at me; the darts hit but didn't stick in my leathers. Maybe I was too far for the darts to stick. They're lying over there. That's when I saw that Connor was still busy taking down the first guy

and the second was doing something with his Taser. I didn't know if it misfired or what, but I couldn't leave him standing, so I took him down. That's pretty much what happened. Those are Program enforcers and they've been after us all summer, apparently, mainly 'cause we got religious exemptions back at our old school in Pennsylvania."

Another patrol car arrived and a man in civilian clothes emerged and began speaking to the officers, who were wrapping up their statement-taking; then they began securing the area for the crime-scene technicians. And finally Jay returned Drew's call as that new man approached her. His whole bearing screamed "cop."

Jay was saying, "Sorry I missed your call; I was in court all day and cell phone use is banned there, of course. What happened—is this about the Program official claiming that you have no exemption?"

Drew put the call on the speaker and told the nearby officer that the call was from her lawyer.

"You're on speaker now. A police officer is listening. What happened is that the Program official claims that our school records had no exemption document and besides, he said that he wouldn't honor an exemption anyway. Eva has a date-stamped copy of it showing that the school received it, so the official must have tampered with our school records. Anyway, the Program official said that because we refused to participate back in PA, they were punishing us by making us be in the Program here for a month. We refused, obviously, so the official called in the enforcers and four of them showed up. They tried to pull us out of a class but the teacher chased them out. Then they tried to kidnap us after school. Connor and I fought them off. Here's the officer."

"I'm Detective Sergeant Romano, sir. You are...?"

"Jay Robbins, Sergeant, Drew's and Connor's attorney. Are they all right?"

"Yes, sir, they appear to be just fine. Can't say the same for the perps, though. Four adults armed with Tasers and these two teens wrecked them. Actually, it appears that Miss Harper here accounted for three of them."

"Did Drew tell you about an enforcer incident earlier this summer, where two of them attempted a kidnapping then? Those two are in prison awaiting trial."

"Jay, that was in my statement. Sergeant Romano wasn't there when I gave it."

Robbins told the sergeant about the prior incident.

"So it appears that the OSA people won't let go of this," Robbins told him. "The county DA is making a special effort to try to curtail the agency's lawbreaking activities. I'll let her know about this latest incident; I'm sure you'll hear further about this. You are arresting the four, correct?"

"We have enough eyewitness statements to support an attempted kidnapping charge, sir," the sergeant answered.

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Meanwhile, Werthur was on the phone with William Garcy, his supervisor.

“When I had them called to the office, the two teens refused to comply and mentioned their religious exemptions. I had pulled the copies that were in their files, but apparently they have additional physical copies of the exemption declarations that were date-stamped by the old school and this current one. I could be criminally charged now with records tampering, you know.”

“There’s no proof that you did it,” Garcy told him.

“But while one could claim a filing error for a single doc, when two disappear, both involving a closely related case, tampering would be very hard to deny. Another thing. When I called for an enforcer pickup, two teams responded.”

“Gerberin said that he’d do that. The two kids put the first team he had sent in the hospital, so he wanted to make sure that wouldn’t happen again.”

“Well, sorry to disabuse you about the success of that plan. Right now, all four enforcement agents are on their way to the hospital. Those teens put the agents down so quickly that from where I was watching, I couldn’t see any real details of what happened. One second they were standing there, apparently talking. Then the Tasers got deployed and aimed. Ten seconds later, all four agents were on the ground and not moving. And then the cops showed up and were interviewing everyone—oh, the whole football team witnessed the thing. Now word will get spread around by all those witnesses about how four Program enforcers were so easily overcome by a boy and girl. That means we’ve lost the threat of outside compliance enforcement when we start the Program here.”

“I’m sure that you’ll find a way to be sure that the kids cooperate. All right, thanks for the report. Keep me informed of any further developments.”

They signed off and Garcy contacted Gerberin, who became livid with rage at hearing this news.

“Did he say how a boy and girl could fight off four professionally trained security men armed with Tasers? Did they have a lot of help in overcoming my agents?”

“He said it was just the two of them. You know, this was at a football practice and the entire team was there watching. Imagine what would have happened if the subjects had gotten them to help. Taser darts against football pads? Those players would have pounded your agents into the ground.”

“Are those kids immune to Tasers, then? The boy was hit last time and it had no effect.”

“He was too far to see details. But he said he saw three of them aiming, then they went down.”

“Shit, they’re trained to aim and shoot as a single action. Give the target no chance to react.”

“You might want to get your regional supervisor to find out where they were taken and get him over there for some damage control. And have him contact legal before he makes any statement. Given how that county’s DA has reacted before, I suspect that your agents again will get hit with attempted kidnapping.”

Gerberin disconnected, simmering with anger and vowing to find a way to punish those teens.

Chapter 22 - Introspection

“Again, Drew, I just can’t believe how quickly you reacted—and your throwing aim is simply awesome. Did you get your combat training, plus a little Amazonian magic, from Wonder Woman while you were living in your nature-camp home in the woods? Where’s your magic tiara?”

“Very funny, sweetheart. Guess that I’m just self-taught. Sorry, no tiara.”

“And to hear what those offensive linemen said about your tackle of the Taser guy. They were all envious of your technique after seeing how hard you hit him. They said that your hit actually lifted him off the ground. Didn’t that hurt?”

Drew giggled. “Hell no. First, the adrenalin was so high, all I could feel was getting the target down. Second, the riding leathers and padding worked better than football pads ever could, I think. Those shoulder pads would have spread out my impact too much. Third, I used my soccer legs for the power and my shoulder as a battering ram. Damn, hitting him felt so good, ‘cause I had thought his Taser shot had gotten you.”

“No, one dart hit my side in an indirect hit and it got tangled there. The other one missed me. Or maybe it hit the top of my cycle boot ‘cause I think I felt an impact there. You know that tales of your fighting exploits will go viral, don’t you?”

“I guess. I’m glad that this happened during football practice and nobody had their phone with them—so there aren’t any videos to go on line. One of the student trainers had to get his phone from his duffel to call 911. Everyone else’s was in their locker.”

That evening, Jay came by the Ritters’ home with news.

“Yeah, the DA was so angry at this incident that she was sputtering with rage,” Jay told them. “She’s applying for a search warrant for any school records related to you and to get a phone calling record for this Werthur character. She wants to link his involvement with those enforcer agents and maybe even trace the chain back to OSA headquarters. So I’ll need to get her a copy of your religious declarations showing the school stamps. I also found out that the two of you are deadly dangerous,” he grinned. “Especially Drew. Connor, the guy you took down has ruptured eardrums and a concussion, a likely ruptured spleen, and a severely hyperextended knee with most of the ligaments and tendons torn or detached.

“And Drew, you tackled that one fellow. He has a separated sternum, broken second and third ribs, and a facial fracture of the upper jaw. The other two fared a little better; your lacrosse balls still did a fair amount of damage, though. They each suffered concussions and a kind of facial fracture; can’t recall the medical terms, but it doesn’t matter. They’ll all be charged with attempted kidnapping. Nowhere in the Social Awareness law does it allow for the creation of an enforcement branch of the agency; that’s completely the invention of the agency officials.

“That means that its agents have no legal powers and especially no powers to detain anyone. They can function in certain school disciplinary matters in the same way that a school administrator can, but they cannot legally detain any person or involuntarily transport them to any location. Here’s the legal definition of kidnapping: it’s the taking of a person against his will

from one place to another through the use of force, violence, threat, or intimidation, such that he doesn't have freedom of movement to leave."

"So how can we get this harassment to stop?" Connor asked.

"I'll ask the DA if a restraining order is possible, given the felonies committed against you," Jay responded. "Since a federal agency is involved, this is a complicated matter. It does appear that coming after you two like they've been doing is personal targeting and not a general enforcement matter."

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It was quiet in school the following day. But the day after, a team of county police, state police, and police technicians invaded the school and began going through the administrative offices and student files. Of course, all the students were burning with curiosity, wondering what this affair was all about, and rumors were flying. But with the Labor Day weekend coming up and the Program starting in just two weeks, when the police teams left, their presence was ascribed to just another school mystery. Only the three Ritter family teens knew the truth, and they weren't talking.

The weather was cool and rainy for most of the Labor Day weekend, so the Ritters didn't visit Pine View. The idea of sitting in the clubhouse or on the cabin porch watching the rain wasn't appealing. Instead, Drew, Connor, and Jennifer went to Sherrill's home where she had arranged a meeting with Wilma and a few other friends; these were the core members of the group that had been planning the Project. All of them had heard about the enforcers' attempt to detain Drew and Connor, of course, and everyone in the school had learned how the two teens had resisted them. Drew had some thoughts about how their encounter might help the Project.

