

Emilie in the 80s Complete

By

TG Cooper and Anonymous Patron

www.patreon.com/tgkadee

Chapter One

“Ladies and gentleman,” the pilot drawled over the airplane intercom. “We are beginning our final descent to Detroit International Airport. Please return to your seats and fasten your seatbelt. We thank you for flying Continental Airlines.”

Pete, who’d been skimming over the latest headlines on his iPad, pulled his phone out of his pocket and typed out a quick text: *about to land. See you soon.* He paused, thumb hovering over the emojis, jaw clenched. He made a decision, tapping the heart emoji and pushed Send.

“Good call,” the flight attendant said as she passed, chewing to make sure all the seats had been placed in the upright position.

“Yeah?” Pete said, running a hand through thinning, graying hair, feeling his fingers brush against the smooth skin of his skull.

“Yeah,” she said.

The phone buzzed back. Three hearts. He and his wife, Rachel, had been through some bad patches together, but things had been pretty good the past couple years, mostly because they’d been forced to ally themselves

against the merciless hormonal onslaught of their teen-age daughters, Brittany and Emily.

The plane banked, the whole cabin dipping to the right. As he held himself against the pull of gravity to keep himself from smothering the petite woman next to him, his mind ran through a quick slide show of Emily's transgression, from getting caught trying to use a Fake ID, to the night she snuck out of her bedroom window to go to a concert with that long haired hippie kid, to the times— so many times— they'd caught her making out with boys.

Now, Brittany, turning 13, was following in her big sister's footsteps, just as boy crazy and reckless as the other. Why couldn't they control themselves? He wondered. Girls. They weren't like they'd been back in his day.

Pete pretty much blamed his teen agers for his balding head, the seeping crows feet around his eyes. He missed the days when they were little, and when he came home from a business trip they would run up to him and throw themselves into his arms. Now, he was lucky if they even looked up from their phones.

THUMP!

The plan seemed to lurch, then there was a loud BANG. Someone screamed, and glancing out the window, Pete saw smoke and flames billowing from the engine. The flames began to crawl up the wing, there was another loud bang and the plane nose dived, a high pitched wail filling the cabin. The air masks dropped, and Pete robotically grabbed his, pulling it on. He felt strangely calm, even as the cabin lights went out. He realized

he was clutching his phone in his hand, his knuckles turning white... he wondered if he should text his wife...

“My God!” The pilot called out over the intercom. “My God.”

Pete realized he was about to die. He began to pray... And the world went dark.

Chapter Two

Pete floated in a soft, fuzzy darkness. He felt light. Free. Am I dead? He wondered. Is this the afterlife? If so, it seemed like it might get boring pretty fast. “God?” He called out. “God, if you’re there— please. I’m not ready! Send me back.” His voice seemed to echo, like he was yelling into a cave. There was no answer.

He felt like the world around him swirled, shifted... images of the plane’s cabin... flickering, merging with soft pink walls... A patchwork quilt of baby blues and sunflowers.. a jewelry box... rays of golden light flowing through thin white curtains.... A voice whispered “Daba...” Or, was that the wind...?

“Can you hear me?” Pete called out. “Send me home!” He tried to shout, but it came out as a whisper. “Send me home!”

“Emily?” A familiar voice called. “Emily?”

Pete opened his eyes, confused. He was looking up at some sort of gauzy, white material. He couldn't seem to move. His mouth felt dry, but he tried to speak and heard a buzzy voice say the words he was thinking, "What happened? Where am I?"

"Did you have some kind of nightmare?" The voice asked, and Pete recognized it just as a familiar face appeared looking down at him, baby blue eyes full of concern.

"Dad?" Pete said, feeling like he'd been punched in the stomach. His father had died a few years ago after a long bout with cancer, but this looked and sounded like his father as a much younger man. Seeing him so young and full of life brought a rush of emotions to Pete— joy, sorrow.... But, if his father was here and young, then? "Am I in heaven?"

Dad chuckled. "You just had a funny dream, Kitty. Time to get up. Up! Up!"

Pete laughed. "I always loved the way you said that every morning. Up! Up! Up!"

"Okay," Dad said. "Goofy."

Dad left, the smell of his Old Spice after shave trailing behind him. Pete missed his dad the moment he walked out the door. There had been so many things left unsaid when his father had died, so many hurts left lingering. Seeing him again had brought all that up again, the regret.

I must be dreaming, he decided. Am I in a coma? In the hospital? Did I survive the plane crash? He found it a little hard to breathe, like there was a weight of some sort on his chest. Maybe he was on a respirator? He

smelled bacon and... waffles! His mom always made a big breakfast every Sunday! He felt hungry, and he wanted to see his mom and dad, relive this childhood memory.

He concentrated on moving. First, he managed to wiggle his fingers. Then, his toes. He felt excited, and pushing his hands against the mattress, he pushed himself up into a sitting position.... And felt his chest sway, dragging heavily against his shoulders and collarbone.... He looked down to see he wore some kind of soft pink garment, but the top swelled outward like.... He reached up and cupped large, heavy pair of breasts?

The shock of feeling his hands cup the soft swelling of his chest sent him rolling out of bed, landing unsteadily on his bare feet. He wore a short dress— no, a nightie, he realized, that came down to his knees and hugged his... no... it wasn't possible.... He reached up and put his hands on his cheeks— smooth and soft, and he felt his arms pressing his.... breasts.... together... the flesh so soft and yielding...

There was a full length mirror hanging on the door to the room he'd found himself in, and his eyes glanced nervously over stuffed animals, a makeup table... a poster of Madonna with the words "Like a Virgin" scrawled underneath, more posters... The Karate Kid, The Outsiders, My Cousin Vinny, plus a couple that were just close ups of Ralph Macchio that looked like they might have been pulled out of a magazine. *Someone's obsessed*, he thought, chuckling as he thought about how his own daughters had formed crushes on different actors and singers over the years. Glancing to the other side of the room, he saw an old fashioned rotary phone,

pink— just like the one he'd seen in his visions.... More posters: Duran Duran and Nightmare on Elm Street, Freddie Kruger flashing his bladed gloves....

Feeling like a newborn fawn just learning to walk, Pete made his way unsteadily to the mirror, trying to ignore the bouncing of his chest. His legs felt too long. He stepped in front of the mirror, and a girl stared back at him, her mouth hanging open, eyes wide.... She had long, thick red hair, and though it made him feel creepy he couldn't help but notice that she had huge boobs straining against the top of her nightie... *they look like watermelons...* he thought, resisting the urge to cup them again, scared of the tingling feeling that had sent through him. *I look like that girl Hermione from the Harry Potter movies'. Freckles, red blonde hair, brown eyes the lot.* His waist was surprisingly small, hips wide.

“Is that me?” He asked, realizing that the buzzy voice he'd heard when he'd spoken was the voice of a teen-age girl.

Staring at the girl in the mirror, he raised a hand, and she raised a small, little hand. He waved. She waved. He felt confused, weird, scared... and all those emotions filled her big eyes... She had short, red hair.... Bright, creamy skin.... Pete touched his face and watched as she did the same.... “I'm her,” he whispered. The world seemed to wobble, Pete felt faint, and he stumbled back to what he now realized was a canopy bed, sitting down, staring at his slender wrists, soft little hands.

He could still see himself in the mirror, and seeing the girl there sitting on the bed, her legs spread wide, disturbed him, so he pulled his knees to-

gether, relieved to see the girl in the mirror adopt a more proper position. He looked down at those huge breasts that swelled impossibly from his chest. They felt so heavy.

“I’m dreaming that I’m a girl,” he mumbled. “Why the hell am I dreaming that I’m a girl?” It disturbed him. What was going on that he would have such a feminine dream?

“Emily!” He heard his mom shout. “Get down here this instant!”

Emily? Pete thought. Is that my name in this dream? Emily? Just like my daughter? Freud would have a field day. Part of him just wanted to hide until he woke up from this weird dream or coma or whatever it was. He felt self-conscious about being a girl, having such big boobs. But if this was a dream, then everyone in here was a figment of his imagination, so what did it matter? Still, he went to the closet and found a robe, pulling it tight around this strange body, then rolled his eyes as he pushed his feet into a pair of Alf slippers, tentatively peeking out the door to see.... This looked just like their house. The one he’d grown up in.

He went down the hall, the stairs, turned and found his Dad sitting in his chair, a napkin tucked into his shirt. The floor was the same white linoleum, the Green Ice Box, with the freezer a little rectangle above the refrigerator, the way they all used to be before the side by side, stainless steel design had come in style. The whole room swam with the tangy odor of bacon, the hearty smell of wheat.

Pete paused again, staring in wonder at the old kitchen, seeing it even as the memories came back to him, the memories and the reality right before

his eyes blurring together. “I think Emily was dreaming she was ET,” Dad said, chuckling. “She was mumbling home.. go home...”

“Silly,” his Mom —

Pete froze. That wasn’t his Mom at the stove, and she wasn’t making waffles, but pancakes.

“—girl,’ the woman finished.

“Sit down!” Dad called. “Come on. Let’s eat.”

Pete took a tentative step, pausing. There was a girl sitting at the kitchen table, looking at a book. She had brown braids and looked a lot like Pete— or rather, the girl he’d seen in the mirror. Like a younger version of her, and she looked like she was on her way to blossoming into a full-figured woman, just like ... Pete.

As Pete wandered over to his usual seat at the kitchen table, he stared at the strange woman at the stove. She looked a lot like the girl he’d seen in the mirror— red hair, pale, creamy skin, and curves all day long. She reminded him of Jacqueline Bisset, but with much larger breasts. Pete sat, his robe and nightie climbing up his legs, and he got up and pulled it down, this time tugging it down as he sat. The whole time, he kept staring at that *woman*. She was pretty, he had to admit, but what was she doing here? And where was his Mom?

The woman didn’t seem to notice Pete’s confused stares, but brought over plates of steaming pancakes and put them on the table in front of Pete and Dad, then grabbed a plate for herself. Pete started to smother his

pancakes with butter, then, on an impulse, testing a theory, he said,
“Mom?”

“Dear?” The woman said as she poured syrup over her own stack.

“Nothing,” Pete said, the feeling of weird, confused emotions coming over him once more. So, is this supposedly my Mom? It was wrong, and what had seemed like a dream— an unusual dream, but a dream— now started to seem like a nightmare as dread began to creep over him. Everything was so real, and yet so wrong. This was his childhood home. And that was his dad. But, he wasn’t a girl, and this wasn’t his mother.

And he wasn’t supposed to be a girl.

Once he’d gotten done buttering his pancakes, he accepted the syrup from the Mom. Log Cabin, he noticed. Not Aunt Jemima. Cutting a chunk off and plunging his fork into the stack, he slipped the pancakes into his mouth, tasting the butter and syrup merging together, the malty taste of the pancakes.... They were soft and tasty, but he missed the crusty, toasty exterior you got with a waffle. Still, everything seemed so real. He’d never had a dream that seemed this real, where everything tasted so real, smelled so real...

Where he had such big boobs. But, if this wasn’t a dream or some sort of nightmare, what was it?

Dad was his usual self, nose in the newspaper while he ate. The newspaper looked so archaic, though it had only been a few years since they’d mostly disappeared from homes, replaced by computers and smart pads. Dad was reading the first section, and Pete glanced at the front page- The

Detroit News. A headline screamed “Weaponization of Space Moving Ahead” and another, further down the page: “Soviets Hold Naval Exercises in Eastern Caribbean.”

Soviets? Pete wondered, confused. On the other side of the kitchen, pushed into a corner, a small screened, tube television chattered away. A weatherman with permed hair and a bushy mustache standing in front of a map of the USA.

Nibbling on a piece of bacon— crispier than his real mom had made it, Pete noted, crinkling his nose in annoyance at this invader who didn’t cook things right. He glanced at the fake mom. She was carefully eating her food, all prim and proper. Noticing Pete’s attention, she smiled and said, “How is everything?”

Weird. Terrible. Wrong, Pete thought, but not wanting to upset anyone, especially his Dad, he forced a smile and said, “Peachy.”

The other girl, who’d kept her nose in her book while eating, looked up, crinkling her nose. “Peachy?” She mocked.

“Lexi,” Dad murmured. “Don’t start.”

Pete started to feel trapped, claustrophobic. He took another bite, wanting to get up, leave, somehow wake up from this dream. Just then, a clanging bell suddenly rang, and he jumped in his seat, almost spilling the glass of milk that had been left in front of his plate.

“Someone get that,” Dad said, finishing with the A section, setting it down and starting on the Sports Pages.

“What is that?” Pete said, looking to the wall to see another rotary phone hanging on the wall, remembering the days when phones had actual bells in them, realizing he’d heard the sound of a bell ringing.

“You get it,” Lexi said, kicking Pete beneath the table.

“Why me?” Pete said, feeling a strange sense of dread as he stared at the ringing phone.

“Why not you?” Lexi said.

“Kitty,” Dad said. “It’s probably for you anyway.”

Pete knew Dad was talking to him, somehow, so he just got up, tugging on the hem of his nightie and went to the phone, picking up the receiver, feeling the cold plastic in his hand. It had been a long time since he’d used one of these. He put it to his ear, felt a bunch of hair in the way, pulled his hair back and brought the cold phone to his ear. “Yes?” He said.

“Emmmmmiiiiiiiiiiiiieee!” A voice squealed.

Pete reeled, pulling the receiver away from his ear. “Um, yes?” He said. “Who is this?”

The phone was silent, then he heard a girl laughing. “You almost had me there,” the girl said. “Very funny.”

Whoever this is, she thinks I know her, Pete thought. He forced a laugh and said, “Got ya?”

“Tell her you’ll call her back,” Dad said. “This is family time.”

“I heard,” the person on the other line said. “Lame.”

“I’ll call you later,” Pete said, hanging up.

“You’re always ruining family time,” Lexi said.

“Lexi,” Dad grumbled.

“I’m full anyway,” Pete said, wanting to get away from this situation, to think, to try and figure out what was happening.

“You’re a growing girl,” Mom said. “Finish up.”

“I’m really full...”

Dad peaked out from over his newspaper. “Listen to your mother.”

Pete sighed and sat down. He started eating again. “You excited about your senior year?” Mom asked.

Pete looked at her. “Me?” He said.

“Um, who else?” Lexi said.

“I’m a senior,” Pete mumbled to himself. “Im high-school?”

Mom looked at him strangely. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“Such an airhead,” Lexi mumbled.

Sirens wailed as a police car raced past their house. On the little television, the announcer was now talking about a pack of wild dogs that had been roaming in Farmington, attacking family pets. Pete raised an eyebrow, his sense of dread growing. “So?” Mom said. “Senior year?”

“Um, yeah,” Pete said, playing along. “It’s a big deal, right? Senior year.”

“I’m stocked about my sophomore year,” Lexi said. “It’s going to be so bad.”

“Bad?” Dad said, drawn away from his newspaper. “Why do you say that?”

“Bad means good to teen-agers,” Mom said, clearly proud of herself.
“Right?”

“Mom, don’t try and be cool,” Lexi said.

Pete finished eating and, remembering the rules from when he was a kid, he took his dishes to the sink. “May I be excused?” He asked.

“You’re excused,” Mom said, offering a smile.

I was asking my DAD, Pete thought, but kept it inside. “Can I read this?” He asked, curious about the headlines he’d seen in the newspaper.

Dad looked at him like he’d gone truly crazy. Lexi slit her eyes at Pete.
“Knock yourself out,” dad said.

Pete grabbed the A section and headed back up to the bedroom where he’d woken up, closing the door behind him and leaning against it with a sigh, glad to just be alone. Looking at the front of the paper, he saw the date: Monday, September 1st, 1984.

Sitting down on the edge of the bed, he stared at the date. Pinched himself again. 1984? The possibility that he was dreaming was seeming less and less probable. He’d never had a dream that seemed this real. Plus, he could see colors. Didn’t people see their dreams in black and white?

But if this wasn’t a dream, what was it? Had he somehow travelled through time and turned into a girl in the process? It didn’t seem likely, and yet, looking down at himself, what else could it be? It was like Peggy Sue Got Married, and he was Peggy Sue. His thoughts turned to his wife, children, and he felt a pang of loss. If this is real, he thought, if I did trav-

el back in time, there has to be a way back. There's always a way back whether in *Peggy Sue Got Married* or *Back to the Future*.

So, where to start?

The phones jangled. Pete remembered how they only had one phone line and all the phones took calls on that same line. Before he could even answer the pink, princess phone, though, the ringing stopped, and then Liza shouted from downstairs: "It's Fiona!"

Relieved at least one mystery had been solved, Pete grabbed the phone, this time hooking his long hair behind his ear automatically. "Yeah?"

"Finally done with family time?" Fiona said.

"Yeah," Pete said.

The phone was silent for a time. Pete shrugged, feeling his breasts bounce. "So, um, why'd you call?"

"What? Are you a spaz?" Fiona said. "You're supposed to come over? I'm just calling to finalize the details."

"You know, I've had a weird day and—"

"No!" Fiona said. "You are not backing out now. We're going to 12 Oaks. I'll be there in an hour. Get ready!"

"No, I can't..." Pete said, but he realized the phone had gone dead. Pete took a deep breath. He would have to find some way out of it, but in the meantime, getting dressed seemed like a good idea. He was starting to feel ridiculous wearing a nightie. The dresser and closet were full of many things Pete assured himself he would never wear—skirts and dresses, but he found a pair of acid wash jeans that weren't too bad. He pulled on a t-

shirt that said, “Frankie Says Relax” on it, chuckling as he remembered the video. It stretched tightly across his chest, and when he looked in the mirror, he immediately wrapped his arms around his breasts in shock. There was no way he could go out in public with these puppies hanging free, he realized.

Pete went to the dresser, where he looked over the collection of bras he’d sneered at wearing only a moment before— they were all colors: white, flesh, pink and blue. He picked a white one up and looked at it— there was a label inside that read KK. Is that my cup size? He wondered, then corrected himself. I mean her cup size. He preferred to think of this body as belonging to someone else.

Pete’s finger tips tingled as he held the bra. He’d always been a little timid when it came to women— even his wife— and his mind swam with confusion now as he considered putting on a bra, confronted what it meant. But, his chest was heavy and bouncy and prone to sway and jiggle with any and every move he made. He had to wear it, and the longer he held it in his hands thinking about it, the more he blushed and agonized, so he finally slipped the straps up his arms and over his shoulders, then spent ten minutes wrestling with the bra, trying to get the hooks clasped in the back, spinning in circles, bending over, bending back.... Straining until he finally succeeded, finishing off the ordeal by slipping his thumbs under the bra straps and adjusting them on his shoulders.

He felt a strange sense of triumph at having put on his first bra, and he shrugged, lifted his arms, hopped on one foot, pleased with the control

and support. *Looks like I'm going to be wearing bras until I get back to the future,* he thought, adding, "Micheal J. Fox had it easy."

Pulling the t-shirt back on, Pete found a baggy sweat shirt that at least offered a little more modesty. He could only manage a quick glance in the mirror— seeing himself as a girl was still too weird, but he thought he looked okay, and so he went about looking around the room. He didn't even know what he was looking for— just something, anything, that might give him some sort of clue as to how to get home.

Chapter Two

"Barf me out," Fiona said, staring at Pete like he'd grown a second, very gross head. "I mean, BARF ME OUT!"

"What?" Pete said, feeling completely weird talking to a teen-age girl who thought he was a teen-age girl. It felt dishonest to him and even a little pervy, like peeking in the girl's locker room, to pretend to be a girl. But, what choice did he have?

"That sweatshirt, for one," Fiona said. "And that rat's nest on your head. Did you even brush your hair when you got out of bed?"

Pete touched his hair, suddenly self-conscious, and lied, "Yes."

"Okay. Let me get to work."

"You know what?" Pete said. "I really don't feel like hitting the mall."

Fiona grabbed a brush from off the dresser and smiled like a shark about to pounce on it's pray. "Let's make you bitchin'." Fiona was like a force of nature. Pete couldn't seem to say no to her, and soon he found

himself completely transformed, with a kerchief tied in his hair, a flouncy sweater with a wide collar that slipped off one shoulder, revealing a bra strap, and all manner of jewelry— earrings, necklaces, bangles on his wrists. He felt like a Christmas tree, smothered in ornaments, and stood, nervously twisting a bracelet, asking “Is this, maybe, too much?”

“Hardly,” Fiona said as she spritzed him with “Opium.”

Pete couched and waved his hands in the air. “Let’s go,” Fiona said, grabbing his wrist. “There are sales to be had! Also, boys.”

“Boys?” Pete squeaked.

“Boys,” Fiona confirmed as she dragged him toward her BMW 325i.

As Pete climbed into the passenger seat, a voice from the back called out, “Bodacious Bod!”

“What?” Pete turned to see a scrawny boy with acne, his gelled hair sticking up. He wore a pair of cheap sunglasses with pink frames and a zebra patterned shirt with the collar turned up.

“Oh, yeah. Mom made me bring *Curtis*,” Fiona said.

“I prefer to be called The Big C,” he said.

“Ugh!” Fiona said, slipping on her Wayfarer sunglasses and flipping on the radio. Pete was immediately taken back as new wave sound of The Go-Gos filled the car:

Go-Go music really makes us dance

Do the pony, puts us in a trance

Do what you see just give us a chance

That's when we fall in line

'Cause we got the beat

We got the beat

We got the beat

Yeah, we got it

Pete grabbed his seat belt. The first time he tried to pull it across his chest, his hand bumped into his still unfamiliar breast, and he had to push it out and bring it around the new thrust of this chest. Feeling the belt nestle into his cleavage made him squirm.

“You’re hair is like angel hair pasta,” Curtis said, leaning forward so Pete could feel his breath.

“Gross,” Fiona said. “Stop.”

Pete just felt himself blush as he sank into his seat. He really had no idea what to say— was this kid hitting on him? Fiona pulled out, tires screeching, and as the car bounded down the street, he felt weirded out by the way his whole body seemed so much more— jiggly? Than before. His chest wobbled with every pothole and bump in the road.

“I can tell you’re into new wave,” Curt said, sitting forward. “The Go Goes are all right, but I’m more of a Cars man, myself.”

“SO,” Pete finally said, turning to Fiona, hoping if he gave the dweeb the cold shoulder he would stop. “what’s the plan?”

“Shop till we drop!” Fiona said. “Then shop some more!”

Pete forced a smile. In fact, he had always hated malls, preferred to shop at little mom and pop stores. Get in, get out. Once again, he rued his inability to escape from this trip. Shouldn't he be trying to get home? Doing some sort of research?

They arrived at the mall. Pete struggled with his seatbelt. It was hard to even reach across his abundant chest. Meanwhile, Fiona had gotten out and opened her door, so Curtis bounded out of the back seat on her side, ran around and he yanked Pete's door open, bowing, "Milady."

Pete froze, blushing. It was too weird having a guy holding the door for him, coming onto him, even in this dorky and pitiful way. He struggled for words, debating between telling Curtis to knock it off or saying thanks, but Fiona intervened: "What's your damage?" She said, getting out of the car.

Pete chuckled. He hadn't heard that phrase in years. *What's your damage.* Everyone had thought it was so cool. Fiona, to Pete's relief, made Curtis walk on the other side of her. Pete felt off—his legs seemed too long, his hips too wide, and he could feel his breasts bouncing in the cups of his bra with each step. He did his best to ignore it.

They walked into 12 Oaks, and Pete was once more overcome with a strange feeling of something between nostalgia, déjà vu and a flashback. Memories came back to him—the marble floors, the Spencer Gifts... "Oh, my God!" He said, his eyes falling on the glowing, neon sign for Sam Goody. "Sam Goody! I haven't seen one of those in years!"

He looked over to Fiona, who was looking at him like he was an alien. "Really? Years?" She said.

Pete realized his mistake. “I mean... Years, like, ironically?”

“Em, you’re scaring me,” Fiona said.

“Can we go in?” Pete said, aching to look through the records and CDs, to just... be in the store, remember what had been popular back then, maybe get some snark from the always arrogant record store clerks.

“Maybe later,” Fiona said, grabbing his hand and yanking him away from the shimmering beauty of Sam Goody. “We need clothes!”

As they walked, Curtis trailing behind, Pete began to notice that the energy at the mall seemed completely different than he remembered. There were roving groups of teen-agers all over the place— that was the same— but Pete couldn’t help but notice that now the eyes of the boys seemed to find and linger on him. In fact, every time he glanced here or there, he seemed to catch some guy looking him over. He swallowed, feeling extra self-aware, skin tingling. The wrongness of his walk came back to him— he felt like his hips were wiggling side to side with each step, and he tried to “man” his walk, fearing the way he was moving was going to encourage the boys, but he couldn’t get the wiggle out of his walk, and his struggle to do so just made him feel more awkward and self-conscious.

As Fiona dragged him toward United Colors of Benneton, he heard the electronic beeps and boops and hyperspace drives of an old school arcade. His head pivoted, and he saw a Joust machine right by the door. He almost pulled away, but he remembered that back in the day not too many girls played video games— as in none, and not wanting to seem weird again he just sighed.

Curtis, had other ideas. “I’m gonna motor on over to the ‘cade,” he said, popping his collar. “Catch you chickies later!”

“One o’clock in the food court,” Fiona shouted after him.

Pete glanced at his red Swatch— that gave them a little over two hours to shop. How am I supposed to survive two hours of this? He wondered and he and Fiona made their way into Benneton, a store he could not remember ever entering in his whole life. The clothes all seemed too bright, too colorful, but soon Fiona was grabbing shirts and jumpers, skirts and blouses, holding them up to herself and doing different comical “model” poses.

A salesgirl approached them, but Fiona shooed her away, then she shoved a sweatshirt into Pete’s hands and said, “show me what you got.”

Pete held the sweatshirt in his hands, shaking his head. “You do it so good,” he said. “I can’t.”

“Em, you gotta loosen up. Live a little!”

Pete rolled his eyes, but then he held the sweatshirt up to his chest, then thrust a hip out to the side and made a silly “model face.”

Fiona burst out laughing, a laugh that was like champagne bubbles, and Pete couldn’t help but laugh back. The first time Fiona handed him a dress, he froze again, but she badgered him until he was holding the dress up to himself, sticking a leg out while puckering at the mirror. The dress had wide stripes, screamed 80s, and Pete couldn’t help but laugh. “So tacky,” he said.

“Tacky?” Fiona said. “That’s, like, so totally in.”

Pete froze. He had no idea. He felt suddenly worried that Fiona was starting to think something was wrong. She'd brought up things he had no memory of, and gotten a puzzled look on her face at some of the things he'd said. He searched his mind for something to say, something 80s that would seem normal. "Psych!" He said, then laughed.

Fiona laughed. "You almost got me there," she said.

They flitted from store to store— from Casual Corner to Gadzooks, Contempo Casual to Ups and Downs— looking at soooo many clothes, posing, laughing... Fiona bought some things for school. Pete completely lost track of time. Fiona was actually funny and cool, and he found himself in a kind of shopping high, eager to see the styles in each new store. He was shocked when Fiona announced it was time to "go to the food-court and see dorkenstein."

"What?" Pete glanced at his Swatch. It was a little after one.

"Come on!" Fiona said. Pete followed her as they hurried through the mall, zig zagging around the other shoppers. His body jiggled and swayed more than ever, and Pete freaked a little at how weird it felt to fun, as well as the fear he was putting on a show for all the boys that seemed to be roving around. He could smell the food court long before they got there—the smell of deep fried everything, and his eyes lit up as they entered the court and he saw a TCBY. "Oh, wow!" He said. "TCBY!" He wanted to say something about how he hadn't seen one in years, but he was getting better at hiding his out of timeness.

"I thought you didn't like it?" Fiona said, scanning the court for Curt.

“Not even,” Pete said, as more and more lingo seemed to be coming back to him.

“Even,” Fiona said.

While the main floors of the mall played standard 80s elevator music, the food court featured pop music from the radio, and it was playing an old — new— Berlin song as they waited:

No more words

You're telling me you love me while your looking away

No more words

Pete started looking around for Curtis, too. He made eye contact with a guy who had tall, black hair and looked a little like a young Robert Downey Jr. The guy smirked and kind of nodded toward Pete, then leaned over and whispered something to his friend. There was a lot in that look, and Pete quickly looked away, brushing his long hair away from his face, acting disinterested. When he glanced back, the two boys had gotten up, and they were walking across the food court toward Pete and Fiona, nudging each other.

Pete turned away, panicking. He grabbed Fiona's arm. “We gotta go,” he said.

“What? Why?” Fiona said, pulling her arm free.

“Those boys,” Pete said, glancing toward them. “I think their going to talk to us!”

Fiona looked over. “They’re cute!” She said, waving at them, smiling.

“No! Stop!” Pete said.

“You’re such a spaz sometimes,” Fiona said. “Just be cool.” Then, she whispered, “maybe we can get them to buy us stuff.”

The boys sauntered up to them. “Jaques,” the Robert Downey Jr. look-alike said, pointing to himself. “This is my associate Benji.”

“Like the dog in that movie?” Fiona said.

Benji actually barked. “You make me feel like an animal,” he said, pulling out a switchblade comb, popping it open and running it through his blonde hair. He looked kind of like the lead singer from Duran Duran, Pete noted, and seemed to be trying to play up the similarity, including a dangly earring.

Pete couldn’t stop himself from giggling. Hearing the feminine giggles coming from him, Pete panicked. Stop! Stop! He told himself. You sound like you’re flirting!

“I’m Fiona,” Fiona said, putting her hand on Jaques’ arm. “I prefer cats.”

Jaques smirked. “Radical,” he said.

Benji’s eyes dropped right to Pete’s chest. He couldn’t help but cross his arms over his breasts. “You,” Benji said, “look like someone who’s going to be famous.”

Pete, still overcome with nervous giggles, just shook his head. He had never, of course, been hit on by a guy before. It was so— totally— gross. “I’m not... I mean...”

“You guys want to catch a movie?” Jaques said. “Gremlins is playing. I heard it was tubular.”

“Actually,” Fiona said. “We were just going to get something to eat, but the only thing is.... Money?”

“You don’t have any money?” Benji said.

“We just forgot it,” Fiona said.

Jaques and Benji exchanged a glance. Pete thought they maybe were not into it, were going to walk away, but then Jaques shrugged and said, “we’ll buy you lunch.”

“A knight in shining armor, coming to your emotional rescue,” Benji said.

Pete pleaded with his eyes, but Fiona just smirked and took Jaques’ arm. “We’d love that, wouldn’t we?”

“Yes,” Pete groaned. “That would be *bad*.”

They ended up ordering from S’barro. Pizza slices. They sat at a table, with Fiona and Jaques on one side and Pete and Benji on the other. Benji kept scooching closer to Pete, their legs and hips touching. Pete scooted away until he was almost falling off his chair. Fiona seemed to have forgotten all about Curtis, and she was laughing away and flirting with Jaques while Pete tried to shrink inside himself. Luckily, Benji seemed content to do all the talking, and he felt his hands to himself even though he kept leaning into Pete, who felt small with the much taller boy pushing at him.

“Maybe we should split up?” Jaques said. “Walk this pizza off?”

“We should go for a walk,” Benji said. “Yeah.”

Pete freaked. There was no way he wanted to be alone with a boy. “No! I can’t! We have to...um....”

“It’ll be fine...”. Fiona started.

Just then, Curtis came bounding into the picture. “Sis! Sis!” He shouted, coming sliding to a halt. “We need to book! Now!”

“What is your major malfunction?” Fiona said, but even as she said it she saw two burly security guards coming toward them. “Uh, oh!” She said, grabbing what was left of her slice of pizza and shoving it into her mouth. “Sorry!”

Pete was more than happy to join them, silently thanking the time travel Gods for getting him out of that mess. He slipped off his chair and the three of them ran, ignoring the shouts of the security guards, half-heartedly chasing behind. At one point, he thought one of the guards shout, “Daba! Daba!”