After having a light lunch, Drew told the group about the enforcers in more detail, and told them about the encounter earlier in the summer.

"So we don't know why they targeted us specifically," she went on. "But here's the background from stuff we do know about. You know that all the kids in our former high school—actually all the schools in the region—had gotten religious exemptions from being in the Program. Connor and Jen and me included. The exemptions were in the records our old school sent to Glen Burnie. Now this is a guess. I think that the Program official here was told about the exemptions when the office got our records. Probably Connor and I were singled out and not Jen, 'cause we had gotten picked for the Program—but we didn't know that we were selected, 'cause the school just hung up a list of names each week that nobody ever looked at.

"So, when school started, the Program jerk had us called to the office and told us that 'cause we didn't do the Program when we were selected back in PA, we were being punished by being put in it here, and for a whole month."

The kids all gasped.

"The guy also said that we had no exemption in our records, too; so he must have removed the copies that we know were there. When we refused, he told us that he was calling in the enforcers. Another thing. Early this summer, a car with two enforcers cut us off on our bike and forced

Connor to the side of the road and tried to kidnap us then.”

More gasps.

“Obviously we got away. Now my question is, how can we use the story of what happened against the school and the Program?”

After a lot of discussion and suggestions, they decided to put a brief message out on the texting tree with a link to a document with the full description of the incident. The document would be hosted on a document-storage site in the cloud. Connor suggested that, in addition, a copy of the list of all the Program abuses that Drew had collected for the Pennsylvania clergy be added to the site, and that was agreed to as well.

The text message they sent was: *Hey Gophers, follow these links to learn what can happen to a Program participant when the Program officials run amuck like they are doing right here at GBHS. And learn what has happened to other kids forced to be in the Program elsewhere. Join the Project and get your friends involved too. Together, we win; divided, we fail!*

Later the same day, the county prosecuting attorney received a message about the search.

TO: Mrs Ruth Dowton,  
District Attorney, Anne Arundel County

FROM: Maj Harry Whitney,  
Assistant Chief, Criminal Investigation Bureau, Maryland State Police

SUBJECT: Results from the execution of search warrants, Glen Burnie High School

This is a summary list of findings from subject search:

*Glen Burnie High School - Alleged missing student documents.*

1. ***Investigators were provided with copies of documents titled:*** ‘Declaration of Religious Exemption’ and date-stamped on 15 June of this year at the Glen Burnie high school office. Student permanent files for Drew Harper and Connor Martin did not contain the Pennsylvania originals of these documents; however, the file for Jennifer Ritter, who transferred from the same Pennsylvania school at the same time, did contain an original Declaration, date-stamped at the same date and time as the allegedly missing ones. The folders were examined by the forensic team and fingerprints were found matching those of Mr Donald Werthur, a federal employee of the Office of Social Awareness (OSA) who is assigned to this school as a so-called Program coordinator. Examination of fifteen additional folders chosen at random found no match to Mr Werthur.

2. ***Dr Marcia Petersmith, Glen Burnie school principal,*** stated to investigators that Mr Werthur would have no official reason to access the student permanent record files. She also stated that Mr Werthur claimed, in her presence, that no such exemption documents existed in the two students’ files; however, the office clerk produced a memo dated 17 June, addressed to Mr Werthur, stating that the office had received the records of three student transfers which contained a Program exemption and asked for instructions. A reply memo from Mr Werthur and dated 18 June instructs the clerk that ‘I’ll look into this

and let you know.’

3. *A search warrant was executed* of Mr Werthur’s office and the missing documents were found in his desk, together with handwritten notes about telephone contacts with his supervisor, Mr William Garcy, director of operations at OSA. Mr Werthur’s notes say that he is to remove the Declaration documents from the students’ files and require that Miss Harper and Mr Martin become immediate Program participants for a month’s term and that they are to be required to strip naked immediately. If they refused, he was to contact the Enforcement Branch of the OSA for what his note called a ‘pickup.’ His note read that these instructions were being relayed by Mr Garcy on behalf of Mr Ross Gerberin, director of Program compliance, OSA, who is the supervisor of the Enforcement Branch.

4. *Examination of telephone records* from the high school show calls to and from the OSA headquarters at the appropriate times to support the physical evidence.

#### ***Recommendation***

Mr Don Werthur: Tampering with public records, conspiracy, accessory to attempted kidnapping.

Please let us know if you require any further details.

None of the GBHS kids knew much about this search but rumors flew everywhere.

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The week following Labor Day was a quiet and introspective time for all of the GBHS kids as they traveled around the school. Drew and Connor saw many familiar faces around the school, in all grades too. So many of their classmates had “practiced” being nudists at the resort that the teens recognized many, and this made them feel good—they didn’t feel like newcomers at the high school. And they knew many of the “in” kids too, since many had been involved in the Project.

Drew’s high spot was that the soccer season was in full swing with games on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. She had been elected as the defensive co-captain, and in a radical move by her coach, for certain plays and formations, when she would gain possession after a steal or interception, she would switch from her usual stopper or full-back role to a central attacking midfielder, very similar to how Trent Alexander-Arnold of Liverpool plays that position. In this position, she would become the team’s playmaker with her speed, field-sense, and her very accurate passes and crosses.

In their Tuesday game, playing in her new role, she carded an unassisted goal, four assists, three steals, and an interception, and her team’s time of possession was 67 percent, a hugely important metric. In the game, Drew had been watching how their opponents set up their attacks as they brought the ball through the midfield. She noticed how the attacking winger usually set up a pass to their striker, and that pass was generally a weak one. So on the next attack, Drew was ready, and began sprinting toward the open pitch between the winger and striker just as the striker began her pass. She intercepted the ball and, still on a full-speed run, lobbed it ahead of her over the

head of their center midfielder, picked up the ball at the right side of the box, rouletted around a defender, faked a shot, juked to the right as the goalie was tricked left, and slammed the ball into the net. It was only the valiant defensive efforts of the opposing team that kept the game from being a blow out; their goalie stopped eleven shots on goal. Still, the Gophers won 5-1.

Thursday's game faced a team with a strong midfield and good ball control, so Drew played her usual stopper, but she still scored a goal and two assists, one of which drew gasps and applause from the spectators. Her speed out of the backfield after a steal led opposing teams to try to double- or even triple-cover her, only to give her teammates scoring opportunities. In this game, Drew was playing in a 4-1-3-2 formation between the back line and midfielders. In the second half with the score tied, one of her team's wingbacks stole the ball on the other team's attack and passed the ball upfield to Drew, who raced upfield with it while three defenders began approaching her to try to mark her. This left her striker and a winger wide open and Drew saw them both racing toward the opponent's box from the opposite side of the pitch. Still moving forward at half-speed, she launched a pretty rainbow flick over the heads of her defenders, leaving them flat-footed—they had never seen that move before. Drew picked up the ball behind the defenders and sent a high cross toward her striker, who met it on the fly at the right corner of the box and headed it into the goal. This broke the tie and they went on to win this game 4-3.

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Drew found herself facing some deeply conflicted feelings that Friday evening as she was working on a homework project. She loved her friends—really loved them. Jennifer's enthusiasm could light up the darkest room, and both Sherrill and Wilma had this uncanny way of knowing exactly what Drew needed to hear when Drew began to express her doubts and concerns about how the Project would work out. And Monday was coming.

She was so gratified that she and Connor were so close because those girls' lives and morals seemed to be so... different. And it wasn't simply their nudism either; they just liked sex. Not promiscuous sex; to them, just having sex was fun among their nudist friends. To Drew, this was a difficult concept.

*I don't feel like a prude, she mused, but I don't see how relationships without love can be fulfilling.*

She reached over the schoolbooks on the table and picked up the well-worn Bible lying there. Its spine was cracked and the corners of many pages were dog-eared, its wear coming from years of its readers' flipping back and forth between favorite passages. It was her mother's Bible and the only possession she had from her. Knowing that she was reading the same passages that her mom had done gave her peace and strength, especially during her extended camp-out times before she began high school.

*Does freedom extend to being free to walk an alternative path than my friends' path? She wondered. Is it being unfaithful to them if I don't support them in their crazy Project, an idea that I had pushed?*

She recalled a verse Pastor had mentioned in one of his early sermons, one he had delivered soon after they had met him, and it was on friendship. Turning to 1 Thessalonians 5:11, she read,

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

*But doesn't that one from Colossians on cooperation apply too?* She wondered and flipped to chapter 3:12-14, where she read, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

*But thinking about the Project, which in a way is like fighting fire with fire, seems to me to emphasize the wrongness of nudity just for the sake of nudity. It's just gratuitous. It's not nudism, like at the resort. Naked people everywhere and a respectful, peaceful atmosphere.*

As Drew’s thoughts continued, and she tried to visualize herself being among the naked kids in the Project, she felt that almost-forgotten pressure begin to tighten in her chest. Anxiety.