Pete slowed and glanced back. Why would he say that? Why did that word sound so... important?

“Come on!” Fiona yelled, pulling him along.

They laughed all the way home, talking about Curtis’ adventures, the boys they’d met. When Fiona dropped Pete off, Curtis had made guns with his hands and pretended to be firing bullets at him. “I’m gonna slay your love,” he said, then blowing on his fingertips.

Pete just shook his head and headed back inside. He went up to his room and sat, running his hands through his hair. He’d never realized how annoying long hair was. Girls seemed to love it, to live with it with ease,

but it was heavy, and it kept getting in his eyes, his mouth. He would need to get to cut. In the meantime, alone with time to think, he once again started thinking about time travel and what he was supposed to do to get out of this mess. He had no internet, so if he wanted to do research he would have to go find a library, and even then, what would they have on time travel?

Sighing, he lay back on his bed, pulling his pillow over his face and drifting off to sleep.

The “Mom” person woke him for dinner. He went down, bleary, managed to eat. “First day back at school tomorrow,” Mom said. “You have your outfit picked out?”

“No, I... wait. First day?” Pete said, coming alert.

“Yes. Tomorrow is the first day of the fall. Did you forget?”

School? I’m a middle-aged man! Pete wanted to say, but instead he just shook his head and shrugged. “I guess I did.”

“Such a spaz,” Lexy said.

“Shut up!” Pete snapped.

After dinner, he wandered into the living room and sat down on the couch, ready to watch the news. It was so odd to see the big, clunky tube television, he struggled not to laugh. That had been the top of the line TV back then, when people had taken pride in how BIG their TVs were instead of how thin- and the picture looked terrible, all fuzz and static.

Dad glanced over. “You know I’m watching the news, right?”

“Yeah,” Pete said, nodding. He was curious to see what was going on—not to be reminded of what had happened, but what might jump out as changed from the history he’d remembered.

“Okay,” Dad said. “Will wonders never cease.”

From the hallway, Lexi watched, eyes slit. What was going on with her sister?

The news ended, Pete went up to his room, sitting down, huffing, blowing at his bangs. What the hell did a kid do for fun before the Internet? What was a girl supposed to do for fun? This kid, this Emily, did have a CD player and a rack full of CDs. Pete popped a Bryan Adams CD into the Magnavox, grabbed Emily’s yearbooks, and started paging through, trying to remember everyone and everything about his own school. As he looked through the books remembering the kids, the teachers, he started to get butterflies in his stomach, his heart started to race.

The first day jitters? He thought. I’m a 50 year old man, and I have been through this before. There is nothing for me to worry about. Besides, maybe, somehow, there would be some clue at his school as to why this had happened and how to get home. Yeah, he thought, as he got ready for bed. There was nothing to worry about. Nothing at all. He was a man, and he was NOT scared to go back to high-school. No way. As if?

Chapter Three

“I feel like I might throw up,” Pete said, covers pulled to his chin, putting on a scratchy, “sick voice.”

Mom put the back of her hand to his forehead. “You don’t have a fever,” she said with a twisted “Mommy grin” on her face.

Hag, Pete thought. “I better stay home,” he said, letting his voice grow more feint. “Could be contagious.”

“Oh, you can’t miss the first day of your senior year! These are the best years of your life!”

“No....”

“Up,” she said. “Get ready. I won’t hear another word!” And with that she pulled the covers off Pete, threw open his curtains and flooded his room with light before fluttering off to torture Lexi.

Pete hissed and shielded his eyes from the light, cursing his evil fake mom and wondering why he was acting like such a teen-ager. *No problem*, he decided. He would pretend he was going to school, ditch, and go see what he could find out about getting back to his own time.

The phone rattled. Dad shouted from downstairs. “Kitty!”

Pete picked up the receiver, pushed his hair back and answered. “Yeah?”

“AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!” Fiona screamed. “Senior year!!!! I’ll pick you up at 7:30!!!!”

She hung up before Pete could say no. He looked at his closet and sighed once more— did I use to sigh so much? He wondered. *It’s the first day of school*, he thought, *and I have nothing to wear. Bogus!*

After taking a shower, and feeling totally creepy as he washed his body, Pete went through dozens of outfit choices. Nothing to wear, of course, meant nothing he wanted to wear, but he he looked through some of Emily's fashion magazines, got some ideas and was soon 80s out, once more sporting acid washed jeans, a sparkly blouse, a kerchief in his hair. He'd even sat down and managed some eyeliner, lip gloss. He'd struggled over whether to wear make-up at all. He wasn't a girl, and what did he care what anyone thought of him?

And yet, some part of him had longed to do his face. After Fiona had given him her makeover the previous day, he'd looked— cute? And now, some part of him really did want to look cute. Besides, he was trying to fit in. He'd noticed Lexi giving him odd looks, and Fiona had as well. He needed to wear make-up, he'd finally told himself, so people wouldn't get suspicious!

In the end, he hadn't been able to resist, and he'd been bubbly with excitement when he'd finally sat down and picked up a tube of lipstick.

Going downstairs, his Dad had looked up and nodded. "Big day. Big year," he'd said.

"You look adorable!" Mom had said. "Oh! I have to take a picture!"

"Don't bother about me," Lexi said sourly. "It's only the first day of my sophomore year. No biggie."

"Oh! You'll both be in the picture!" Mom gushed, going and grabbing her Polaroid. "My two girls!" The flash popped, and the photo slide out

of the front of the camera. Mom shook it, and then they all took a look. It still seemed impossible to Pete the the girl in that photo was him.

Being a school morning, the breakfast of the day was cereal— a bowl of Special K. As Pete ate, a news report on the television caught his attention: “Authorities now say the unusual glowing lights and vortex winds that surrounded the abandoned Ford plant in Dearborn were the result of a weather anomaly, and pose no public health threat...”

“What’s that?” Pete said.

Dad peered over his newspaper. “The thing. You know. From Sunday night.”

“Oh, it’s nothing, dear,” Mom said. “Don’t worry yourself over it.”

“As for the classic Edsel that some witnesses claimed appeared out of nowhere, a spokesman from Ford revealed that they had stored some old cars on the property.”

An Edsel appeared out of nowhere? Pete’s heart raced. On the screen, the camera showed a gleaming Edsel that looked like it had just rolled off the assembly line. Pete wondered if this could have something to do with his situation.

His thoughts were interrupted by a frantically honking horn outside the house. He got up and peeked out the front window. Fiona waved from her car and shouted, “Let’s go!”

“It’s Fiona,” he said. “Gotta go.”

“Have fun, Kitty,” Dad murmured.

Mom ran to the door and stood on the front steps, waving as they drove off. Pete waved back, fighting against the urge to grin. Maybe she wasn't so bad, even though she would never be his real Mom.

The Go Gos blasted from the radio as Fiona tore off down the street. Fiona sang along, and Pete couldn't help but join her:

Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away
Vacation, meant to be spent alone
Vacation, all I ever wanted
Vacation, had to get away

For a time, Pete's anxiety lessened, but as soon as Fiona pulled into the parking lot and the bulk of Novi High-school rose into Pete's sight, he felt like he might panic. It was all just as he remembered—and as Fiona pulled into the parking area reserved for the seniors, he saw groups of kids standing around, talking, laughing. The cars all looked so old. He knew they were not, at least not for these kids, but he couldn't help but feel like he was in some kind of 80s movie, surrounded by vintage cars and kids dressed in throwback fashions.

Fiona parked. "Em! This is our year! It's going to be so grody."

Pete took a deep breath, feeling the weight of his breasts rise and fall. This is no big deal, he told himself. You've done it before. He remembered back to his high-school days. Really, it had been easy. He'd hung out

with the Dungeons and Dragons crowd, but it hadn't been like *Revenge of the Nerds* or one of those movies where the cool kids were always messing with him. In fact, no one ever noticed him at all, unless they wanted to copy his homework. It would be easy. He'd just go through the motions, keep his head down and then sneak off sometime after homeroom. Yeah. It would be simple.

He got out of the car and followed along as Fiona charged off to a group of girls. They all yelled and hugged, a lot of high-pitch, excited chattering. Pete felt himself blushing. One of the girls was Laura Ervin. He'd crushed on her so bad back in the day. She was so hot, but he'd never had the courage to talk to her, and she had never even looked at him. Now, she threw her arms around Pete, and he felt his soft body press against hers, smelled the strawberry scent of her shampoo.

"Your outfit is so cute!" Laura said.

"Thanks," Pete said, looking down, feeling shy, but also a little proud that he'd done well picking out his clothes. Am I one of the cool girls? He wondered as he exchanged greetings and compliments.

As they talked, a group of guys wearing letterman jackets sauntered by, brazenly letting their eyes play across the girl's bodies. Pete felt like his whole body was blushing. The girls drew closer together, giggling. The guys, all tall and broad shoulders, grinned. Pete, glancing out of the corner of his eyes, saw that one of them was Brad Culpepper, who'd been the quarterback for the football team and Big Man on campus. He's so full of himself, Pete thought, his old jealousy returning. Pete fully expected for

Bard to ignore him, walk by like he was too cool, but instead Brad met Pete's eyes and said, "Looking *fine*," Brad said, flashing the bright, dimpled smile that went perfectly with his all-American head of blonde hair.

Pete felt his knees go weak, his mouth dry. The guys walked by and the girls all giggled, one of them said, "Look at those cute butts!"

Pete reflexively glanced. He'd never been very much interested in guy's butts, but now his eyes dropped to Brad's and his knees went even weaker as he felt himself flushing, something inside him clench. Brad glanced back, caught Pete checking him out and smirked. Pete gasped and turned away, hiding under the curtain of his hair.

"I think he likes you!" Fiona said.

"Me? Like, barf!" Pete said.

"Oh, sure," Fiona said. "Because you would never be interested in the hottest guy on campus."

"I don't like him!" Pete squealed, horrified as he found his eyes drawn magnetically back to Brad.

Just then, the bell rang, saving Pete from further humiliation. The group started to disperse. Pete froze. He suddenly realized he had no idea where his homeroom was. He hadn't even thought to look for a schedule.

"You coming?" Fiona said.

"Oh. Yeah," Pete said, deciding to gamble that they had the same home room. He walked along with Fiona, and after 10 seconds he started to realize his plan of staying invisible was not going to happen. Everyone was looking at him— girls were checking him out, judging his body and his

sense of fashion, and the guys were all ogling him, many of them locking in on his breasts, their heads bobbing up and down as his breasts jiggled with each and every step.

Pete felt like a he was a goldfish in a fishbowl, and his sense of anxiety grew, his heart fluttered. “Do I have something on my face?” He whispered to Fiona as they made their way down the crowded halls. “Everyone is looking at me.”

“Duh,” Fiona said. “You only have the biggest boobs of any girl in school.”

“I do?” Pete said, feeling both humiliated and a little proud at the thought.

“Dork,” Fiona said. “Like you don’t know.”

The halls were crowded. A big banner with the Novi Wildcats logo hung from the ceiling. As they were about to walk into homeroom, they passed a couple scrawny, late blooming freshman who looked like they belonged in 5th grade, he heard one of them, who was staring wide eyed at Pete’s chest, say, “I’d do her.”

Pete turned. “What?” He spat, clenching his fists as his sides.

The boys turned and ran down the hall.

“Excellent,” Fiona said, laughing.

They went into the classroom just as the final bell rang. The kids were all sitting at desks, talking excitedly. Pete and Fiona found seats. Mr. Kelly got up from his desk and went to the podium, carrying a sheaf of green and white print outs. “Welcome back,” he said. “You know the drill.” He

read through all the names on his homeroom roster. As each name was called, the kid got up and got their schedule. Pete, who'd started idly twirling his hair around his fingers, couldn't believe how primitive everything had been. His kids got their schedules over the Internet and never even printed them, instead accessing them through an APP on their phones.

When Mr. Kelly finished, Pete realized two things: One, Mr. Kelly had not called his name. Two, Mr. Kelly was now looking at him with a 'what gives' attitude. "This isn't your home room," Mr. Kelly said.

Pete, sensing all the kids were watching, on a nervous impulse just blurted out, "Can't I be in this one?"

He fully expected Mr. Kelly to tell him to leave, but instead Mr. Kelly had seemed to be thinking about it. Pete smiled and shrugged. "Please?" Mr. Kelly's eyes bobbed up and down with the tremors that went through Pete's chest. Then, he just nodded and said, "Okay. I'll make the change with the office."

Pete glanced at Fiona, who just smiled and shook her head.

"You better run to the guidance counselor and get your schedule, though."

"Thanks," Pete said, crossing the room and heading down the hall. So weird, he thought. Did that just happen? It kind of made Mr. Kelly seem like an old perv that he was letting a teen-age girl manipulate him like that, but at the same time Pete felt a strange sense of— power? Yes, he decided. Power. He started wondering what else he could do now. Just as he

was about to go into the office, he noticed the word “Daba” had been written on one of the old lockers. Under it was an image of a winged woman, wearing a horned crown. Daba, again, he thought. What is it? He felt drawn to the image, took a step toward it...

“There some reason you’re in the hall when you’re supposed to be in homeroom?”

Pete turned. It was Vice Principal Haggerty. He was old and fat, with a gleaming bald head, and he was reaching for his famous “Pad of Doom.” He always walked around with a pad of detention slips on his belt. Pete did not want to be sent to detention. He smiled and hooked his hair behind his ear, pushing his shoulders back. “Um, Mr. Kelly sent me to guidance to get my schedule.”

Haggerty smiled, actually licked his lips. “Oh, that’s fine, then. You go on ahead Emily.”

Pete smiled and walked into the office, feeling Haggerty’s eyes on his behind as he entered.

After Pete got his schedule, he went right back to the locker, freezing. The word Daba, the picture were gone. He shook his head. *What?* But just then the bell rang, and so he headed on down the hall and to his first class, having forgotten the idea of skipping all together.

The morning went on in much the same way. Pete moved from class to class, a magnet for eyes. He noticed most of the boys almost seemed scared of him. He’d turned around in his seat at one point and asked to

borrow a pencil, and the kid behind him had only been able to mumble in return. But then, there were the other guys— the cocky, arrogant ones. Guys like Brad, who looked him right in the eyes with total confidence, who made little mocking comments to him. It seemed that between every class, he somehow crossed paths with Brad, and each time there was just this— thing— going on.

Pete liked and didn't like it. Brad seemed very full of himself, and for Pete that was igniting a growing need to put Brad in his place.

Lunch time came, and as he and Fiona headed to the cafeteria, he thought back on how it had been when he was a here the first time. He and his friends actually didn't eat in the cafeteria. They said it was too loud, but the teal reason is because it was always hard to find a place to sit, and besides that, they were kind of embarrassed to debating whether Tom Baker or Peter Davison was the better doctor. The other kids were always giving them weird looks, like, "what are you even talking about?"

So, they hung out at the back of the art room, playing Car Wars or Illuminati, talking about Daleks and Cybermen.

Now, based on what he'd experienced all morning, Pete knew that lunch would be different, and he was excited and nervous as they walked down the hall, getting closer, closer... and then they walked through the double doors into the noise and confusion, kids at tables, in lines with trays. The room smelled of soy burgers and deep fryers. Fiona headed directly toward a table in the corner, and Pete saw all the same girls from the morning— all the cool girls, a few guys... It still didn't seem possible, but Pete

was one of them now, and he didn't have to pretend to smile as he sat down, tossing his hair, knowing he was being watched, appreciated, envied and desired.

They started talking about this and that. Pete was careful. Still unsure exactly how a teen-age girl was supposed to act, what he was supposed to say, he mostly affirmed what others were saying, or repeated things he'd heard some other girl say, in the way she said it. After they'd talked a little bit, some of them decided to go and get food, since the line had died down. Pete didn't feel like waiting in line, so he looked at Niles, who'd been hanging out at their table and seemed to have a certain air of "nice" about him. Pulling his lunch money out of his pocket, he slid it across the table and said, "Go get my lunch for me."

"O-okay," Niles said, and then, weirdly, added, "thanks."

Pete covered his mouth and stymied a giggle. Had Niles just thanked him for the opportunity to run and get Pete food, like a servant? That feeling of power grew stronger. How hot am I? Pete wondered. Of course, he'd seen and knew, but the way these boys were fawning over him, and even the pervy teachers?

"Hey, skank," Brad said, plopping down next to Pete. His buddy Greg was with him.

"Don't call me that," Pete said, instantly annoyed.

"Oh," Brad said, reaching out and brazenly pushing Pete's bangs from his forehead. "Hit a little too close to home?"

Pete batted Brad's hand away. "Don't you have some footballs to throw or something?"

"Oh, yeah," Brad said. "I have some balls all right." His sycophant, Greg, snickered.

Pete actually thought it was funny, but Brad was sooooo annoying and full of himself! Pete decided to put him in his place. "Look," Pete said. "I don't blame you for being interested, but you're not my type!"

He expected Brad to be put off, but instead Brad just put a hand on Pete's thigh and squeezed. "Keep telling yourself that— skank." And with that he got up and swaggered away. Pete slit his eyes at him, furious.

I am going to so know you off that high horse of yours, Pete thought. Ugh!

Fiona's tray clattered to the table as she and the other girls came back from the lunch line. "Emmy and Brad, sitting in a tree..." Fiona said.

"As if," Pete said. Niles delivered Pete's tray, even making a small bow as he set it down in front of Pete, who gave him a quick little smile as a reward. Pete nibbled half the weird burger and a few of the fries. His appetite didn't seem as strong as before.

After school, Pete and Fiona walked over to the middle school playground next door and got on the swings, not really all out swinging but just kind of rocking back and forth. The tart smell of fall was already in the air, and a few of the leaves had started to turn. "So, anyway," Fiona said, breaking off a conversation she'd been having mostly with herself about

how “Happy Days” needed to just stop already. “Are you going to tell me why you’re acting so weird?”

“What? Me?” Pete said.

“Who else?”

“I’m not... I mean... you are so out of it,” Pete said, terrified she was getting wise to the fact he was actually a middle aged man.

“Am I?” Fiona said. “There’s something off about you the past couple days. I know it.”

Pete did want to talk, and as he rocked back and forth on the swing, he looked up to the sky and decided to at least share a part of his weirdness. “I know this may sound untrue somehow, but I am a little freaked out about all the attention I’m getting.”

Fiona raised an eyebrow. “But you’ve been...”

“Getting attention since I got boobs,” Pete said, repeating what she’d said earlier. “It seems different to me now, more in some way. I don’t know. I’m just not sure how to handle it.”

“Well, you’re going to get attention,” Fiona said. “Sorry to tell you. It’s not going away until you hit menopause, and even then I’m not sure for you.”

“So, what do I do?”

“Learn to love it,” Fiona said with a shrug. “It’s better than being invisible.”

Better than being invisible. He knew invisible. Fiona had no idea. And hadn’t he spent his whole life wishing people would notice him? See him?

Now, did they ever... wait.... That thought. Something about wishing seemed to stir a memory in him, and he started pushing to try and retrieve it, to recall...

Just then his thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a low, angry growl coming from behind him. Both he and Fiona looked back, screamed and jumped off their swings. A wolf stood there, ten feet away, with natty black fur and feral eyes, saliva dripping from its fangs. It was staring at them, pawing at the ground as if it were trying to decide whether it wanted to pounce on them. Pete instinctively threw his arms around Fiona, and they stood there, frozen, as the wolf began to move toward them... slowly... slowly...

“What do we do?” Pete said, voice trembling.

“I can’t think,” Fiona said, staring in terror at the wolf.

The wolf crouched, its whole body tensing, as it were about to pounce, the guttural growl growing louder, when a football came flying through the air and bashed it in the head. The wolf howled and turned, and three more footballs slammed into it as Brad and some guys from the team charged at it, shouting, causing the wolf to run off into the woods.

“What the hell?” Brad said as he and the guys ran up to Fiona and Pete. “Wolves? Around here?”

Fiona separated from Pete and threw herself into Brad’s arms, sobbing. One of the other guys held Pete, who was shaking, but even still, the sight of Fiona in Brad’s arms made him... am I jealous? He wondered, as a hard, ugly emotion seemed to settle into his heart. But- I hate Brad!

When Pete got home, he felt exhausted, and though part of him felt he really needed to do some investigating, he went to his room and took a nap. He tossed and turned, his mind consumed jarring images:

He and his daughters, lying by the pool, only he was a girl wearing a bikini

Arms snaking around his waist, a hot mouth kissing his neck

Wolves, howling

A vortex swirling in the sky, lighting flashing from the pitch black clouds

Hands on his breasts...

A horned and winged goddess...

Daba

He, on his back, pushing down his jeans as Brad straddled him

The last image, and the intense feeling it ignited, shocked him awake. He sat up with a gasp, his long hair falling in his face. His hard nipples ached, straining against the stiff cups of his bra. He covered his face with his hands, unnerved by these feelings a man was never supposed to have. He found he was crying, though he didn't know why.

He got up and went to the bathroom, splashing cold water on his face until he felt like he was regaining his composure. He took one of the hand towels and dried his face. When he removed the towel, he jumped in fright at the unexpected image of Lexy in the mirror.

He turned. “What?”

“Something isn’t right,” Lexi said, looking him over, staring into his eyes like she was trying to look through them and right into his head.

“I almost got attacked by a wolf,” Pete said. “Okay?”

Lexi crunched up her face. “A wolf? What are you talking about?”

“Nothing. Just go away,” Pete said, pushing past her and hurrying down the hall.

Lexi watched him go, puzzled. What had happened to Em? She didn’t talk the way she talked, or walk the way she walked.

Pete went downstairs. His Dad had come home from work and was plopped on the couch, watching TV. The sight of his father made him feel at ease, like he was safe, and Pete couldn’t help but go up and give him a hug from behind. “Hey, Daddy,” he said, surprised he’d chosen the word ‘Daddy.’

“Hey, Kitten,” Dad said without taking his eyes from the TV, where the early news was on. It was Gerald Handly, with his wide, wacky ties and trademark yellow sport coat. Pete curled up on the couch, chuckling. Handly had seemed like a dork back then, but looking at him with eyes from decades in the future, he now looked like some kind of retro hipster.

They cut to commercial: A couple with big hair disco dancing while a woman sang, “The Jordache look.... The Jordache look....” Pete giggled. Jordache jeans! He forgot about them. He wondered if he had a pair in this reality?

Then, a woman in a bikini walking toward the camera while a peppy jingle played in the background: 'Tab! Tab Cola for the beautiful people. Tab! Tab Cola you're beautiful to me!' They showed a guy checking out the hot girl, and his girlfriend dumps a bucket of water on his head. Then, a guy is drinking a tab and an elephant steals it from him...

"That ad is so weird," Pete says, remembering it as he watches.

"I know," Dad says. "Are they trying to sell this stuff to elephants?"

Pete giggled some more. It was such a dad thing for Dad to say. Pete settled in, ready to be amused by whatever the next commercial was. A black screen and the words, Kathy Rigby has good news for every woman appeared. *I guess that's me now*, Pete thought, curious.

Then, Kathy hugging a box. "Something you've never seen before," Kathy says, pulling her arms away to reveal a box of Tampax.

Pete grimaced. Yuck. He felt kinda of gross, didn't like seeing that with his father sitting next to him, but he didn't want to overreact because then — weird. He sat, averting his gaze, trying to ignore the ad even as new concerns and anxieties began to flood his brain. Would he? But, no, right?

I have to get out of here before I do, he decided. *I can't ever do... that.*

Mercifully, the commercial ended and Handly came back. "This just in," he said, his voice more intense as he clutched papers in his hands. "A massive fissure has ripped open the street in downtown Detroit." They cut to a live feed, smoke and steam pouring from what looked like someone had slashed open the street with a giant knife. The famous status of the thinker could be seen in the background, now tilted to the side. A crowd

had gathered around the partition the police had set up. “No word yet on the cause of this fissure in the earth, and authorities are asking people to please stay away from the downtown area.”

“Everything is going crazy,” Pete said, plucking at his hair.

“Don’t worry,” Dad said. “Just stay close. You’ll be safe.”

Pete smiled. His Dad was the best, and he did feel safe here at home.

Chapter 4

Pete’s night was filled with more fever dreams— images and voices, everything jumbling together. That horned goddess, and the word “Daba.” He woke feeling muddled, tired. Different. As he thought about his previous day at school, he thought about how powerful he felt with all those boys drooling over him. The attention had seemed creepy at first, had made him feel self-conscious, but what if Fiona was right? What if he just embraced it?

Might as well have some fun with this, he decided, unbuttoning the top of his blouse to reveal the creamy swell of his breasts, the canyon of cleavage. He looked in the mirror, cupping and lifting his breasts, adjusting them in the cups of his bra, shaking his head. Poor guys, he thought. They are about to have their little minds blown. He went to the closet, looking to see if he had a pair of Jordache jeans, but his eyes were drawn to the skirts that hung in a row to the back. The thought of wearing one made him nervous. That was pretty girly. And yet, he also felt excited at

the thought, like it probably would be fun and he'd get a sense of how the other half lived, right?

He found a denim skirt, knee length. He wouldn't wear it, he decided. He just wanted to try it on, see what it felt like to wear a skirt. Just for fun. It wasn't like he was into it. He stepped in, wiggled his hips as he pulled it up, then buttoned it at the waist, feeling the skirt swirl around his knees, the cool air around his calves. He felt— free? Did a twirl, giggling, and then went to the mirror, putting a hand on his hip, sticking a leg out.

He looked... hot. He had to admit. His legs looked good. He walked around his room a little, getting a feel for the way the skirt moved, glanced back and looked at himself in the mirror. What the heck? He decided, throwing himself on his bed, kicking his legs in the air. Why not have some fun?

He slipped into a pair of ankle boots, sat down and started to do his makeup. He picked a wet, red lipstick that would give boys ideas. It was cruel, he knew, since none of them had a chance with him, but was it his fault if they thought they did? Most of all, though, he thought of Brad. It was going to be fun putting him in his place. Pete went back to the mirror, pushing his shoulders back, his chest out, and he smiled. Oh, yes, he decided. Brad was in trouble. Big trouble.

Pete went down to breakfast. The family noticed. "Going for slut of the year?" Lexi smeared.

"Shut up," Pete said, sitting down to his bowl of Special K.

Dad glanced over his paper, frowned. He wasn't pleased, which for some reason made Pete feel— like a bad girl. He realized he kinda liked feeling bad.

“I think you look great,” Fake Mom said. “Like Madonna!”

“Slut,” Lexi mumbled.

“Zip it,” Dad said.

Pete hopped to start his torture of Brad first thing in the morning. But he and his jock crew never showed up at the usual spot. Instead, Pete spent the time before school with the girls, chattering away. Pete found himself checking them each out, appraising their fashion sense, their hotness. Many of them had normal teen-age bodies, which meant he was the hottest one by far. He had the fully developed body of a woman, in fact, the kind of body most fully grown women envied. He was the hottest girl, clearly, and that made him feel good.

But where was Brad?

Homeroom. Hallways. Nothing. Whereas the previous day Brad had managed to bump into him repeatedly, now he seemed to have vanished. It frustrated Pete to no end. Of course, as planned, all the other guys were drooling, tongues hanging on the floor, and Pete enjoyed tormenting them, slipping a thumb into his blouse, adjusting a bra strap while their eyes bugged out of their heads, but none of them were Brad, and he hadn't spent all that time getting ready for just any stupid boy. In third period, he

did see that someone had carved a stick figure with huge boobs onto the desk. Under the figure, the name “Emma.”

He smiled.

When lunch time came, Pete had strutted into the lunchroom, confident that at long last Brad would have to see him and of course fall to his knees. But no Brad. No jocks. It really made Pete mad! Where could they be?

After lunch, Pete had study hall, and he headed to the library. He hadn't completely forgotten about getting back to the future, and he had two clues. Daba, and that image of the horned goddess. He went to the dictionary and looked up daba. Nothing. There was no such word. It sounded like a name, anyway, so he wasn't surprised. He thought of the horned goddess. It looked like something from ancient times. He looked around for a computer, laughed at himself, then spotted the huge, wooden cabinets that housed the card catalog. Pulling open the M drawer, he was immediately met with that musty smell of old card stock, felt the rough edges of the cards against his fingertips. It was an ancient and inefficient system, he thought, but a lot more stimulating.

The books on mythology were in a back corner of the library, far away from the front desk and the study tables. Pete went back, looking up at all the books, with their plastic, protective wrappers. It had been years since he'd gone to an old school library with actual books. He spotted the book his was looking for— *Mythologies of the Ancient World*— and reached for it.

Damn! The book was on the top shelf. Too high for him. He looked around for a stool, got on his tippy toes, straining...

An arm slipped around his waist, and he felt hot breath in his ear as Brad whispered, "Need some help?"

"No," Pete said, freezing.

Brad kissed him on the neck. "Come on. Don't be like that."

The skin where Brad had kissed him burned. Pete put his hand over it. He didn't know what to do or say. He couldn't think. Brad maneuvered him forward, and then he felt Brad's body pressing against his as Brad reached up and plucked the book from the top shelf. Brad lowered the book toward Pete, but when Pete reached for it, Brad plucked it away, holding it up in the air where Pete couldn't reach it.

"Come on!" Pete said, grasping for the book, hopping, his chest heaving.

Brad chuckled. "You want the book, give me a kiss."

Pete felt himself flush. He stopped hopping. "No," he said.

"You know you want to," Brad said.

Pete's mouth dropped open. "As if," he said.

Brad held the book toward him. "A kiss for a book."

Pete hooked his hair behind his ear, planted a defiant fist on his hip. He glared at Brad, who stood there smirking. Maybe I should just give in, Pete started to think. I really need that book, and its just a kiss. He rolled his eyes. "Fine!" He huffed.

Brad's triumphant smirk could have lit a stadium.

Pete tilted his head back, trying as hard as he could to seem disinterested, even as he felt his whole body enflamed with excitement. Brad stepped forward. Pete could feel the energy between them, the heat. Brad cupped his chin, tilted his head back.

“Ahem!” Miss Gretchen, the librarian said.

They jumped away from each other.

“There will be no public displays of affection!” Miss Gretchen whispered.

“I was just getting a book for this young lady,” Brad said, handing the book to Pete. “I don’t know what’s in your dirty mind.”

“Hmmpf,” Miss Gretchen huffed. “I know all about boys like you. Come,” she said, grabbing Pete’s wrist and dragging him from the aisle.

Pete allowed himself to be dragged away, but couldn’t resist glancing back at Brad, who blew him a mocking kiss. *Jerk!* Pete thought, tossing his hair. *Who does he think he is?*

Pete couldn’t stop thinking about his encounter with Brad. The feeling of Brad’s arm locked around his waist, Brad pressing his body up against Pete’s... the feeling of Brad’s strong hand on Pete’s face.... The near kiss...

His kept having hot flashes... he was thirsty and his mind raced... he longed for the touch of a man.... He couldn’t help it. His body had needs, demands, and his mind was consumed with them.

The final bell rang. Pete found himself in Mr. Kelly's room. "Hey, Mr. Kelly," he said, letting his hips sway as he walked in, shoulders back, chest out.

"Oh, hey," Mr. Kelly said, unable to stop himself from letting his eyes drift down to Pete's swelling breasts, straining to get out of his little blouse. "What's up?"

"I just ... I need someone to talk to...". Pete said, letting his voice slide up into a higher register, like a little girl's.

"What about?" Mr. Kelly said, his voice getting hoarse.

Pete licked his lips. "I feel so lonely," he said. "I need someone to hold me. Do you ever feel that way? Do you ever want someone to hold you, John?"

Mr. John Kelly swallowed. He held up his hand, wedding band gleaming. "I have a wife," he said.

Pete stepped forward, taking John's tie in his hands, caressing it. He looked up into John's eyes and pouted. "I won't tell her if you don't," Pete whispered.