*But I vowed to be free. Am I being too rigid? Or am I failing to stand firm in what I believe?*

“Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18 where it states, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ she murmured quietly. *That part I understand. The loving part's easy. But what about all the rest of the support? What about supporting my friends while they do the really difficult crap? What about my supporting their version of morality and watch them walk paths I don't fully understand—paths that I'm afraid might hurt them?*

“Say something, darling?” Connor asked, looking up from across the table. “Oh, you’re reading the Bible, so you’re into introspection mode.”

“Just thinking about Monday, sweetie. Can I be a true friend if I can’t do what our friends are doing?”

“Darling, to be a good person and friend doesn’t mean you have to copy them. Didn’t Pastor say more than once something from Luke, um, ‘A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart’? And your heart is truly good.”

“Nice verse, yeah, thanks, sweetie. I know that one, it’s from Luke ... ah, here, 6:45. You know the right stuff to keep me oriented. I’m not gonna get naked Monday, I decided. I had my own Program challenge and resistance. Twice. Like they say, I got no irons in this here fire.”

“Hey, all of our friends are agreed about that, right?” Connor replied. “They’re just delighted that you’re involved in the Project and go to the resort too. Hey, has anyone ever mentioned your wearing a cover-up there?”

“Um, no, never...”

“So there. As you said, the Glen Burnie Program is their fire. We’ve already got the battle scars to show from when we were in our own same fire ... fires. And me too; I’ll be on the cheering section and not in the game.”

“Connor, honey, you’re not just doing that to make me happy...?”

“I’d do lots to keep you happy but this time, no, it’s not just for you. ONG, do I need to remind

you again of our talk back at your MacTent campsite?” Drew smiled and shook her head. “I’m not spiritual the way you are, but for me, seeing what Dad did to his life made me rethink my morals. Forcing one group’s morals on another group or person is so cringeworthy. Dad did that in his dealing, capturing people into addiction. Our elected morons want to have schools social-engineer teens. Supporting friends is important, sure, and we’ve been doing that, big time—even back at Memorial.”

“But this group is special. I get hit right in the feels when I think that I should be right up on the front lines too.”

Connor got up, walked around the table, and hugged her.

“Hell, you should never feel overcome by those kinds of conflicting emotions. You know? You’re a master at keeping it 100; you always stay true to yourself. Do it now.”

They kissed.

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When Monday’s first period arrived, everyone was on edge; even the teachers in the teens’ classroom wing looked jittery as they watched the students file into their classrooms as the day began.

“Mmm, teachers are on alert,” Sherrill commented as Wilma came trotting up.

“Saw that Werthur jerk,” she told them. “He was talking to a few P.E. teachers and pointing to the field house. So maybe that’s where they plan to do the strip-off.”

“Makes sense. Also when it gets cold,” Connor remarked.

Their first period passed with no surprises; when it ended, they went off to their home-room classroom.

“Wonder how many kids will get picked today,” Drew remarked as they went to their seats.

“Well, statistically I think that it would be two in each senior home room. They said they’d pick sixteen seniors each week,” Connor replied. “Changed from that summer letter.”

“So two, maybe three of us in home room will get picked.”

Then the bell rang and the room settled. The teacher began the usual home-room activities and several minutes later, the P.A. system bonged and crackled to life.

“Good morning. This is Program Coordinator Werthur. We will start the Program very soon. First, this is what you will do when your name is called. Leave your classroom with your belongings. Bring those to your lockers. Next, go to the field house where you’ll strip naked and boxes will be provided to store your clothes. They are numbered and you’ll get the lock combination number. At the bell, you can return to your locker and get any materials you need for your second period class.

“At the end of the day, when weather permits, your clothing boxes will be in the main courtyard where you can get dressed, otherwise go to the field house. For the rest of the week, you’ll strip

in the courtyard each morning. When the weather is inclement, you'll use the field house.

"You all have a copy of the Program booklet and the list of FAQs that covers many items. Let me go over your major responsibilities now."

He then spoke about all the Program rules and requirements and mentioned the standard punishments for violators.

"The teachers have the names of this week's participants in their classrooms. We have selected sixteen seniors, ten juniors, and six each sophomores and freshmen for this and subsequent weeks. Teachers, please begin."

Everyone in the room began shifting nervously in their seats as the teacher opened an envelope. She read out three names to huge sighs from class members.

Then Sherrill called out, "Project begins!"



GBHS Home room—Project begins

She stood up and began disrobing and virtually everyone else in the room gave a half-hearted cheer; then most followed her lead as louder cheering and whistles broke out. Similar sounds could be heard from nearby classrooms. Then, naked, everyone sat.

Drew noticed that only nine kids in the room, including herself and Connor, remained dressed, and it was those dressed kids who looked embarrassed. The others were joking and laughing, but there was still a bit of tension in the

room.

But the teacher looked bewildered. "Audrey, Mitchell, and Jonas. You were asked to leave for the field house but..."

"But we're not going, ma'am," Mitchell answered. "And our friends are supporting us by stripping with us. We all are..."

The P.A. bonged, interrupting Mitchell.

"Students whose names were called, please obey our request to come to the field..."

Then Drew heard unintelligible speech in the background.

"They're doing what? Naked? ... Not the selected... those too?" Werthur's voice could be

heard. “All right,” he said, now back at the P.A. “Apparently many students have disrobed in the classrooms and the selected students are not responding to my request to go to the field house. This is not acceptable and the named students are to come to the field house as requested. Not participating will result in additional weeks in the Program. That is all.”

Drew’s phone was humming with incoming text signals so she decided, despite the no-phone use rule during classes, to peek. The messages were mainly text-tree ones with thumb’s up emojis but a few gave details. None of the texts reported that any kids had left their classrooms and it appeared about three-quarters of the kids in each class were naked. Drew caught Sherrill’s eye and gave her a big finger-circle-okay sign and Sherrill responded with a grin.

After the period change bell rang, the halls were becoming packed with naked kids—some nervous and some apprehensive, but all stoically naked—the second period began. One



Glen Burnie High School–Naked Project

of the senior Project organizers in that room called out the suggestion, “Feel chilly in class, then put a top on, guys. No point in catching a cold.”

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Meanwhile, in the office, a bewildered Werthur was talking to Dr Petersmith.

“Why is everyone stripping? How can we tell if the participants are stripping too? For that matter, how can anyone tell who the Program participants are? You need to announce to the school that the students have to obey...” he began.

“Mr Werthur, this is your show. I’ve already told you that the school board will let the feds run it in the county schools but are allowing principals leeway in giving the amount of direct support that we will allow. In my school, teachers will be allowed to use the federal curriculum only where using it meets class objectives. But I will not allow overt actions like forcible stripping. That’s illegal. And I will not tolerate any violence in my school either.”

Werthur hustled to his office and phoned his boss at OSA.

“I need to update you on the situation here,” he began and described what he had seen. “At the

last class change, it looked like everyone in the halls was naked, just about. There was no way to tell which were the participants. Many kids also get partly dressed during classes and there's no way to tell if the locker room and restroom rules are being followed. The principal is not cooperating with me to stop the extra nudity. That's what's happening."

"We haven't seen this happen before, so I can't tell you what to do. Perhaps require arm bands or something for the participants? The problem there is that we don't have a supply of anything like that. A few schools bought sports whistles which the participants used for security and we reimbursed them but I don't think arm bands would be visible enough. And what would you do if the others started wearing them too? The principal would have to set up the purchase of the arm bands, as well, and apply for reimbursement."

"From my interactions with her, it's highly unlikely that she'd cooperate. She told me that 'this is my show.'"

"Maybe sending letters to parents advising them to have their student obey school authorities would work. We'll see. Carry on as best as you can and I'll talk to the planners here about how to respond to this problem."

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The rest of the day at the school, Drew thought, went well, based on her two past schools. Lunch was quieter than usual since so many of the kids were naked and most seemed a bit self conscious. Of course this was a different experience from when the majority of the students were at the resort, being outside naked and swimming or doing an activity. It was different too from when they had been sitting naked in their classrooms, since here at lunch, they could interact with each other in a familiar environment but they were completely naked.



Project kids entering the lunchroom at the high school

Drew asked Connor, "Did you notice how the clothing status kinda changes here? How some kids put something on to go on the serving line and then took it off at their tables?"

"Saw that. And the dressed kids and naked ones are really mixed together—nobody's being shut out socially 'cause they're either naked or clothed. Let's

join Sherrill and Wilma."

When they got to that table, Wilma had some news.

“Sherrill and I heard from some of the guys on the planning group. The teachers seem to be confused about what to do in classes so they’re conducting them as usual. I heard about one bio class where the two Program kids got plenty of support from their classmates, so no abuse or humiliation happened.”

“Yeah, and I heard that kids in the P.E. classes appeared to be splitting locker-room use by their comfort level,” Sherrill added.

After lunch, as they walked to their next class, Drew joked to Sherrill, “I think that it’d be kinda funny if on some class changes, only the boys are naked, and the next time, the girls go naked.”

“Cool idea!” Sherrill exclaimed and got on her phone to start a text message.

After school, Drew had soccer practice in preparation for their Tuesday game, a non-conference game against a powerful team. If they made it to the regionals, they would certainly meet this school there.

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On Tuesday during home room, Sherrill and Wilma were paged to go to the office and Drew and Connor insisted that they had to go too. Werthur was there, of course, as the teens were pretty certain that they were called because of their leadership in the Project. They were sent to the conference room where the Robbins girls’ assistant principal was waiting with Werthur.

“I only had the two Robbins girls called,” Werthur complained. “Why are you two troublemakers here too?”

Drew answered, “All the trouble you’re complaining about was caused by OSA, not us. And now you think that you’ve figured out who the nudity organizers are, and you’re gonna try to persuade or threaten us to stop it. Well, the idea for a nudist high school actually came from a kid in a different county and that idea caught on here. Lots of kids bought into it and it’s become a voluntary movement to resist how the Program causes abuses. The four of us are only part of the organizers and nothing we’re doing violates Program rules.”

“You’re wrong, miss,” Werthur retorted. “The Program does allow children to volunteer, but the booklet says that they must register in the office, get approval, and spend a month naked. No one’s done that.”

“That’s in the ‘Volunteer’ section. Look at the ‘Outreach’ section where it says, ‘Nude individuals, including fellow students who choose a nude lifestyle, are not subject to the rules of the Program and should not be treated as such.’”

“But nude lifestyles aren’t recognized in Maryland...”

“Look at the first two words. ‘Nude individuals.’ Those who choose to be nude, just like all the students at the school here. The Program rules allow for nude individuals and that’s what’s happening,” Drew retorted.

“All the nude students you see out there are nudists and most have been going to a nudist resort this past summer,” Wilma rejoined. “Your stupid Program rules have given them the chance to

be nude here in school, just like everyone can do the Outreach part and be naked in public places.”

“But nobody can tell who the Program participants are and, ah...” Werthur began.

“You mean for Reasonable Requests?” Wilma interrupted.

“That’s right. How can the participants do the Requests?”

“We know who they are, at least those in our classes. And as nudists, we’re very familiar with the bodies of the other sex so we’ve got no need to make Requests.”

“But the participants need to ...” Werthur tried to rebut.

The door opened and the principal, a woman, and a county police officer entered.

Dr Petersmith spoke, “Mr Werthur, these people are here for you.”

He saw the officer.

“What? Why?”

The woman spoke. “I’m District Attorney Dowton. Mr Donald Werthur, I have a warrant for your arrest. You are charged with tampering with public records, conspiracy, and accessory to attempted kidnapping...”

She continued with the Miranda notice while Werthur was sputtering in denial. Then the officer cuffed him and led him out of the room.

The others looked on in surprise and then Dowton explained, “You all, except possibly AP West, know much about the events leading up to this arrest. I’ve seen problems in several county high schools but none like this. Let me see. You clothed students must be Drew Harper and Connor Martin, am I correct?”

They acknowledged her.

“It’s clear that the OSA has been harassing both of you for reasons that cannot be justified. But Werthur is small fry here. We’ll indict him and release him on a low bail. We want to see if he can lead us to bigger prey, the people who are harassing you.”

“Thanks, Mrs DA,” Connor said. “Werthur told us that we were singled out ‘cause we got a religious exemption back at our old school when we were picked to participate and then when two OSA people interviewed us, they began trying to get us to justify our reasons. Doing that was actually forbidden by the court injunction, our attorney had told us, so we refused to continue the interview. So Werthur told us that we’d have to spend a month in the Program.”

“Yes, I did know those details. All right, then, carry on. Your Mr Werthur might actually return to the school by this afternoon.”

Except he didn’t; he went to the OSA headquarters to discuss his arrest.

After the DA left, Petersmith asked the four teens, “May I ask if it is actually you four who organized this demonstration opposing the Program?”

“We were part of it, plus about a dozen others,” Sherrill acknowledged. “We heard what was happening with the Program in other schools and didn’t want that here.”

“Well, I think that you did something that seems impossible, to mobilize such a large part of the student body over the summer. And using the Program rules to support the idea that being a nudist would flood the school with naked students so that participants wouldn’t be easy to identify. That was your intention, am I right?”

“Dr Petersmith, you seem to be in the same camp as us, opposing the Program, but you can’t come out against it, right?” Sherrill asked.

“You know I can’t make a direct statement about that,” she demurred.

“Of course. Yes, we did flood the school with nudists, but it was to see how what we saw at our nudist resort, where mutual respect is the norm, would work in the school with the Program, where any respect is absent.”

“Dr Petersmith, while the nudity that the Program requires isn’t its biggest problem by any measure, we wanted to demonstrate to the kids that just being nude with others isn’t such a big deal.” This comment was from Wilma.

Drew broke in, “Totally. Connor and I have attended two schools where the Program was running and can agree that the nudity, in itself, wasn’t the real problem—it was the egregious humiliation forced on the kids by those Requests, and worse, how some teachers would use the kids for demos which were terribly embarrassing for both the participant and the whole class, too. In one class, I couldn’t bear to watch. From what I’ve seen of the classroom demos, none of them make any sense, that is, any more than a good video would.”

“Another thing we wanted to stop was the opposite sex in the locker room rule,” Connor said. “Back in our first high school, a girl was raped in the boys’ locker room.”

Petersmith gasped.

“Yeah, it happened and she got pregnant. We don’t know what happened after that; Drew’s contact from that school graduated. Anyway, if the Program’s idea is to get kids familiar with the bodies of the other sex, then we’re doing that. Why should groping and posing be part of that? And modesty is a very personal matter, obviously. Our Project gives the more modest kids here a chance to either invisibly resist participating in the Program and not getting naked, or if they choose, they can stretch their boundaries and join all the other nudists. Judging from how many kids got nude shows that excessive modesty isn’t a teen social problem, I would think. But using force does cause bad problems, and again Drew and I saw that too.”

“Very cogent and strong arguments against the Program, Connor,” Petersmith replied. “What are your plans going forward?”

“We’ll be nude in school as long as the Program’s running,” Sherrill answered. “And the temps allow it. Those enclosed walkways between buildings do get cold too. I mean the hard core of our group will keep it up and that’s maybe four hundred kids. We think that if a reluctant kid is picked and they see that so many others are nude too, they might get the strength to join us, even

if it's just for a week."

Michael West, the AP for the Robbins cousins, spoke for the first time.

"Drew and Connor, you speak very well for your nudity opposition plan, but..."

"But we're clothed. Sure. We did the Program at our last school by getting an exemption, along with the kids in the entire school. The OSA tried to overturn them but failed in federal court. We support the kids in what they're doing here but see no need to be nude ourselves. We have a religious exemption here too," Drew responded.

"Very good," he replied. "All right, let's see about getting you back to class."

They got their passes and returned to class.

## Chapter 23 - Swim Team

At OSA headquarters, Werthur was speaking to his supervisor, Garcy, and Gerberin from Enforcement.

“The participant students didn’t go to the field house to strip. But again, a large number of students in the next class were naked and they were during the class change too. I had identified the organizers of this nudist display and during home room, had them called to meet with me and their assistant principal. When they came, both Martin and Harper were with them. They admitted, all four of them, to be an organizer, and pointed out the part of the Outreach section of the rules that allows other students to be naked in addition to participants.”

They all looked at the Program booklet and Werthur pointed out that section.

He continued, “But if almost everyone else is naked too, there’s no way to ensure that participants are being subjected to Requests, there appear to have been no instances of classroom Relief, and no cases of teachers using participants for demos. Of course, that is only the second day.”

“Second day or not, this is unacceptable,” Gerberin said. “And identifying participants...”

Werthur interrupted, “I thought of several ways but they’d all require funding from the school or school district. I asked but got denied. They said that they had no funds for non-instructional purposes.”

He told them about using armbands and other options he had considered.

“What about these organizers? What have you done?” Gerberin asked.

“I asked them to announce to the school to stop the extra nudity, but they said it was an individual choice and wouldn’t interfere. And there hasn’t been a violation of Program rules. Putting them in the Program wouldn’t change anything and besides, two of them have religious exemptions.”