"Oh, God," John said as Pete tugged his tie and dragged him toward the storage room. "Oh, God."

Pete was in total control, and he loved it.

After, Pete pulled the door to the storage room closed, tucking his blouse back into his skirt, mussing his hair. He would need to fix his makeup. He felt calm now, relaxed, his insatiable hunger satisfied. As for

the sex itself, he wasn't sure. He couldn't deny that he'd loved it, every minute of it, but wasn't he a man? Didn't he have a wife? How could he have just girls gone wild like that, making John Kelly do everything in every way he could think of?

Inside the storage room, John had fallen asleep, the way guys did after being ravished. Hopefully, his wife would never find out. Pete really didn't want to cause trouble. He headed toward the girls room so he could finish his makeup, thinking, Well, I am not a virgin anymore. He would have to write something about that in his diary, he supposed. It was pretty major. Should he tell Fiona? He really wasn't sure, but he knew he would have to resist the urge he had to climb on top of the school and shout if from the rooftops.

He had just banged the hell out of Mr. Kelly, and it made him feel like a goddess.

Chapter Five

Back home, Pete fell into his usual routine. Going to his room and doing a little homework; it was surprising to him how much he'd forgotten over the years, so revisiting the history book, refreshing his Spanish, it was actually pretty fun. He wanted to tell Fiona about it. She was his best friend, and he just felt she should know. But, he was worried she might blab it to everyone.

Mom called him down to diner, and he picked at his food, detached, not really listening to the family conversation. He kept thinking about his little fling, processing what had happened, and trying to figure out if it was good or bad that he had liked it so much. How could he ever talk to his own daughter about sex again?

Mom had made Hamburger Helper. Stove top stuffing. Instant potatoes. It all tasted like chemicals to Pete, and he marveled that people used to eat this way, back before whole grains and natural ingredients became a thing in the Midwest. Luckily, he didn't have as much of an appetite anymore. As he speared a limp noodle and held it on his fork, he thought about Mr. Kelly, their bodies pressed together...

On television, the news reported that the USAF as part of the Alaskan Air Defense Command has intercepted a record number of Soviet attempts to probe the Alaskan Air Defense Zone. Thus far the Air Force has intercepted 20 attempts just from January alone. A small number until one considers there were 35 interceptions between 1980-1983. There have also been 4 actual breaches of US airspace this year. Again, a small number but prior to this year the Alaskan Air Defense Command recorded only 6 total breaches from 1961-1983.

“What’s on your mind, Kitten?” Dad said. “You seem lost in thought.”

Pete jumped. “Um, no? Just... I don’t know?” He giggled and shoveled the food into his mouth. Chewing, shrugging, like, can’t talk now?

Lexi slit her eyes, shaking her head.

When dinner ended, Pete started to head back to his room. Dad cleared his throat. “Where are you going?”

“Up to my room?” Pete said, confused.

“Not tonight,” Dad said.

He knows, Pete thought, feeling himself flush. He found out somehow, and I am in such big trouble! He felt so ashamed. His father hadn’t raised him to be that kind of girl— or any kind of girl. Confess, he decided. He just had to confess! Just as he was about to blurt out an apology for seducing his teacher, Mom chimed in: “It’s game night!” She sang out. “You didn’t forget did you?”

Game night! Pete almost collapsed with relief. Of course. Wednesday was always game night! How could he have forgotten? “I did forget,” he said as memories of their family game night came over him, all the warm, fuzzy feelings.

“You know there are no game night skips,” Dad said.

Dad, Pete thought. As much as he could be distant, cold, he was always doing things to make sure they were a family, spending time together. He’d even kept it up after Pete had moved out of the house in his old life, always pushing for family get togethers, refusing to let them grow apart like so many families seemed to do these days.

It was Lexis’s turn to pick the game, and she went to the closet and dithered for a big before coming back with Trivial Pursuit. It had been so big back then, Pete remembered, smiling. “Good choice,” he said.

“You won’t be saying that after I beat you!” Lexi laughed.

They gathered around the kitchen table, put the pieces out, laughing and joking as they played. As usual, Dad grumbled and complained, all the while filling up his piece with wedges. Lexi was actually better than Pete expected, and he found himself in third place, struggling to get the answers. “I don’t know why I am having such a hard time tonight,” he said at one point.

“Because none of the questions are about Simon Le Bon,” Lexi said.

Pete stuck his tongue out at her, and they both giggled.

“So, what are you two thinking about college?” Dad said, rolling the dice. He always liked to sneak these more serious talks into their game nights. “You still thinking about that English degree, Kitten?”

English degree? Pete smiled at the thought. He had wanted to get an English degree at one point, but it hadn’t seemed practical or, honestly, manly. That wasn’t such a problem in this world. “I think so,” he said.

“More like an Mrs. Degree,” Lexi said.

“And how about you?” Dad said.

“Maybe a surgeon like you,” Lexi said, “or accounting like Mom.”

Suck up, Pete thought. “I just want to study something I’m really passionate about,” Pete said.

“So, boys?” Lexi said.

Pete kicked her under the table. “Like I don’t see you flirting with every pimply faced sophomore.”

Lexi kicked back. “They don’t all have pimples!”

The game ended with Dad winning, as he usually did, Lexi second, Pete and Mom tied for last. He was not pleased and would have demanded a rematch, but his thoughts had turned to the mythology book, and his predicament, and he wanted to get upstairs and read. Saying his good-nights, he headed up to his room and grabbed the book. Laying on his belly, propped up on pillows, he hooked his legs at the ankles and flipped to the Index, looking for Daba.

There was a knock on the door. “Yeah?”

Lexi walked in. “Hey, sis,” she said.

“Hey,” Pete said.

“Can I borrow that cable knit sweater you have? The navy blue one?”

“Sure,” Pete said.

Lexi went to his closet and started digging through his clothes. “Is everything okay?” She asked.

“Um, yeah?” Pete said.

Lexi came back into the room, carrying the sweater, plus a denim skirt. She sat down on the bed and started to play with Pete’s hair. “I just worry,” she said. “You’ve been acting like a dork.”

Pete felt himself warming to Lexi. Having her play with his hair like that made him feel... fuzzy? She was all right for a kid sister, he decided. “I really am fine,” Pete said, not wanting her to worry. “Just, you know, a teen-ager.”

“Tell me about it,” Lexi said. “Well, if you ever need to talk...”

“I know,” Pete said. Lexi seemed different tonight. “What about you?”
He asked.

“Me?”

“Why are you always so mean to me?”

“I don’t know,” Lexi said. “I guess I’m just jealous. You’re so pretty, and you get all the attention.”

Pete chuckled. “It’s mostly my boobs.”

“And you have bigger boobs. How unfair is that?”

“I didn’t ask for them,” Pete said, knowing Lexi wouldn’t get the irony.
“Believe me.”

“I’m kind of hoping mine are still growing, you know?” Lexi said. “Do you think I might? I mean, be as lucky as you?”

“Look at Mom,” Pete said, putting a hand on Lexi’s shoulder. “You have the genes. I’m sure.”

“I hope so,” Lexi said.

“My wish for you,” Pete said, giving her shoulder a squeeze. “Is that one day your boobs will be just as big as mine. Just don’t blame me when you keep finding crumbs in your cleavage.”

Lexi laughed. “Thanks,” she said, getting up and heading toward the door. “You’re still a slut, though.”

“I said you could borrow my sweater, not my skirt!” Pete said.

“Psyche!” Lexi said, hurrying out of the room.

Pete shook his head and went back to his book. He sipped some of his hair into his mouth and idly chewed on it as he looked up Daba. No refer-

ence. Hmmmmn. He started to page through the book, enjoying the feel of the glossy pages against his fingertips. Nothing... nothing... and then, there she was— the goddess with the horned crown, the wings. Inanna, the book said, a Sumerian goddess of sex. There was a picture of a statue there— huge breasts— and seeing the statue, Pete flashed back to a memory. He'd seen that statue before:

Trumpets blared, and a man on stilts edged his way through the teeming crowd. Guys on balconies tossed beads to college girls, who lifted their shirts, giving everyone an eyeful of their firm, young breasts. Pete stumbled along clutching a half a cup of rum runner, the red liquid sloshing as he got jostled by the crowd. He saw a girl— gorgeous Carmel skin, full breasts squeezed into a tiny tank top, and he went up to her and said, “You’re so pretty.”

The girl laughed. “You’re not in my league,” she said, turning away.

Pete drank the rest of the rum runner, threw the cup against the wall. Where were his friends? He turned, looking around the masses of people, but he'd gotten separated from them somehow...Still stinging from the rejection, and pushed his way to a bar and waved, trying to get the bartender's attention. There was a group of hot girls at the other end doing shots, laughing, pulling for their shirts, and the bartender was totally ignoring Pete, flirting with the girls. Pissed, Pete reached over and snagged a

beer from the ice, turning and running from the bar. It was the best beer he'd ever tasted, and he wandered off Bourbon Street, sipping, putting the cold bottle against his forehead. A group of guys and girls passed, arms around each other's waists.

Pete felt totally invisible, ignored, irrelevant. Mardi Gras. It was supposed to be the most fun ever, but he was miserable. He looked up and saw a sign: Emporium le Majik

The wooden sign hung above an arched doorway, and Pete figured, what the hell? Inside he'd found what looked like the prop house for a horror movie: stuffed crows, rows and rows of occult books, candles and bats and skulls lanced with nails.

"Hello, hello!" A tiny, hunchbacked man had called out to him in a Creole accent as he'd entered. "Many blessing on you."

Pete, bleary from the booze, woozily made his way to the back of the store. "Many blessed to me, too," he said.

The man smiled, his eyes glinting with mischief. "I am Mr. Daba," he said, with a small bow. "Purveyor of fine magic."

Daba... Pete thought as he drifted through the memory. Of course.

"Magic?" Pete said. "I could use some magic! Could I ever?"

"Choose," Daba said, opening his arms and gesturing toward his store. "And be fated."

Pete's eyes fell on a figurine— a woman with wings, horns, huge breasts. He picked the figure up and ran his thumb over the cool stone breasts. "I bet she never had to pay for a drink," he said.

Daba did not laugh. He frowned, growing serious. “Inanne. Not to be trifled with. She dates back to the ancient world... the great Summerian empire... older, still... older than time is Inanne, goddess of sex and war.”

Hmmm Pete said. “And what magic does mother jugs perform?”

Daba shrugged. “Buy her, and she will grant you one wish.”

“A wish? Like a genie.”

“Oh, yes.”

“How much?”

“12 dollars.”

“For a wish? Sure.” Pete dug into his wallet, threw the money on the counter. He figured his buds would get a laugh out of the whole thing.

“Don’t mind me saying, but you could probably charge a little more for wishes.”

Pete left. Daba smiled, his forked tongue flickering out from between his sharp, razor teeth. “I charge plenty,” he chuckled. “You’ll see.”

Pete wandered around drinking some more. He didn’t even know how long. The sun set, and the scalding heat of the day lifted. His annoyance grew, his anger and frustration. He had no luck with any of the women, and meanwhile he saw them everywhere, drinking for free, smothered with attention. I wish I could flash my boobs and get free booze, he thought bitterly when he’d reached into his pocket and found himself broke.

Somehow, he made his way back to the hotel room. As he threw himself onto his bed, he’d felt something hard jamming against his leg, and digging into his pocket he found the statue. “I forgot about you,” he said, once

more rubbing his thumbs over the breasts. “I get a wish, right?” He chuckled. “Well, I wish I was a hot chick with a super bod and gigantic tits.” There was a flash, and Pete felt his body get hot and tingly. Oh, shit, he thought, throwing his hands on his chest, terrified he would find he now had a pair of huge tits.... But, no. Nothing had changed.

Pete had woken the next day with a terrible hangover. His buddies still hadn't reappeared. Not even remembering the wish of anything else, he'd thrown all his stuff into his suitcase, including the statue, and headed back to college. When he'd gotten home, though, it had been the weirdest thing — the statue had vanished!

Pete sat up, hooking his hair behind his ear. He looked down at the epic swell of his breasts. The wish had come true. It had just been years later. “Daba?” He said. “Inanne?” He looked around the room. Nothing. “I didn't mean it? I don't want to be a a hot girl. It was just a joke?”

Nothing.

Pete bit his lip. What was done could be undone, right? At least he'd figured out how this had happened. Now, he just needed to find some way to get it undone. He went and got his hairbrush and started to brush out his hair. He knew it needed 100 strokes a night. There was no way he could get back to New Orleans. Maybe he could call? It was too late now, but he resolved to call information the next day and get the number.

The next morning Pete got up extra early to shave his legs. He was still determined to put Brad in his place, even if that meant putting on a skirt. He chose a knee length skirt that was a bright, mango color, a lemon colored blouse— strategically unbuttoned, of course, to taunt all the boys with a real nice look at the soft swell of his breasts. He slipped into a pair of ankle boots with three inch heels, and then slipped a few bangles onto his wrists before sitting down and carefully making up his face, using a picture of Madonna from Vogue as a model. He tied a polka dot kerchief into his hair, slipped on his Swatch and perched his Wayfarers into his hair. Checking himself out in the mirror, he giggled and did a little leg kick, like you always saw girls do in movies when they got kissed by a hot guy.

“You going after Brad?” Fiona asked when she saw Pete that morning.

“Yeah, but...”

“What?”

“I kinda thought I’d flirt with Casey for awhile. Set a little jealousy trap.”

Fiona punched him. “You are a bad girl.”

“You have no idea, Fiona,” Pete said, thinking of Mr. Kelly.

“Why don’t you call me Fe anymore?”

“What?”

“You used to always call me Fe. It was Fe and Em, the unstoppable team.”

“Oh,” Pete said. “I still call you Fe, Fe.”

“Not Fifi!” Fiona said. “Gross.”

‘No, I meant...’

‘I know,’ Fiona said. ‘I know.’

Pete’s mind drifted to Mr. Kelly once more, the grunting sounds he’d made, the smell of him, the smell of a man. He caught Fiona glancing at him, a curious look on her face. ‘What?’ Pete said, hooking a strand of hair behind his ear.

‘What aren’t you telling me?’

‘Nothing!’

‘Did you and Brad do it?’ Fiona said, striking a little too close to Pete’s secret.

‘Gross!’

‘You want him so bad.’

‘As if!’ Pete shrieked.

The halls of Novi High School were smothered with painted banners. The cheerleaders and Pep club had gone crazy. The first football game and pep rally were this Friday—the next day. Green and white signs reading Go Wildcats and Rope the Mustangs hung on every wall, every classroom door. ‘We’re playing Northville this week?’ Pete said.

‘More like Dorkville,’ Fiona said.

Brad, who was at his locker talking to some of his bros, called out, ‘You gonna come and watch us win?’

“Maybe,” Pete said, feigning disinterest. He made a beeline for Casey, dragging a hand across his shoulders and saying, “Good luck, Casey.”

Casey surprised, smiled. “Thanks.”

Pete smiled, then walked away, he and Fiona crowding together, giggling.

All day, Pete ignored Brad, making a point of constantly catching Casey’s eye, smiling, giving his shoulders a little shake. As usual, the guys were all checking him out, obsessing over him, and Pete strutted through the halls, glowing. Having remembered his wish, he realized that it had all come true. All those girls who got all the attention, who could get what they wanted with a smile and a wink, he was one of them now. He did have to get home to his own time, though, didn’t he? Kind of?

When school ended and Pete was at his locker putting his books away, he glanced out of the corner of his eye and caught Brad checking him out. Pete pretended to drop one of his books, and bent over, giving Brad a nice view of his behind, then glanced over his shoulder and said, “Perv!”

Brad smirked, like he knew Pete had done it all on purpose.

“Hey,” Fiona said, putting her hand on his arm. “Come to my place to study?”

“I guess I could for a few hours,” Pete said.

They went down into Fiona’s basement. Her dad had fixed it up as a rec room with the usual ping pong table, dart board, TV and VCR. Pete flopped on the old, leather couch and grabbed a Colleco football game off the coffee table, turning it on, the little lights that were supposed to repre-

sent football players blinking on the little green and black screen.