“Oh, those two, Martin and Harper.”

“Right. And there’s the matter of my arrest. I was given a very small bail, \$5,000, but it came with a warning from the DA that it would be increased if I attempt to do anything that interferes with students’ rights. How can OSA defend me in a trial?”

“The documents part is covered,” Gerberin said. “As the Program coordinator, you have the duty to validate any exemption so you took those records for that purpose. Your statements that the exemption docs didn’t exist was a misunderstanding of what you meant. Legal is working on the kidnapping part. But now we have a counter to the religious exemptions for Martin and Harper. They’re involved in this student nudism display, so their religious exemption is invalid. Put them in the Program as punishment.”

“With all respect, sir, I won’t go there. They wrecked two enforcer teams, and when I spoke to both of them, they both have an inner intensity about them that I’ve never seen in a kid before. The girl is a soccer standout and has a national ranking and the boy’s a strength and fitness coach

for the soccer and football teams; he's said to be that good. My advice is not to keep targeting them."

"I think that if we make an example of them, then the rest of the school will follow," Gerberin replied. "We'll send you back to the school and for Monday's participant selection, include those two in addition to the random ones and we'll have an enforcer go to their classroom to escort them. In fact, I'll have three teams at the school to escort those students who are picked to the field house."

"You're making a mistake, but I'm overruled, I guess," Werthur responded. "So that's my report."

"Carry on, then," Garcy told him.

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But instead of returning to the school, Werthur went to the DA's office. She had told him that if he cooperated going forward, he could have his charges reduced or dropped.

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Connor was a busy guy. During the pre-school practice weeks, the football coach had watched one of Connor's stamina workouts with the soccer team and was impressed.

When it was completed, he asked Connor, "Where did you learn those series of moves? It incorporates agility with stamina very well."

"Coach, from several sources, but mainly from the Marine Corps' physical training websites. I used those exercises and adapted them to meet my own needs and they work well for soccer too."

"Seems that they'd work in football too..." Connor nodded in agreement. "So would you have time to teach our fitness coach and team some of those moves?"

"Sure, Coach. Let's look at your practice schedule and see when I can work mine in."

And in this way, Connor had become the stamina and agility student coach for the football team. Now the tryouts for the winter sports season were approaching, so he had added pool time to his coaching time, coming to school at 7:30 to use the pool to do laps for endurance and sprints for speed.

Several other swimmers stopped to talk to him and they all introduced themselves..

"I'm Jarred, the men's team captain, and I think I've seen you around. Y'know, 'cause you're one of the few wearing clothes."

The others laughed and Connor smiled widely as he answered, "Sure. I'm Connor, and yeah, I'm usually clothed and there's a story there. Moved to the area over the summer and want to try out for the swim team."

"Compete before? I could see you have good form and speed," Jarred told him. "You have a swimmer's body, but damn, are you ripped too."

“I’m a fitness coach for the women’s soccer and men’s football teams...”

“Oh! You’re that guy? The guys on the football team say you’re tough as hell on them but they like the new exercises you have them doing. Do any of them translate for swimming?”

Connor thought for a few moments. “Sure. Here’s a couple that would work well.”

And he began to lead the little group through a series of exercises to improve fast-twitch muscle fiber tone.

“Those would help on reacting to the starting gun,” he told them. “Your muscles should already be primed at the ‘Take your mark’ command and they fire with the gun or horn. They also help on your flip turns and sprints. Power and endurance come from the slow-twitch muscle fibers; they tire less easily than the fast-twitch fibers do. And...”

Connor was interrupted by, “...hello, Jared, and did you organize an early practice session? What I saw was pretty impressive. Who’s the new guy? He was leading you.”

“Hi, you’re Coach Mayberry, right?” Connor asked. “I’m Connor Martin and plan to try out for the team.”

“Coach, this guy is good in the water,” Jarred interjected, “and he’s a conditioning coach for soccer and football. He was showing us some cool exercises just now.”

“I saw you doing them. Connor, word among the coaching staff is that you’re really good and I mean good like a BS in sports physiology good. How did you learn so much in high school?”

Connor told him a bit of his past and how he had researched the physiology behind the body-building and agility exercises he used in his physical development.

“Well, it certainly shows,” the coach remarked. “Have you swum in competition?”

“I haven’t. I was too involved in the school nudity garbage at my former school. I spent my P.E. time developing strength and agility exercises for my own use. Get ideas, try them out, and measure their effect.”

“Jeez, guy, I guess you’ll probably want to study sports physiology then.”

“It’s one of my options, yes.”

“What do you consider your best stroke?”

“I like the challenge that the breast stroke gives and have very strong pecs and long arms, Coach. So I work on that stroke a bit more than the others.”

“Damn, an answer to my prayers,” the coach muttered. “Yeah, that’s the most difficult one to teach. Getting the kids to master the timing of the ‘pull-kick-glide’ sequence isn’t easy. Can you show me four laps—100 meters? Do you know the proper turn?”

“I do, Coach. I also stay underwater as long as possible after starting and push-off and I assume that’s okay?”

Mayberry was practically rubbing his hands in glee. “For sure. Show me. On my mark.”

Conner went to the starting block, set himself, and dove in at the coach's command. Mayberry watched Connor's form and kept an eye on the big timing clock on the wall as Connor turned for each lap. When he finished, Mayberry motioned him to get out of the water.

"Jarred said that you wanted to try out, Connor. You just did; welcome to the team. You only used six strokes per lap which is superb. Your time was just over 63 seconds and that's not only a pool record, it would be a conference record too."

The other swimmers exchanged high-fives with Connor.

"How did you get so good at that stroke without coaching?" Mayberry asked.

"Videos, Coach. I studied them to learn the proper form. I have a good body sense—proprioception—so I can always tell where my limbs are, and the repetition builds muscle memory for the body form. Building speed was keeping streamlined, timing, and the underwater portion where I have a good dolphin kick."

"That was impressive, Connor. How are your other strokes?"

"I do have good form, others have told me, and I am pretty fast. Guess I have the build."

"For sure. Okay, get with me later, when you can, and I'll go over our practice schedule. You've got about a half hour more pool time, so get back to that if you want. Welcome aboard the team, Connor."

"Thanks, Coach."

Connor jumped in and began his backstroke practice routine.

Later, he told Drew about his meeting the swim coach.

"Hey, we'll both be lettered athletes," Drew chuckled. "I think that they give letters for student coaches and trainers too."

"Say, for two kids who wanted to be invisible in school, look where we wound up," Connor remarked.

"So true," Drew sighed.

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On Thursday afternoon, Drew, Connor, Sherrill, and Wilma got messages to go to the principal's office after classes. The messages said that nobody was in trouble.

Drew had a Friday game after school and a Saturday game and their Thursday practice was important.

"Hope this doesn't take too long," she observed to the other three as they walked to the office.

Petersmith was there but also DA Downton was sitting at the conference table. She got up to greet the teens.

"Let's all sit," she invited, and when everyone was ready, she began. "This is about the coming

week. Mr Werthur is cooperating with my office and told me that the higher-ups at OSA, mainly their enforcement head, will be making yet another attempt to try to get the Program running here like in the other schools. I must say, what you are doing here is a creative way to show your opposition to it.”

The others chuckled.

“So Mr Werthur told me that they plan to add you two, Miss Harper and Mr Martin, to next week’s Program group where you would be instructed to go to the field house where everyone is to undress. I understand that for this week, what happened is about three-quarters of the student body undressed in their classrooms instead. Next week, they want to try to get the selected students to the field house. Mr Werthur told us that he doesn’t expect that they’ll go next week either.”

“They won’t,” Sherrill told her. “Messages on the text tree we’ve set up confirm that next week should be the same.”

“Goodness. What you’re doing here is impressive, I think. The OSA plan is to locate you two in particular, Drew and Connor, and get you two to strip as an example for the rest of the students. I know of your prowess in self-protection. Also, Dr Petersmith knows that the use of force to strip someone is a felony and she’ll tell any OSA person coming into the school that fact. But county police will be standing by, ready to respond, if any violence occurs.”

“Mrs Dowton, our attorney at my prior home told us that if someone threatens battery, like aiming a Taser at us, we can defend ourselves...” Connor said.

“That’s true here too. But please, could you not be so, ah, energetic about your defense?” the DA chuckled.

“Sure, I’ll try. Depends on what they do and how many of them get involved. But Drew and I protect each other very well.”

“Assuredly,” Dowton responded. “I hope to stop this over-the-top kind of vendetta against students who have somehow fallen outside the what Program officials consider to be a norm. Okay, that’s what I had to say, Dr Petersmith. Thanks for your time.”

“And thanks for the heads-up, Mrs Dowton,” the principal responded.

The teens echoed their thanks. Dowton left the room but Petersmith signaled the teens to stay.

“I want you students to really try to avoid violence,” she told them.

“We’ll try,” Drew said. “But if they try using Tasers, we *must* protect ourselves. And the only way someone can restrain me long enough to strip me would be with a Taser. If I see a Taser aimed at me, that person will wake up on a hospital bed. Did it several times before. Just a lacrosse ball... no, shorter range. A golf ball to the head. Been practicing with them.”

Petersmith shuddered. “My goodness, Drew...”

“Self-protection has been my imperative since I was in middle school when I was almost raped. I *will* protect myself... and Connor,” she said with a steely expression.

“I’ll do what I can about the Tasers,” Petersmith replied. “See if you can de-escalate where you can.”

“Absolutely,” Connor told her.

“That’s all I have; oh, Connor, I heard you’ve joined the swimmers, and Drew, your games are exciting to watch. Keep up your aggressive play. I can see where it comes from.”

“Thanks, Dr Petersmith,” the four teens harmonized as they left the room.

“Ack, more nastiness to come,” Wilma complained.

“I have an idea for home room Monday,” Connor told them. “Just for our home room ‘cause the enforcers will come there. Probably just four; six would get in each other’s way. First, everyone stays dressed when the participants are named. We’ve got time till next class, so let’s detour to the pool and I’ll show you what I thought of. Then here’s what we’ll all do...”

He went on to describe his plan, and on the way back, they cut through the field house where a P.E. class was in session.

“Oh wow, look!” Sherrill exclaimed. “They’re playing volleyball naked!”

“That’s totally righteous,” Wilma enthused.

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*Naked volleyball class at GBHS*

Drew’s

weekend games went well for her individually, but the team struggled to eke out a win Friday and then tied Saturday to the non-conference team that had won the division at state last season. In the first game she again scored on a quick play; her team was attacking and a defender poked the ball away from her striker at the front of the box. It was a hard poke and the ball traveled ten meters downfield. Drew had anticipated that possibility and had raced to meet the ball. The whole defense was high in the box, the goalie too, with seven players between Drew and the goal, so she lofted a Messi chip shot over the heads of the scrum there and smiled as the ball sailed over their heads, bounced once, and hit the back of the net. She had that one unassisted goal, two assists, two interceptions, and three steals, one of which led to an assist.

In the second game, which ended in a 1-1 tie, Drew had the assist that led to their sole score. Their team time of possession, however, was 68 percent, and it was only their opponent’s

extremely tight defense that kept the score so low. The game was a real battle of the defenses.

Drew was now in talks with coaches from a large number of NCAA D-1 schools, including a number from the west coast. She was now ranked among the top ten women's soccer players in the nation by all of the prep school websites.

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Monday arrived, cool and rainy. Connor took their car to early swim practice instead of the bike and Drew came in later with Jennifer.

"I wonder why they picked on you two," Jennifer remarked while on the short drive. "I have that religious exemption in my records too."

"Probably 'cause you didn't get picked at E-town," Drew told her. "Since those Program people back there got arrested after our interview, and then we showed up in Maryland, maybe we're getting the blame for that. Nothing else makes sense."

"You know that you're ahead of Emma in body-count now, don't you?" Jennifer joked.

"I guess. But please! I hope that today will end it."

"Truth."

The two went to the pool where they met Sherrill and Wilma, according to Connor's plan, and together they carried some items from the pool to their home room classroom. Drew and Connor were wearing their riding leather "armor." when the bell for first period began. When the home room period began, Connor got up and went to the stack of kickboards the girls had brought earlier.

"Hey, guys," he called. "Mrs Cooper's allowing me to speak now; thanks, ma'am. We're probably in for some excitement this period. Inside info from the OSA says that Drew and I will be named as participants today in a setup scheme."

Some of the kids in the room made angry noises at that comment.

"You all got word on the text tree to stay dressed, right? That's because of a possible enforcer showdown here in class. We don't want anyone to get hurt. I've got almost enough of these swimming kickboards for everyone here to use as shields if the enforcers start shooting their Tasers. These are almost two feet long and body width wide. They'll block darts for sure. Drew and I think that only four will come into the room and if they pull their Tasers, we'll counterattack. Please don't get involved! The principal asked us to limit as much violence as we can. If you want to just hide out, then duck behind the desks at the back of the room."

"What will they do?" a girl asked.

"Try to make us go with them. There will be two or three kids in here called along with us. We're not going. And we'll protect you when you're called."

There were several further questions and then the P.A. bonged and an unfamiliar voice intoned, "Good morning, GBHS students. This week's Program starts when your teacher reads your

names. If your name is called, drop off your backpacks and whatever at your lockers and proceed to the field house. Teachers, read your lists.”

Mrs Cooper looked up at the class. “Sorry about this...” and she took the list out and read it. There were two names, followed by Drew’s and Connor’s.

A sigh wafted through the classroom. After several tense minutes, the P.A. bonged again and the speaker said, “No one’s left a classroom, so we will send enforcers to escort you.”

That weekend the text tree had suggested that since the enforcers didn’t know who anyone was, and the teachers had agreed not to point them out, they should switch backpacks, boy with girl, so that would obfuscate their identities if the enforcers tried to identify kids by their backpacks. The kids loved that idea.

As they had anticipated, four Taser-armed enforcers arrived in their classroom several minutes later.

“Where are Drew Harper and Connor Martin?” one demanded. “You’re to come with us.”

Connor stood up; Drew was already standing at the side of the room and the teacher quickly moved to a far corner. Connor had given her a kickboard.

He spoke now. “First, we have a federal exemption. Second, you have no authority in this school. Third, any use of force is a felony. I suggest you leave now.”

The speaker began to move toward Connor but the guy next to him held him back.

“See what he’s wearing and the girl over there?” the guy said in his ear but his voice carried enough that Connor could hear.

“All right then, if you two don’t come with us voluntarily, you’re resisting proper authority. Don’t make us Tase you.”

“Try and that’s assault and we’ll respond,” Connor retorted.

All four pulled out their Tasers and began to aim them and Connor and Drew went into action. What they did that morning became a school legend. The first enforcer, the speaker, shot at Connor, who had whipped up a kickboard in front of him. The darts hit the board and then Connor charged at the enforcer, throwing his favorite body punch at the guy’s solar plexus, doubling him over; a knee to the chin knocked him out. The second enforcer didn’t have a clean shot at Connor; first, since Connor kept the kickboard raised while he charged, the enforcer saw that it would block his darts. Then, when Connor punched his partner, he had turned the enforcer so there was no clear shot. When Connor kned the enforcer in the jaw, he lifted him and threw him into the second enforcer. The two went down. Connor bent down and slugged that second enforcer in the jaw before he could get up. Two down.

Connor looked around. No, four down... no, five. Then a Taser was fired into the room from the doorway and ineffectively impacted the shield Drew was holding, and with a grim smile, she whipped another golf ball at that Taser user. Six down. Eight golf balls littered the floor and two sets of darts were lodged in her kickboard.

Then the two teens pulled out a bunch of large plastic tie-wraps, turned their victims to get to their hands, and cuffed them.

The room echoed with the sounds of cheers and applause as a man ran into the room, shouting, "How could you disable so many..."

He lunged at Connor in an awkward attempt to hold him and Connor grabbed him and twisted him into a hammerlock.

"Just who are you?" Connor growled.

"Oww, let up on my arm... I'm the Enforcer division head. You've been violating Program rules for more than a year now and that behavior requires punishment."

"And you just committed battery on me. I violated no rule."

Connor noticed a handcuff pouch on the belt of one of the downed enforcers. He asked a nearby student to grab the cuffs and help him cuff the man he was holding, to the man's shouts and struggles.

A minute later, two police officers entered the room and the teacher met them. Connor and Drew were busy checking the condition of the downed men, their pulses and respiration.

"Need ambulances for six," Connor called to the officers. "The cuffed guy, he battered me. The DA can explain about all this."

"She's somewhere nearby," one officer said. "We need to get your statements now."

They did that, and after the EMTs had removed the injured men, it was well into the second period.

The DA wanted to meet with Connor and Drew, so the two trooped over to the office. Petersmith led them to the conference room.

"I suppose that was what you call minimum violence," she remarked.

Drew responded, "When Tasers are being shot at you, you do what's necessary to stop the threat."

"How did you account for four of them?" Downton asked.

"In my statement I told what happened. The first four pulled out their Tasers; Connor took two on, and the second two shot at me. One missed 'cause I had already hit him with a golf ball to the head. The second's darts hit my kickboard shield. He needed three balls to put him down; it was hard to throw accurately from behind a shield. Then number three ran in about then and pointed his Taser at me, so I needed three balls to stop him. And the fourth guy shot at me from the doorway; another ball. I only had ten and was getting low. Fortunately, the attacks stopped then."