“Omigod,” he said. “I used to play this all the time.”

“Since when?” Fiona called. She was rummaging through a shelf piled with VHS tapes, then turned around with a wooden box and came back to the couch.

“Oh, I mean— I guess I was just thinking of something else.”

“You are such an airhead.”

Pete giggled and forced himself to put the game down. Fiona opened the box, and Pete saw a little metal pipe, a plastic bag full of weed.

“Grass?”

“I know I said I was quitting, but this is a special occasion.” Fiona said, packing the pipe.

“Which is?”

“You having sex with Brad.”

“You are so full of it!” Pete said, giving her a soft punch in the arm.

Fiona lit the pipe, took a deep toke and then blew the smoke out of her nostrils. The air filled with the harsh, acrid scent of marijuana. She handed the pipe to Pete, got up and cracked one of the basement windows, then lit a stick of incense. Pete looked at the pipe, smoke twisting and rising from the bowl. He hadn’t smoked weed since college and his middle-aged dad mind told him he shouldn’t do it, but he was a teenager again, he decided, so why not? He took a drag from the pipe, it caught in his throat and he coughed, hacked.

“Dork,” Fiona said, taking the pipe back.

“It’s so harsh,” Pete said, shaking his head.

Fiona didn’t answer. She took another toke and handed the pipe back to Pete, then went and got a couple cans of Strohs Beer from the fridge. She cracked hers open and took a swig, then curled up on the couch next to Pete, reaching out and touching his hair.

Pete smiled, taking another toke from the pipe, doing better, not coughing. He felt the weed going right to his head, giving him that light, rushed feeling, his body relaxing. Fiona’s expression turned serious. They stared into each other’s eyes, and Pete felt like they were almost talking without words. “You’re scared,” Pete finally whispered.

A sad smile spread across Fiona’s face. “Surprised?”

“Kinda.”

“I don’t know what I’m going to do,” she said. “I just— college seems so — pointless, but my parents are all about college college college since I was 8. “

“It’ll be fine,” Pete said. “You’ll do great.”

“You sound like my MOM,” Fiona said. “It’s not that I’m worried about failing or anything. It’s all bullshit. It’s— “ She stopped, frustrated, grabbing the beer and taking another sip.

Pete waited, playing idly with his hair. This was so different for Fiona— at least as he’d known her so far. He wondered if this was a regular thing between her and Emma.

“I just— it’s that path, that life. Go to college. Get a job. Get married. Have babies, end up just like them.” She looked up, as if her parents were

standing above her. “It’s death,” she said. “A pointless life doing pointless things with pointless people in the *suburbs*.”

Pete found himself thinking about his own life— his life before he became a girl. “It’s not so bad,” he said. He reached out and grabbed the can of beer Fiona had gotten for him, cracked it open.

“Not so bad,” Fiona said, laughing now. “Not SOOO bad. I want more. I want great, or even fucking bad, but not so bad?” She stood up, waving her arms now, getting animated. “I want to climb mountains! Wander deserts! I want to hitchhike to California or New York, live on a commune!”

Pete laughed, and suddenly he was in Dad mode, talking to one of his daughters. “Life isn’t a movie,” he said.

“Why not?” Fiona said. “Why can’t it be— bitchin’?”

“What are you going to do in the desert?” He said, giggling some more.

“Ugh!” Fiona threw herself back down on the couch. “I don’t know. Actually, it probably too sunny for me. I burn.”

“And I really can’t see you climbing any mountains. I’ve seen you in PE.”

“Jerk,” Fiona said, kicking him.

They were quiet for a time, just drinking, looking at the ceiling. Then, Fiona said, “I feel dead inside sometimes. I feel nothing. I want to feel. I need to do something, and I’m just thinking college is going to just make me— okay with feeling dead.”

At home that night, the news was filled with more of the growing conflict between America and the Soviet Union. A Soviet spy plane had been shot down over the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California. None of this had happened in Pete's previous life, and he watched, curious if he was actually not in the past, but in an alternate universe. Well, he reminded himself, he needed to get out of here in any case. He had a wife daughters depending on him. He went up to his room and called Information, asking for a phone number for Emporium le Majik. "I'm sorry," the operator said in the kind of nasal voice they'll seemed to have back then, "there is no listing under that name."

Pete frowned. "Anything for the last name Daba?"

"I don't see anything under that name."

"Okay," Pete said. "Sorry."

Pete fell back on his bed, sighing. Of course, it couldn't be that easy. He wondered if he'd remembered the names right. It had been a long time ago. What he wouldn't give for the Internet about now!

When Pete's alarm rang Thursday morning, it pushed away of muddled, steamy dreams that had kept him tossing and turning all night. He showered and dressed, only half awake, then went downstairs in a daze, mumbling "good morning" and making himself a bowl of Special K. Lexi came walking into the kitchen, and Pete did a double take. Her breasts had—

blown up! She now was just as busy as he was. He remembered their conversation, how he'd wished for her to blossom. "You look hot," he said, unable to control himself. He looked at his hand, the one he'd used to squeeze her shoulder. *What the what?*

"Um, thanks?" Lexi said, screwing up her face. "Weirdo."

The phone rang. Lexi answered. "It's for you," she said, holding out the phone, a little smile on her face.

Lexi's smile set off Pete's spidey sense. There was a cat that ate the canary look in her eyes. "What?" He said. "It's Fi," she said impatiently.

Pete got up and took the phone, feeling the cool plastic in his hands. "Yeah?" He said.

"I can't give you a ride today," Fiona said. "Bummer, dude, but something came up."

"What the h.e. double hockey sticks?" Pete said, mindful of his languages due to his parents. "How am I supposed to get to school?"

"The bus," Fiona said.

"Take the bus?" Pete said. "Me?"

"Later," Fiona said, hanging up.

Pete hung up the phone.

"You're gonna have to ride the bus like some normal?" Lexi said. "Hahahaha!"

Pete slit his eyes at her.

"It will be good for you to ride the bus," Dad said from behind his newspaper. "Remember where you came from."

“Gag me,” Pete said, plopping onto his seat, tossing his hair and sighing dramatically. “Mom, can’t you take me?” He said, a whine slipping into his voice.

“Sorry, dear,” Mom said, flashing that same ‘I have a secret smile,’ as Lexi. “I have something.”

“YOU have something? Really?”

“You’ll probably get stuck sitting next to a sweaty nerd who’ll hit on you the whole way,” Lexi said.

“I can’t be seen on the bus,” Pete said, pouting. “Do you have any idea what this will do to my reputation?”

“Oh, probably just make people think you’re a dork,” Lexi said.

Pete checked his watch. “Maybe I can walk,” he thought. “If I leave now?” He actually didn’t know if he had any boys’ phone numbers. They called him sometimes, but if Emily had kept their numbers, he’d never found her address book. Ugh! Things were so much harder in this stupid analog planet. “Is it okay if I walk?”

“You could walk,” Dad said, lowering his paper, a big smile on his face. “Or, you could just drive.”

“Drive? I can take your car?”

“My car? Take your own,” Dad said, sliding a set of keys he’d been palming across the table. The chrome key sparkled, the key ring read “Saab.”

“What?” Pete said, staring at the keys, his heart racing. “My car?”

“Go take a look,” Dad said, nodding toward the drive way.

Pete snatched the keys from the table and ran to the front door, throwing it open. There in the driveway was a fire engine red Saab 900 Turbo. There was a big bow on top, and balloons floated all around it.

Pete turned up his hands at the wrists, bent his knees and screamed. He turned to face his family, and now Mom was holding a cake that read “Happy Birthday.” As he turned everyone shouted “happy birthday” and Lexi pulled a popper that showered him in confetti.

“It’s my birthday?” Pete said.

“Yeah,” dad said chuckling. “Same day a last year.”

“I totally forgot,” he said.

“Airhead,” Lexi said, shaking her head, but she was smiling.

“It’s my birthday!” Pete screamed again, running up and giving each and every member of his family a hug. Then he ran out to the car and slipped into it, loving the feeling of the leather seats, the new car smell. He heard honking and glanced in the rearview mirror to see Fiona waving from her car. “You were in on this?” He shouted, jumping out of his car.

“Of course!” Fiona shouted. “Happy birthday, slut!” And with that she rode off laughing.

Pete could have spent all morning gushing over his birthday present, hugging everyone, but school beckoned, and as Pete drove into the senior parking lot, windows down, Duran, Duran singing “Hungry like the Wolf” he felt like he was floating in on a bubble, Glinda style. And, checking out all the cute boys, he smiled and waved, thinking he was hungry like the wolf-- fer sure.

Then, his eyes were drawn to Jenny Number, an angry post punk girl who never smiled, but gave everyone stink eye for no reason. She wasn't wearing a bra, and her firm little breast strained against her Black Flag t-shirt, her ripped jeans hugged her long legs. Pete felt his mouth get dry as their eyes met, and he thought— wait, am I still into girls?

Later that day, Pete got a hall pass during boring math class and went to the bathroom to check his makeup. When he walked in, none other than Jenny was leaning against one of the stall doors, smoking. Their eyes met. She scowled. Pete scowled back, thinking— bitch, don't test me. He went to the mirror and pulled a tube of lipstick out of his bag, leaned over the counter and puckered up, painting his plump lips, all the while glancing in the mirror, meeting Jenny's eyes, which were hot and hard. Jenny licked her lips and raised her chin toward one of the stalls. Pete agreed with his eyes, spinning, following Jenny into the stall. They kissed, and Pete grabbed one of Jenny's small breasts, giving it a squeeze. Jenny grabbed his hair and pulled it, hard. Pete laughed, and once more like they were psychically connected, he knew just what she wanted, and he dropped to his knees, unbuttoning her jeans, yanking them down. The earthy smell of Jenny's wet sex filled his head, and he kissed her there, and then again, and then Jenny put her hands on the back of his head and pushed him in between her legs. Pete's tongue flicked out, he hadn't realized how long it was— like a snake— and he pushed it deep into Jenny, who moaned softly, her body spasming.

The bell rang, and Pete got back to his feet. He started to kiss Jenny, but she turned her head. “You have me all over your face,” she said.

“Oh. Sorry, Pete said.

“You are so hot,” Jenny said. “I’ve never been with a girl before. I just... I needed to have you.”

Pete smiled and gave Jenny a pat on the ass as she slipped past him and out of the stall, yanking and buttoning her pants. You and everyone else at the school, Pete thought, going to the mirror to clean up his face.

Friday came, and the whole school was buzzing with excitement for the pep rally and the big game. Everyone except for that one group of kids—the stoners, who as always were off in the smoking area, trying to look so cool and superior to everyone. They all had long hair and wore black t-shirts with the names of stupid singers like Ted Nugent or old, 70s bands like Led Zeppelin. Pete kept up his flirtatious little act with Casey, spending a few minutes listening to him talk before school, giggling and tossing his hair, his back turned to Brad.

The pep rally was in the gym. The stands were packed with all the students, and even the teachers were excited, a lot of them wearing the school colors. Pete and Fiona were sitting with all their friends right down front and center. They were the most popular girls in the whole school, and he could see the way the other kids kind of looked at them in awe. Pete had put on a skirt and a green and white striped sweater. The school band

honked out their fight song. The cheerleaders came cartwheeling out onto the floor, got in formation and led a cheer, all the kids stomping their feet on the wooden bleachers, creating a rumbling like thunder. Pete cheered, too, feeling so excited. The first time through life, as a shy boy, he'd just sat off at the top of the bleachers, had felt alone, left out, like he wasn't a part of it at all. Now, he was totally a part of it, and he clapped and shouted, all the while avoiding even looking at Brad, even when the team was called out onto the floor, the captains introduced.... Cheers and music, shouts and clapping...

There were a few hours between the end of school and the game. He and Fiona went over to her house to hang out in the basement. "Let's watch a movie," Fiona said.

"Cool," Pete said, going over to the cabinet with rows of neatly stacked VHS tapes. "Star Wars?"

"Har har," Fiona said, rolling her eyes. Then, she pulled a box out and held it up toward Pete.

"Benji?"

"Remember how we watched this, like, 1000 times when we were in middle school?"

"Yeah," Pete lied.

"And you *always* cried!"

"As if," Pete said.

"Liar."

Fiona put the tape in the VCR, and they sat on the couch together. Pete didn't actually remember if he had ever seen Benji. It started out, Benji was a stray, and the dog that played him looked like a ragamuffin. "He's so cute," Pete said, tugging on an earring. Early on, seeing the movie through his middle-aged man's eyes, it seemed kind of corny, but as it went on he fell in love with Benji, and he so badly wanted Benji to find a family. At the end, when Benji saved the day and got to be part of the Chapman family, Pete couldn't help but bawl.

"Told ya," Fiona said, punching him on the arm, but her eyes were red-rimmed as well, though she seemed to hold back the tears. As the credits played, Fiona shook her head. "I can't believe we're seniors already. High-school is going to be over so soon, and then its the rest of life. It went by so fast."

"Life does that," Pete said between sniffles. "Blink, and you miss it."

"What if we end up going to different schools?" Fiona said. "We'll drift apart, lose touch."

"We'll always be friends," Pete said, because he knew that was what she needed to hear, but at the same time he knew it probably wasn't true. How many kids from high-school had he kept in touch with? None.

"Promise?" Fiona said. "Even if I go to Michigan State and you're going to Michigan? You won't start hating me?"

"Never," Pete said, giving her a hug. "I'll make fun of you is all."

When the hug ended, Fiona took his hands. "So tell me, then."

"Tell you what?"

“Tell me why you’re acting so weird. So not like yourself.”

“I’m me,” Pete said.

“Forget it,” Fiona said, getting up, walking away. “Just keep your little secret.”

“There’s no...”

“I KNOW something happened!” Fiona snapped. “Something is different about you! And the fact you won’t tell me makes me think I am losing you as a friend.”

The pain in Fiona’s voice hit him— hard. And, it almost happened. Pete almost told her the whole truth— that he was actually a middle-aged man who’d somehow found himself transported into the past and turned into a teen-age girl, but it seemed too crazy, too impossible, and so he blurted out another secret, one he’d been dying to tell her: “I fucked Mr. Kelly!”

Fiona’s eyes went wide. Her mouth dropped open. “No way.”

“Way,” Pete said. He got up and grabbed Fiona’s hands, dragged her back to the couch. “You can’t tell anyone. Swear.”

“You totally slept with him, didn’t you?” Fiona said, amazed. Her face clouded. “Wait, did that old perv come onto you?”

“No. He actually — it was me. I just wanted to make him, and he was all, oh, my wife, and I just— I wouldn’t take no for an answer.”

“You? Went after him?”

“I know. It was— I just— “

“You dirty girl,” Fiona said, shaking her head.

“Am I terrible?” Pete said, covering his face. “It was so wrong, and I just— didn’t care?”

“Wow. Well, that was not what I was expecting you to say,” Fiona said. “Give me a minute to process.”

“What if his wife finds out and—“

“Processing done,” Fiona said, waving her hand dismissively. “And never mind about his wife. I want details.”

They got ready for the game, and as they were heading out the door, Fiona’s mom called, “Home by 11!”

“Okay, Mom,” Fiona groaned.

Pete paused. Reagan was on television, giving some kind of address to the nation. “What’s going on?” He asked.

“Who cares?” Fiona said, grabbing his arm, pulling him out the door.

Drums beat, and the air swam with the smell of charcoal grilling. They found places in the stands just as the team kicked off, and the game started. Pete found he had no interest in the game, other than to check out how Brad’s butt looked in those tight little football pants. Otherwise, he and Fiona did a lot of people watching and flirting. Pete got some skinny sophomore boy to go to the concession stand to buy hotdogs and cokes for the two of them.

“You’re terrible,” Fiona laughed.

“I’m not,” Pete said. “I’m just hungry.”

The kid came back, blushing, with a cardboard tray holding the food and drinks. Pete gave him a little kiss on the cheek as a thank you, and he almost laughed when the boy turned three shades of red and almost ran off, getting high-fives by his buddies.