"And I just knocked out two of them," Connor told her.

"Okay. You guys are making my life hard here. But I'm discounting the use of a weapon, golf balls, because a weapon was used against you for illegal purposes. Singling you out for special

treatment was also illegal; many student statements asserted that the enforcers only called your names, not all four from your classroom. Be aware that some or all of them might file a civil suit against you, though. But we are holding a Mr Gerberin who the police say battered you?”

“Is that the guy’s name? He ran at me and grabbed me, so I cuffed him. He was saying that Drew and I have been violating Program rules, which can’t be, ‘cause we have a federal exemption from participating. Apparently the OSA isn’t recognizing that exemption, despite that a federal court upheld it. Can I get him for assault? He must be the guy who’s been sending enforcers after us.”

“There are other possible charges, like contempt of court, I think. But you’d sign a complaint?”

“I would. You know that I’m over eighteen?”

“Oh, that puts the matter into a different perspective, Connor. Drew, are you over eighteen?”

“Not yet. In November.”

“Participating in the Program can only be enforced with minors, by law,” Dowton told Connor. “You have an adult’s right to refuse to participate, and the harassing that the OSA is doing with you is assault, even battery. I will pursue that. Your school administration is being very accommodating to students regarding the Program, I’m happy to see, and our circuit court judge told me that your religious exemption is valid, Drew. So any attempt to deny that exemption would result in a contempt of court charge.”

“Thank you, Mrs Dowton. Do you know if those enforcers are injured badly?”

“The ones you hit with the golf balls all have concussions. Two have facial bone breaks, one, a depressed skull fracture. Nothing critical, fortunately. Drew, your throwing skill is amazing.”

“Thanks. I wouldn’t want those guys to have permanent injuries. But using Tasers against non-violent teens is unconscionable, I think.”

“I agree. All right, that’s all I have now. I really hope that this problem is put to rest now. Contact me if something comes up, okay?”

“Sure. And thanks again, Mrs Dowton,” Connor said.

She left and Petersmith spoke. “I’m sure you’re glad that’s over. I tried to tell them not to use those Tasers, but they said not to interfere and then ignored me. Connor, to satisfy my curiosity, you’re apparently quite good at personal combat. Have you studied a discipline?”

“No, ma’am. I suppose I have an instinctual response to what will work best to incapacitate someone. And my fast reflexes and strength help.”

“Well, as a team, you two are formidable. Drew, your games this weekend were exciting to watch and goodness, the number of scouts from distant NCAA conferences was unprecedented. Your playing has put GBHS on the map and all of our seniors are benefitting from the exposure. And Coach Mayberry told me, Connor, that you broke our pool breaststroke record in a practice session. He thinks we’ll have a good season. Okay, there’s been enough disruption today, so get your passes and go to class.”

“Thanks, Dr Petersmith,” they chimed and left her office.

The next class was actually their lunch period. On the way there, Drew marveled at how the Project was progressing.



GBH hallway near cafeteria with Project kids

“Look down that corridor, sweetie,” she pointed. “Look how everyone’s acting with each other—even the nudes, the partially clothed, and the clothed kids are laughing and talking to each other. In our other schools, the nude kids got all the attention and bad stuff began happening. Not here; I’m so glad this is working.”

“I guess you could say that your idea for doing the Project here is a rousing success,” Connor laughed. “Not arousing, although I’ve seen my share of aroused boys,” he joked.

Drew smirked. “Don’t think that the gals aren’t aroused too. In the girls’ rooms, I’ve seen lots of them wiping their privates in the open and blushing ‘cause the stalls are all occupied.”

Connor laughed. “Now that’s a crazy picture. Ah, here’s the cafeteria.”

When the two teens entered the cafeteria, everyone began applauding. So Drew got onto a table and began to speak.

“Thanks, everyone, I guess. I hope that what Connor and I did wasn’t blown out of proportion.”

Applause and cheers.

“What was it all about? Well, a high-level OSA person didn’t like the fact that Connor and I, plus many hundreds of other students in Pennsylvania where we went to school last year, all got religious exemptions. We came to his attention when we moved here, so he’s been trying to use us as an example of what will happen to kids who refuse to participate. Connor and I won’t be used that way, and that classroom battle was to show our resolve. See, you *can* resist participating, but if they send an army of enforcers after you, then watch out,” she joked.

Laughter, then more applause, cheers, and whistles.

“But it was six against two and they had Tasers!” someone called.

Connor got onto the table and spoke. “We had a plan and they didn’t. It really was two on twos. And we had Taser shields—aka swimming kickboards, as you probably heard.”

Laughter and applause.

They both hopped down and were mobbed by kids who had additional questions. They answered a few and then got them to pause so that they could get their lunch. They joined Sherrill and the others at their usual table.

“Damn, but you two don’t do stuff in a small way, do you?” Sherrill said as they sat down.

“Wanted to just end the shit,” Connor said between bites of food. “Had a feeling that maybe this was their last shot.”



Lunchroom crowd listening to Drew’s speech

“Yeah, they were running out of enforcers,” Jennifer joked. “Six more down, and who was that guy at the end who you cuffed?”

“The enforcer head boss,” Drew told her. “I think that the DA was after him, so part of this mess was a kinda trap for him.”

“I saw you throwing those balls,” Sherrill remarked. “Your arm was a blur; you moved so fast. And you were throwing the next ball even as your arm barely slowed down.”

“I practiced that a lot,” Drew grinned. “Soccer develops the legs and body core. I wanted to try to do something fun to develop my arms and chest. What am I going to do now if I don’t have enforcers to throw balls at?”

They all laughed.

The rest of the day went normally. Now there was about an even mix of clothed and naked students in the halls during class changes, and Drew noticed and commented to Connor, Jennifer, and the cousins as they walked to their last class.

“Look, I see fewer nude kids now. Guess that the rest have sensed that the original need for lots of naked kids is gone, now that the ‘Battle of the Enforcers’ was won. Maybe the rest have retreated to their own comfort zones.”

“I think you’re right, Drew,” Sherrill remarked. “But the text tree is still active with lots of kids saying that they plan to continue doing the Project, so all’s good.”

“Awesome,” both Drew and Connor chimed.

The five teens shared their last period with the boy and girl, Roy and Evelyn, whose names had been read as the week’s Program participants during their home room.

As Connor went to talk with a swimming teammate, and the three girls went to their seats, Drew waited outside to greet Evelyn as she was coming to the classroom. She was happy to see that the girl was still naked.

“Hi, Evelyn,” Drew said. “Was today okay for you? I know that you were really scared about the Program and Project nudity; you mentioned that during a planning meeting this summer.”

“Damn, Drew, that was awesome, how you and Connor just destroyed those enforcers. Are you sure that Wonder Woman isn’t one of your cousins? Yeah, I’m doing the Program. Didn’t like the thought of having to be naked like this but with the way you guys changed things, it’s made me confused now. I need to explain, but first? My day was fine. No Requests, so far, for example. My P.E. class did volleyball and the bouncing on my chest felt strange; so did sharing the locker room with the boys. Going to the resort really helped me get used to showering with guys at the next shower head.”

Then Roy came up, the other student called along with Evelyn; he was even shyer than she was, and he was nude too.

“Um, hi, um, Evelyn... was today okay ... um for you?” he stammered to Evelyn.

“Was good, Roy. I was just telling Drew.”

“Ah yeah, Drew, I didn’t get a chance, um, to talk to you after the melee,” he said. “What you guys did was fuckin’ awesome, you know? Um, and the Project? Shit, I gotta admit, I kinda like this nudity stuff—it feels so natural wearing nothing like this... jeez, natural, nudist. That’s what it’s all about, right?”

Drew nodded, smiling. “So your visits to Pine View helped, I gather,” she said.

“For sure. And the eye candy wasn’t too bad either,” he chuckled. “Seriously, this experience has given me a new perspective on sexuality. I love seeing the naked gals at the resort and here in school, but somehow it’s not particularly arousing. So strange; I thought I’d be sporting an erection all day but that didn’t happen.”

“My nudist friends tell me that’s because the mind can separate nudity from sexuality,” Drew responded. “That’s something I still need to learn, myself. I’m so happy that the Project seems to be successful.”

“Absolutely,” Evelyn said. “I said that I needed to explain my confusion. Before today, I was scared of being naked like this. But, you know, me and many of my girlfriends are having a blast at this, and like Roy said, it’s great fun seeing the guys nude too—to tell the truth, seeing the variety of the cocks on display, even some guys sporting awesome erections, is dope—oh, god, did I really admit that?”

She blushed, and her nudity showed that it was a full-body blush.

“OMG, this nudity... it’s like baring the soul to others—I just blab whatever I’m thinking! Yeah, I’m much more open than I’ve ever been. It’s also dope that I don’t have to worry about being hit on or molested and shit like that. It’s helped me get over a bit of my shyness, too,” she told the others.

“That’s wonderful, Evelyn,” Drew exclaimed and hugged her.

Evelyn looked at Roy, who was holding his backpack in front of himself and looking red-faced and uncomfortable. She gently took one of his arms and moved the backpack aside. Roy was sporting a respectable erection, close to seven inches and thick. His backpack hit the floor and he looked down in shame.

“Um... ah... Evelyn...” Roy stuttered. “I could control myself around you but when you started talking about erections...”

“Oh, Roy! Did I make that happen? You’re always so quiet... oh, shit, your thing looks... shit, shit, I’m leaking now...” she whispered. “Looks so awesome...”

“Evelyn, I really like you...”

“You do? You never said anything and I was hoping that you’d notice me... Um, my body is

thrumming now,” she sighed. “I’m kinda attracted to you...”

The two teens looked intently at each other and then wordlessly came into a tight embrace and a passionate kiss as the teacher came up to the room.

She cleared her throat. “Ah, guys, we’ve been pretty light on PDA enforcement, but...” she started.



Evelyn and Roy embrace as Drew looks on

They separated as Roy said, “Okay, Miss Foster. We got it, sorry.”

As the three teens followed the teacher in and headed for their seats, Drew commented to them, smiling, “Glad you guys found each other.”

“God, yes,” from Evelyn.

“For sure,” from Roy.

After class was over, Connor came over to Drew as she was talking to Evelyn and Roy, who had their arms around each other.

“I’ve heard that the Program is known for bringing shy kids together,” Drew was commenting. “Looks like the Project’s doing that too.”

“Oh yeah, you know that I’ve seen Roy looking at Evelyn longingly several times,” Connor smiled at both of them and Roy nodded back.

“Um, I have an embarrassed admission to make,” Evelyn said, blushing to match her embarrassment. “Before class, I was talking about seeing all the naked boys and... their... I need to say it, *cocks!* And then when I really got to see Roy’s up close—Roy, it’s so yummy—I was so damn primed and my puss just began leaking... there, I said it. Drew, my being nude like this, seeing all the nudity around me too, has totally wiped out all my inhibitions, you know? I think that I’m coming to like the nudity, too. It’s so freeing. Is that bad?”

The other three teens shook their heads in negation and Roy answered, “Um, not at all, Ev, and like you, I was fuckin’ scared of being nude... in the Project, you saw that I always wore my briefs. Couldn’t get past that last step. I was so embarrassed at girls seeing my...”

“But Roy, it’s an awesome cock!” Evelyn objected. “Why are you embarrassed about it?”

“The guys in gym, in the showers, always kid me about my size,” he began.

“I’ve seen that in other schools too, Roy,” Connor told him. “Usually they’re envious of the guy’s endowment—I can see that yours *is* big, you know, even soft like now. Looks like six inches soft and that’s big for damn sure.”

“He got excited earlier and it was, *wow!*” Evelyn said as she hugged Roy, whose whole-body blush had returned; his penis had become fluffed during their discussion and was now growing again.

“Oh shit,” Roy muttered as he tried to hide himself.



Drew talking to Evelyn and Roy after class

“Don’t do that, sweetie,” Evelyn implored.

“Celebrate your virility and masculinity. Isn’t that part of what the nudity in the Project is supposed to do?”

“Not in those terms, but that works too,” Drew commented. “Let’s hope that lots of other kids get the message we wanted to send—as opposed to what the Program teaches about nudity and sex; in

the Project, we wanted to show that nudity per se is separate from sex. Like at nudist resorts, with everyone nude, we wanted to bring that idea to the school and flood the Program with nudity so it couldn’t function.”

“Well, it sure worked,” Roy said. “And brought Ev and me together. All good things.”

“Absolutely,” Drew agreed as Evelyn nodded energetically. “And let’s hope that the rest of the year is as good for all of us.”

And it would turn out to be good. The kids’ Project to Oppose the Program had overwhelmed and vanquished the Program at Glen Burnie High.

Chapter 24 - Epilogue

That's how the rest of the year went. Many of the kids, it turned out, enjoyed the nudity they experienced, and quite a few admitted that they had acquired a measure of exhibitionism. Many were surprised at how "natural" being nude felt—they said that they felt liberated or more open with other nude students, just as Roy had told Drew. And like Evelyn and Roy, there were a fair number of new friendships formed. Sherrill and Wilma did join a small group of GBH students to go on several naked shopping mall excursions, but they couldn't convince Jennifer, or their boyfriends, to join them. Of course, Drew and Connor gave that activity an emphatic pass.

Vanquishing the OSA didn't end the Program, of course. It still continued at the high school and by the spring term, only a third of the kids were getting naked for the Project. The Monday Program participation calls were still largely being ignored and most Program "resistors" were now brave enough to declare to the Program official—not Werthur; he had been replaced—that they were resisting. Thus the cries of "Reasonable Request" continued to be not heard in the halls at Glen Burnie High.

Gerberin's and Werthur's charges were reduced to disorderly conduct and they were given warnings not to engage in similar activities in the future. The enforcer Taser users from the classroom battle were charged with endangering a minor and their pending kidnapping charges were dropped, since they had no intention of taking anyone away from the school.

Drew's soccer season continued with her dominating opposing teams with her defense and the Gophers reached the finals at State in their division, where they were defeated by a perennial powerhouse team in overtime, 2-1.

Connor did well on the swim team; indeed, his breast stroke set pool and conference records and he was a strong contributor to the Gophers coming in second in their conference.

Drew received many full-scholarship offers but she chose to stay local. She accepted the offer from the University of Maryland. Their soccer program used formations which complemented her playing style. And Connor's swimming performances attracted several scholarship offers; he chose Maryland's; the athletic staff was very interested in his self-taught athletic training and offered a partial swimming scholarship, supplemented with a needs-based scholarship to cover the rest of his attendance costs.

Jennifer, Sherrill, and Wilma all chose Maryland as well, as did a number of other core Project planners, so they were able to closely maintain their friendships.

The Project at GBHS lost a little momentum when the seniors graduated; Emma's resort subsidy had ended and when school began the following fall, there were fewer strongly motivated students who cared to organize it. And Program resistors no longer needed the naked camouflaging support of their classmates—they simply refused to participate. Despite this, the Project had become a sort of tradition in the school and many students did continue to go nude for years after the first Project year and the school's administration was careful to prevent the typical Program abuses which happened in other schools.

The premise that Andrew had first expressed, that of bringing nudism to a high school in place of

the Program, turned out to be valid. The voluntary nudity that Drew had originally proposed, even though it was motivated somewhat by the frightening prospect of the impending Program, had become embraced by a significant number of teens, who found out that they enjoyed the clothes-free-freedom of the Project. And Drew Harper found her personal freedom through companionship and her successes in soccer.

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Hi, it's Drew. Thanks for reading my story, although I must say that my narrator embellished some parts somewhat. Let me bring you up to date. My college career with the Terrapins was fantastic; we took the NCAA Division 1 women's soccer championship during my sophomore through senior years. I studied business and graduated with a BBA but during my senior year, the U.S. Women's National Team had been scouting me and I was offered a berth on the team. I played in the next two Olympics and I became a household name. Apparently I was an exciting player to watch. Yes, we won the gold both times and I played my favorite position, stopper, and, all modesty aside, had top stats too. I joined a professional league after my Olympic career and when my playing days are over, I think I'll become a coach.

Connor and I married in our junior year. He did take a degree in sports physiology and went on to medical school. He's now board-certified and specializing in physiatry; it's a branch of medicine that's dedicated to the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of all types of disabilities related to the brain, nerves, bones and muscles. Connor likes to work mainly with injured athletes to rehabilitate them to regain as much function as possible. His practice is very successful.

Did I ever become a "full" nudist? Here's a secret... I did; at the resort on one weekend during the spring term of my high-school senior year, surrounded by all of my friends and Connor, my beloved, who joined me in nudity. Surprisingly, I felt very little anxiety as I shed my pareo and became nude in mixed company for the first time. I discovered the pleasure of nude swimming and sunbathing and just being nude in the outdoors. And back at school after that weekend, I decided to fully participate in the Project; to the amazement and delight of everyone in my home room class, I stripped off with everyone else in the room when the participant names were read, and got many nude hugs from my thrilled friends. And now that I've experienced the physical sensations of being clothes-free, now I really know what "freedom to be free" means.

I hope that you find your own personal freedom as I did.

The End