“So, um, what does it feel like to be the queen?” Fiona said.

“It doesn’t suck,” Pete answered.

He lifted the hot dog from the tray. The warm bun smelled of yeast, and the hot dog was smothered in bright yellow mustard. As he lifted it toward his mouth, he heard some of the boys off to his right giggling. He realized what was happening and decided to put on a show. Puckering, he brought the hot dog to his lips, then slipped it in.... The giggling from the boys grew louder.

“Young lady!” One of the teachers sitting nearby said.

Pete shot her a look, but decided he’d teased the boys enough. He took a bite of the hot dog, chewed, enjoying the taste of the tart mustard and the bun, though the dirty water dog had no taste. When he finished chewing, he realized there was some mustard on his lips, so turning so the boys could get a look, he swiped his tongue across his lips.

The guys all stared, mouths hanging open.

Pete smirked and gave them a little wave.

Fiona laughed, sipping his coke. “Look who’s watching,” she whispered, nudging Pete.

Pete turned and saw Brad down by the bench, staring up at him. The defense was on the field, so he had time. Unlike the giggling boys, he stared

at Pete with hard, hungry eyes, like a shark that had spotted its prey. The look sent a shock through Pete's body, and he squeezed his knees together even as he looked away, pretending he didn't care.

"He wants you so bad," Fiona said, her own voice having gone a little hoarse at the look in Brad's eyes.

Pete squeezed his knees together, fanned himself. He was having a hot flash, and his eyes went back to the skinny boy sitting down the row. He was a senior, but a late bloomer with a slender frame. Big blue eyes under a mop of honey blonde hair and plump, kissable lips. Really, he could almost be a girl. Pete gave him a look that made the boy's pale cheeks flush pink. That boy-girl thing was driving Pete wild, and he nodded toward the back of the stands. "I'll be right back," he said to Fiona.

"You want me to come with?"

"No," Pete said, and when the boy followed him, Fiona understood why.

As soon as they were alone behind the cinderblock locker room that was just down from the concession stands, Pete attacked, grabbing the boy's shirt and tanking it over his head, running his hands over the boy's smooth, flat chest and belly. "You're so hot," the boy whispered.

"Don't talk," Pete said, pushing the boy down onto his back, crawling on top of him, struggling with his jeans, pushing them down and exposing a — tiny dick. Pete felt some power in him, some essence of Inanne, and he grabbed the boy's hard, throbbing member, and as he squeezed it grew longer and thicker. The boy groaned as Pete climbed on top of him and started bouncing up and down, like he was on a pogo stick. The fact that

there were people just on the other side of the building made it extra exciting for Pete, and he bit his lip, holding back the screams of pleasure that were trying to explode out of him.

When he finished, Pete climbed off, pulled up his panties and straightened his skirt. The boy was lying there on his back, his pants down around his ankles, staring up at Pete in awe. "Be good," Pete said, patting him on the cheek, then sauntering off, letting his hips wiggle a little extra as he left his latest conquest lying in the dirt.

The game ended. Novi won, 20-10. The band played their fight song from the stands. Most of the kids and parents headed for the exits, while some went out into the field to congratulate the team. Pete and Fiona wandered out, feeling small and cute among all the big, sweaty football players. The boys all gave off a musky, masculine scent that filled Pete's head and made him feel a little dizzy. Keeping with his plan, Pete went up to Casey, squealed and gave him a hug. "You were so great!" Pete cried out, making his voice higher and more girlish.

"Awe," Casey said. "You know. Just doing my thing."

Fiona came over a minute later. "After party at Jeremy's," she said. "Everyone will be there."

Most of the kids at Novi High-School belonged to one of two groups: The Jocks or the Freaks. Jeremy was a between two worlds kind of kid.

His mom was a drunk and a druggie. His Dad long gone. He hung out with the stoners sometimes and was a major burnout, but he was also good in school, got good grades and took chorus. Best of all, his drunk mom was usually out late and spent a lot of nights with gentleman friends, so his busted up junker of a house was always free for parties.

“What about curfew?” Pete said. Checking his Swatch, he saw it was already past 10.

“As if,” Fiona said, grabbing his hand and pulling him along.

They found a pretty mellow party. Kids were sprawled all over the furniture. Someone had brought a keg, so people were drinking but nothing too crazy. Pete’s heart raced as they wandered through the living room. He’d never been invited to any of these parties when he was a kid the first time around, and he half expected someone to tell him to get lost. Instead, people were all smiles and hugs and good to see you, babe. He was cool! Everyone loved him. People kept handing him and Fiona drinks, and he drunk them down without a second thought. They made their way through the kitchen to the back yard, where more kids lounged around a fire pit. Fiona and Pete found a seat, and they were instantly encircled by boys, flirting, talking, laughing and checking out Pete’s bod. He reveled in it, crossing his legs, adjusting his bra straps, watching amused as his every little gesture made the boys nuts.

Jerry Stein roamed the party, a huge, bulky video camera on his shoulder. As King Nerd of the A/V club, he’d announced he was going to make a documentary about their senior year. “It’ll be Fast Times at

Ridgemont High meets 60 Minutes,” he was telling everyone, even though no one cared. Some of the kids had brought Polaroid instamatic cameras and were taking snapshots of their friends. Pete felt himself getting bored, and he was looking around for some guy to do when out of nowhere a voice called out, “So, you’re the queen of the sluts?”

Pete looked up to see the legendary Jake the Snake standing there in a cowboy hat, leather jeans and a leather vest. His hard bod was covered in wiry black hairs, and he had a thick mustache. He’d actually graduated the year before, but seemed like he was going to be on of those kids who hung around the high-school parties until he went bald. “Shouldn’t you be at an old folks home eating jello?” Pete said, tossing his hair.

Jake smiled, then flicked his tongue out of his mouth like a serpent. “Be careful, baby. This snake bites.”

Pete giggled. It seemed like such a silly line. He was set to dismiss the snake when someone called out, “I bet not one girl here can completely swallow Jake’s python.” The girls all laughed. The guy who’d shouted was known as Bluto, because he was loud and fat and freshman year he’d lied to everyone and claimed he was John Belushi’s cousin.

“Yeah!” Jake said, framing his crotch with his hands. “18 inches, ladies. Are any of you woman enough to take me?”

“How much?” Kelly White called out.

“Twenty bucks!” Bluto shouted.

“No way!” A bunch of the girls said.

“I’ll throw in twenty! Me, too!” Guys yelled, getting into it. Soon, 120 dollars lay in a pile of crumpled 20 dollar bills on the stone patio floor. Things got quiet. “So? Any takers?” Jake shouted.

“Let us see it!” Kelly said.

“No problem,” Jake unzipped his pants and pulled out his huge member. It was thick and long, even flaccid, and he worked it with his hand, making it hard. The girls shrank away. It was—breathtaking, but none of them felt they could take it all in their mouths. “None of you little girls woman enough?” Jake taunted.

“I am,” Pete said, licking his lips, getting up from his seat. The crowd cheered. There was something about the challenge, the sight of that huge thing—he wanted to show everyone he was a sex goddess without limits.

“Oh!” Everyone in the crowd shouted as Pete went to Jake and dropped to his knees. Jerry Stein climbed onto an Adirondak chair, carefully balancing the camera on his shoulder. Part of Pete, whatever was left of the man he’d been, couldn’t believe what he was about to do in front of everyone, but a much stronger part reveled in the scene, and the sight of the epic phallus. Pete zoomed in, murmuring, “we are not about to witness the absolute decadence of the modern American high-school coed...”. He watched through the viewfinder as Perl grabbed the base of Jake’s manhood, opened his mouth and slipped it in, sliding forward while all the kids cheered and jeered.... He was halfway, and he hesitated, his eyes going wide.... “Uh oh!” Someone called out, but then Pete slid forward, gobbling down the entire length.... Polaroids flashed.

“Righteous,” Jake said, his eyes rolling back in his head. “Talk about deep throat!”

Pete slide out, stood up throwing his fists in the air. The kids all cheered, and he immediately grabbed a solo cup full of beer, swishing it in his mouth and spitting the foamy suds to the ground.

“You’re just gonna stop now? I got blue balls!” Jake moaned.

“And I got 120 bucks!” Pete said. “Sorry, doll!” He turned and walked away, throwing one fist in the air like Judd Nelson at the end of Breakfast Club. Jake shoved himself back into his pants, bent over awkwardly and said, “Bitch! Ow. Ow. I’ll be right back!” He waddled off, trying to shove down the boner threatening to tear through his pants.

Pete’s world had become a boozy blur, and he wandered back into the house. Fiona said something to him, and he laughed. They hugged. He saw Jake now, looking desperate, one hand on his aching johnson, standing in line at the bathroom, desperate to relieve the tension. Giggling, Pete decided to show the poor male some mercy. He walked right up to him and grabbed his junk, squeezing it hard.

“You’re a cocktease,” Jake said, groaning.

“Come on,” Pete commanded, keeping his hand locked firmly on Jake’s junk, dragging him toward the stairs, up and into a bedroom. Jake seemed confused, but also mesmerized.

“What’s this...”. He started to say, and Pete slapped him hard across the face.

“Shut up,” Pete said, shoving Pete backwards so he fell onto his back on the bed. “Unzip,” Pete said. “Hurry...”

Jake unzipped, pulled his junk out. Pete climbed on top, hiking his skirt, pushing his panties down. He slapped Jake across the face again. Jake looked furious, like he wanted to say something, to slap back, but Pete put his hand over Jake’s mouth, positioned himself and started to work.... Jake surrendered to Pete, laying back passively.... Pete tossed his hair, laughing, his breasts bouncing as he rode Jake like a stallion...

Jake tensed and then spasmed... all around Pete, the room filled with boys from school, who crouched around the bed watching, stripping their clothes off... when Pete had finished with Jake he pulled his top off, his bra, tossing it into the face of some random kid, and then he said, “please me.” The boys swarmed the bed, and Pete felt their mouths on every part of his body... kissing... sucking... hands caressing... as they rose into a sexual frenzy they started to murmur.. Inanne.... Inanne...

Pete was lost in ecstasy... felt people entering him... hot sweaty bodies... all these boys desperate to serve him, to please him... “yes!” He cried out. “Yes! Yes! Yes!!!!!!”

Chapter 6

Pete lay in bed Saturday morning, pleasantly surprised to find that he didn’t have a hangover. Cool, he thought, wondering if that was somehow part of the whole Inane thing. His mind was also swimming with memo-

ries of the night before... He thought again of his daughters, the talks he and their mother had had with them about waiting, about safe sex... If anyone had been wearing a condom last night, it would be a miracle. He didn't remember how he even got home last night, and he was grateful that he did. He smelled like sex, and he could feel— boy substances— dried on his inner thighs. The boys had been in heat like animals, all of them desperate to please him, almost to worship him like a goddess.

The thought pleased Pete, and he rolled out of bed and went to the shower, getting the water nice and hot, filling the whole tiled little room with steam. He stepped into the shower and bathed luxuriously... running his hands over his wet skin, frothy suds sliding down his legs and pooling at his feet. He put his hands on his breasts and lifted them, squeezed... lathering up his hands he rubbed the soap into his tits... then down along his tummy...

Stepping out of the shower, he toweled off. He'd been careful not to let his hair get wet. He didn't feel like sitting around waiting for it to dry. He wrapped the towel around his body girl-style and went back into his bedroom, pausing when he caught a glimpse himself in the mirror. He looked sexy as hell in a towel, he decided, stepping to the mirror, arching his back, smiling. When he'd first come here and found himself female, he'd felt embarrassed at the thought of seeing himself naked. It had seemed pervy and wrong. Those feelings were gone now, and he let the towel drop to his feet, and looked straight on at himself.... His breasts were magnificent. Huge, but also firm, gravity defying, floating out in front of him, high and

proud, big, red nipples against pale white skin that glowed.... Taught tummy and a narrow waist about full, round hips, soft and inviting... tiny little arms that would fill any boy his age with shame, but made Pete thrill with pride, just like those lithe legs, so long.... They rose up from his slender ankles along firm calves, and inviting rounded thighs to his red patch...

Pete started to caress his breasts. They were so soft and yet so firm... he felt his nipples Harden against his palms, and he squeezed them, then ran his thumbs over the hard little erasers.... Keeping one hand on his breast, he let the other slide down his tummy, to find that space between his legs... he knees going weak as he started to explore... to please himself... his eyes filling with stars and he made soft, mewling sounds and then moaned in pleasure as an orgasm exploded inside him and now he did sink to his knees, his hair falling him his face as his whole body shook...

He heard the doorknob to his room rattle. "Honey? You okay?" Mom called.

"Oh!" Pete called, his voice cracking. "I'm— yeah. Everything is fine."

The handled rattled some more, the door banging against the frame. Pete sighed with relief, realizing he'd locked the door. "Can I come in?" Mom said, her voice full of concern.

"I'm dressing," Pete said. "I'll be out in a minute!"

"Okay," Mom said, and Pete heard her footsteps retreating.

Pete was hot and horny, but having been almost caught he decided he was just going to have to deal. For the first time since he'd arrived back here in the past, he seemed to have a wide open day. Nothing planned. He

threw himself on his bed, rolled over, buried his face in his pillow. Things had gone wild last night. He didn't even know who he was anymore. Not just that he was a girl, Emma now, but Emma seemed to be changing, becoming some kind of slut goddess, and as much as he loved the power, it scared him as well.

He looked at the mythology book he'd gotten from the library. Maybe he should focus. Try and figure out the mystery- get free of this life? And yet, he thought about the conversation he had with Fi, the one where she'd been talking about how terrified she felt about a bland, boring future in the suburbs, a life not much different from the one he'd lived as a man. Wasn't this life better? Bigger? Wasn't he special and beautiful and free here in a way he'd never been as a man? Why would he want to go back?

His daughters. His wife. Memories. First steps. Pageants. Dance recitals. His heart ached at the thought of leaving them behind and never being there for the rest of their big moments: graduation, marriage.

He buried his face in his pillow and screamed, punching his mattress. What was he supposed to do? How was he supposed to live? What did Innane want from him? There was a knock on the door. Pete looked up, thinking it was fake mom again. "What?" He snapped.

"Whoa," Dad said through the door. "Cool your jets."

Pete smiled, his mood instantly changed. Dad. Good old Dad, and his Dad sayings. "Oh. Sorry," he said, getting off his bed, going over and opening the door. "Yes?"

"Gear up, buckaroo," Dad said. "It's time for apple picking."

“Apple picking?” Pete said, feeling instantly happy. He’d almost forgotten about their annual apple picking family trip.

“Apple picking,” Dad said.

While Pete headed out for a wholesome family outing, aspiring filmmaker Jerry Stein sat in a darkened room, eyes bulging as he watched his footage from the night before, most of which consisted of Emma being an epic slut. His mouth felt dry, and he frantically guzzled down his mom’s Tab colas, watching, rewinding, watching, rewinding. The tape was awesome. Incredible. He just couldn’t stop watching, and then he started to work on a rough edit, struggling to focus as he found himself consumed with desire for Emma.

When he finished his edit, he practically ran to the bathroom, emerging sometime later, cheeks flush, adjusting his pants, relieved but still burning with desire to hold Emma’s perfect body, to bury his face in those gorgeous breasts. Then, he set up his copy maker with a blank tape and his rough edit in the other. As the machine started to copy, he ran to the bathroom and lost himself in another hot, messy fantasy of Emma.

Pete had fun Apple-picking, spending a few hours in the brisk fall weather. He picked out a cute apple picking outfit, with mittens and a big, thick fall scarf over his Angora sweater, plus cute boots. A flouncy beret he wore sideways. He and his family wandered among the evenly spaced trees, talking, laughing, sharing stories about past apple picking days Pete didn’t

remember. There were many other families around and some young couples. Pete was not surprised at all to find the eyes of all the men being drawn to him, and he teased them, reaching for a high apple, getting up on his toes stretching, his sweater tight against his chest.... After, he would sometimes glance at them, wink... the men shaken, unable to look away, and when their wives or girlfriends, catching them staring, started to complain, sometimes hitting them, Pete felt a full body blush. That's right, bitches, he thought. I am way hotter than you, and your man is getting a boner right now thinking about this body!

Back home, picking done, Pete found himself on the phone, as it kept ringing and ringing and ringing... it was guys from school, from the party, everyone was getting his number from someone, and the calls were flirty and fun and all the guys wanted Pete, needed Pete, and he teased them all and giggled and laughed and then felt that same rush of pure power when they finally got up the nerve to ask him out, and he was all, I'm not dating right now!

The guys were all crushed. They needed Pete, needed him bad, but he was in control, and he would decide when and if they got to experience the privilege of his perfect curves.

Finally, the phone stopped ringing. Pete found himself sighing, on his back, his hair spread out like a pillow under him. He could hear the droning voices of the news from downstairs. More stuff about the Russians—submarines had been spotted taking up positions around the East and West Coasts. The Russian Navy was fully deployed, and there had been more in-

cursions, with Russians jets crossing into American airspace. Pete didn't remember any of this, but his mind quickly drifted away from it as he drifted off thinking about— sex.

In the morning, he woke with a start, and sitting up he was shocked to see the word Daba had appeared across his bedroom wall. He sat up, climbed out of bed, digging his hands into his hair and pulling it away from his face as he walked over to the letters, reaching out and touching them. He noticed that beneath Daba there was something else in smaller letters: 42.4806N83.4755W What were they even written with? He wondered. It didn't look like paint... chalk? It felt rubbery, and had ridges, but his fingers came away clean.

Daba.... The word haunted him now, and a chill went through his body.. just then, he heard the barking of wolves in the distance, the howling, and then the wail of a jet engine, coming closer... closer... the house shaking as the jet seemed to pass right overhead

“Fi!” Pete said, as soon as his friend picked up the phone. “We need to talk.”

They met in Fi's basement. It was a place that felt private even though her parents were hovering above them. Fi was in stay at home Sunday clothes— bags sweats. Pete, of course, had gotten himself all dressed up, this time a kind of Flashdance look with an off the shoulder sweatshirt and one black bra strap showing against his perfect skin. Fi was already lighting up as he came down the stairs, and she handed the pipe to Pete, who took

a toke. “So what’re you freaking out about?” Fi said, sprawling in a tattered old Lazy-E-Boy..

“I need someone to talk to,” Pete said. “I can’t keep this in anymore.”

Fi sat up. “You banged another teacher?”

“No, not that,” Pete said. “It’s something much weirder.”

He started off talking about Innane, Daba... how he’d been seeing the word everywhere, how he felt that Innane had given him some kind of sex powers. Made him irresistible to men. Fiona seemed curious, receptive. Pete talked about the wolves, the Russians, how he felt it was all building toward something terrible...

Fiona still seemed willing to come along for the ride.

Pete took a deep breath. “The next thing I am about to tell you, you may have a hard time believing, but please just hear me out.”

“Lay it on me.”

“You noticed there was something different about me, right? How I was acting different? Didn’t seem like myself?”

“Yuppers.”

“Well, I am not myself. I am not the Emma you know.”

Fiona tilted her head to the side. “What does that even mean?”

“I am from the future. I travelled back in time somehow, I don’t know... maybe it was Innane, but all I know is I woke in this time, this body, and I need to find some way to get...”

“Back to the Future?” Fiona said, crinkling her nose. “Is this some kind of joke?”

“No. I swear. I need you to believe me.”

Fiona frowned. What the Emster had just said seemed impossible. She wondered if Em had gone a little crazy, or was sick or something? The idea that this wasn't her best friend Emma would not calibrate, despite the changed behavior, and so she defaulted to the decision that felt right, and decided she had to stick with her friend.

“I mean, okay? Maybe? But, why now? Why are you telling me all this now?”

“I want your help. I need your help. I have to get out of here before something terrible happens. I think maybe all this weirdness, the wolves and the meteor, I think I may be causing it by coming back in time.”

That part sounded crazy to Fiona for sure, but she let it slide. This was all starting to scare her— Emma sounded more and more crazy, talking about ancient goddesses, blaming herself for all that was wrong with the world, and the talk of leaving was like a dagger in her heart. Fiona needed to stay close, to at least make sure her friend didn't do anything drastic.

“So, how can I help you? Tell me what you need.”

Pete sighed. “Thank you,” he said. “Thanking you for believing me.” He reached for the pipe. Fiona caught his hand and pulled it away.

“Maybe we lay off the weed for a little bit— until, ya know, we solve this whole mystery thing.”

It was Pete's turn to frown. “You think I'm crazy now, don't you?”

“I always thought you were crazy, but you do NOT need anything else messing around with that crazy brain of yours.”

Pete pulled a scrap of paper out of his pocket. He showed it to Fiona—the code he'd found scrawled under the word Daba: 42.4806N83.4755W.

“What’s this mean?” Fiona said.

“I was hoping you could tell me?”

Fiona shook her head. “Maybe it’s some kind of”

Before they could even finish, they heard the klaxon rev up and start wailing. Novi, like many towns in the mid-west, had huge sirens that sounded to warn of tornados, and they were revving up now, wailing their warning into the day.

“Hell,” Fi said, rushing to open the basement windows, waving, trying to get the smell of weed out of the air. Pete lit an incense stick and started waving it around... the basement door opened, and the sound of feet pounding down stairs, then Fi’s family appeared. “Stay calm, stay calm,” Fi’s Dad said. “We’re all gonna be fine!”

Fi’s Mom, a tiny, birdlike woman, sniffed the air but then turned her attention to Pete. “Call your mother. Tell her you’re here and safe.”

“She knows I’m here,” Pete said, slipping the slip of paper back into his pocket.

“Call your mother, young lady!” Fi’s Mom said, using her Mom voice.

Despite the fact he was not really a teen-age girl, Pete found he had to obey. Rolling eyes and groaning dramatically, he stomped over the basement phone and called.

“As soon as this is over, I want you to come straight home,” Mom said.

“But, Fi and I were going to—“

“Straight home!” Mom insisted.

Once more, Pete groaned. Parents! It was hard enough trying to solve this whole mystery, but the limitations and demands of being a teen girl were making it nearly impossible.

Chapter Seven

As Pete walked down the hall at school Monday, his heels clicking on the tile floor, he noticed people were looking at him differently. Girls were huddling, whispering. Guys were doing the same. He'd grown to expect all the attention, and for sure he still sensed the lust and jealousy from the kids, but at the same time— something had changed.

“Good morning!” Fiona almost shouted as she burst into the scene, grabbed Pete's wrist and dragged him to a quiet corner. “There's a tape,” she said. ‘A tape!’

“Okay, dork. I have no idea of what that means.”

“The party? Your sex fest? That creep Jerry Stein taped it!”

Pete thought about it for a second, then his mouth dropped open. “Oh, no.”

“Yes, and he made copies.”

Pete turned and marched off.

“Where are you going?” Fi said.

“To have a little chat with Jerry Slime,” Pete said.

Pete stormed through the hall, spotted Jerry at his locker, a couple guys crowding around him as he pulled some VHS tapes out of his locker. Pete charged. Jerry never saw him coming, so when Pete put both hands on Jerry's shoulders and threw the whole weight of his weight against Jerry's body, Jerry slammed into the locker with a "clang," his head bouncing off the metal, and he sank to the ground, holding his head, groaning. Everyone backed away, "ooooohhhhhh" and formed a circle around Pete and Jerry.

Pete planted a heel on Jerry's chest. "Jerk!" He spat. "Who do you think you are?"

Jerry looked up into Pete's furious eyes, shaking his head. "I... uh... I..."

"Get on your knees," Pete said, removing his foot from Jerry's chest.

Jerry obeyed. He hadn't thought this through at all, nor had he expected to become obsessed with "Emma." He'd just done what he did, but now having Emma enraged at him, he just had to do whatever he needed to do to make it right. On his hands and knees, he looked up at Emma. The other kids were laughing, shaking their heads, seeing Pete standing there, regal, nose in the air, hands on his hips.

"Kiss my foot," Pete said.

"What?" Jerry said, looking at all the other kids. "I... um..."

"Kiss it!"

Jerry leaned down, kissed Pete's foot. Pete tossed his long hair triumphantly. "Give me the tapes. All of them."

“Yeah, yeah,” Jerry said, crawling around, gathering the tapes. The bell rung, and the other kids scattered, even as Mr. Kelly came down the hall, curious as to what was going on.

Fiona went to Jerry’s locker and grabbed the rest of the tapes, while Jerry handed the pile he’d collected from the floor to Pete. “I’m sorry…” he mumbled.

“What’s going on here?” Mr. Kelly said, avoiding Pete’s eyes.

“Oh, I accidentally dropped some videos and little Jerry is helping me,” Pete said.

“Is that right?”

“Yeah, yeah,” Jerry said, slump shouldered, completely broken.

Mr. Kelly sensed there was something more going on. “What’s on these tapes?”

“Walk away,” Pete said.

Mr. Kelly hesitated, but he knew if it ever came out that he had slept with his student, his life would be over. “Okay. Okay,” he said.

“I better not hear anything more ever about tapes,” Pete said, stepping right up to Jerry, who sank back against the lockers. “You better destroy any more copies.”

“I will. Yeah. Yeah.” And then, as Pete turned to walk away, he added, “thanks.”

Pete smirked. He and Fiona walked out to the parking lot and threw the tapes into the trunk of his car. “You’re amazing,” Fiona said.

Pete tossed his hair. “I know.”

Talk of the tapes and the showdown with Jerry filled the school the whole day. The girls were amazed. They thought for sure Emma would be shamed, knocked down, destroyed forever as a massive slut, but somehow she only seemed to grow bigger, more powerful. They could all see the way the guys drooled over her even more.

Pete reveled in the attention, the power. He decided it was time to take Brad down. The way he'd humbled Jerry had triggered all kinds of things in Pete, and he wanted more, lots more. When his last class ended, he pulled out his lipstick and a compact, and he touched up his lipstick. "I'll see you later," he said, checking his face, mussing his hair.

"What are you doing?"

"Take Brad," Pete said, getting up.

Brad was at his locker, holding court, his usual group of bros gathered around him. Pete pushed through the circle, grabbed the collar of Brad's rugby shirt and pulled him away from the guys. "I need to talk to you," Pete said.

Brad smirked at his bros and followed, letting his eyes fall to Pete's plump, inviting ass. Pete dragged Brad all the way down the hall, out of the school and off to a spot behind some bushes behind the storage unit where the maintenance crew kept their gear. He didn't stop for small talk, but pushed his body against Brad's, grabbing the boy behind the neck and pulling him down for a kiss. Brad responded, slipping an arm around Pete's waist, pulling him in, meeting the kiss.

Pete attacked like a wild animal, and somehow Brad found himself on his butt, Pete yanking his pants down to his knees. Pete climbed on then, kissing Brad, pushing him onto his back, straddling him. Brad tried to roll them over, to take the top position, but Pete rolled with him and ended up back on top. “Just lay back sweetie,” he said.

“I don’t know,” Brad said, feeling weird, knowing that “Emma” was taking the dominant role, which made him feel— weak.

Pete rubbed his thumb along Brad’s lower lip then slipped it into his wet mouth. “Suck,” Pete said.

“Mmmpf,” Brad answered, turning his head, but Pete kept his thumb in Brad’s mouth, pushing it deeper, rubbing it against his tongue. With his free hand Pete pulled his shirt open, revealing his bra, his cleavage. “If you want all this, suck,” he repeated. Pete loved that Brad was fighting, resisting, and it made it all the sweeter when something seemed to flicker in Brad’s eyes, and he started to suck, slowly, bashfully at first. Then, he started to bob, letting his mouth slide up and down as he flickered Pete’s thumb with his tongue, enjoying the salty taste.

“Yeah, baby,” Pete said, mussing Brad’s hair with his free hand. “That’s good. That’s the way I like it. He pushed his hand under Brad’s shirt, pinched one of his nipples. Brad arched his back, moaned. He was lost in lust, confused and ashamed but also driven by need. He had to have Emma, had to do whatever it took to please her.

Pete pushed his panties down, climbed on Brad and started to bounce. Brad kept sucking, his cheeks pulled in, making moaning sounds. “You’re so pretty,” Pete mocked, “and so good at sucking.”

Brad didn’t care. He was inside Pete now, sucking on his thumb, Pete riding him, hard, and he reached his arms up over his head, arching his back while Pete slammed onto him and then he felt himself explode and Pete sighed as he came, and then they collapsed next to each other, silvery breath clouding the air above them as they gasped, panted.

Brad put an arm over Pete’s waist, started to spoon him, but Pete pushed him off, getting up, pulling his panties up, fixing his clothes. Brad watched, confused. “What’s wrong?” He said.

“Nothing,” Pete said. “I got what I wanted. Be good, babe.”

And with that he walked off, leaving a confused and angry Brad laying on his back, wondering what had just happened— and what he would need to do to get another roll in the hay with that incredible girl. He noticed a scrap of paper on the ground. “I think you dropped these,” Brad said, looking at the numbers on the scrap.

“What?” Pete patted his pockets as he walked back, realizing he’d dropped the code from Daba. “Oh, thanks.”

“What are these coordinates?” Brad said, glad to have found a chance to spend more time with Emma, to have a chance to get in her good graces. He’d never had sex like that before, and it scared him but he wanted it more— a lot more, even though he was pretty sure Emma had made him her girl.

“Coordinates?” Pete said, taking the piece of paper.

“Yeah. Those are coordinates. Like map coordinates. Boy Scouts,” Brad said. “I have a badge for this.”

“Of course you do,” Pete said. “Get dressed, doll. I need your help with this.”

Brad got up, got his pants pulled up. Pete had an impulse and took off his beret, putting it on Brad’s head. “I think you should wear this,” he said, giggling.

Brad grimaced. “Really?”

“Yeah. You look cute.” Pete grabbed Brad’s hand and dragged him to the parking lot, then unlocked the passenger door for him and held it. Pete was totally getting into the whole reversal thing. Brad, blushing, knowing some of the other kids in the lot saw him wearing Emma’s girly beret, got in, hunching over, trying to hide.

Pete smiled and closed the door, then went around and got in the driver’s seat.

It was Pete, Fiona and Brad gathered around the coffee table in Fiona’s basement. They’d found an old map, and Brad was locating the coordinates. He slipped the beret off, but not until Fiona had given him some shit about it. “And those coordinates are— here.” Brad said, pointing to a spot on the map.

“That looks like nothing,” Pete said.

“Yeah. It’s just green and squiggly lines.”

“It’s a hilltop in the woods outside town,” Brad said. “Actually, that’s a campground. Closed for the winter. So, what’s this all about?”

“Don’t worry your pretty little head about it,” Pete said, mussing Brad’s hair.

“So what next?” Fiona said.

“I guess we go there. Maybe there’s another clue or something.”

“Can I come with?” Brad said.

Pete looked at Fiona. She shrugged. “Why not? Maybe we will need him to lift something?”

“Okay,” Pete said. “You come, too.”

The sun was going down as they parked outside the chained off entrance to Camp L’amour. The air temperature was dropping, dropping, and the dark, low hanging clouds threatened snow. The air smelled like winter. Brad had the map, and he was leading them along, their three flashlights cutting back and forth against the dirt path, when the klaxons back at town sounded.

“Tornados?” Fiona said.

“It doesn’t seem like tornado weather,” Brad said.

“Let’s just go,” Pete said. His feeling of dread was growing, like something terrible was about to happen, or maybe was happening back in his own time. They had to press forward. As they reached the top the hill, the blazing remnants of the sun were still smoldering in the western sky. They looked around, standing close together in the dying light.

“Nothing,” Pete said, kicking the ground. Hitting something hard. “Wait. There’s something here.” He kicked at the ground again, seeing something hard and flat beneath the grass. “Brad,” he said. “Clear this off.”

Brad did as he was told. Cleaning the earth away, revealing a stone tablet implanted in the ground. There were letters carved into the tablet. Some were in a strange, unknown language, but beneath in what looked like fresher carvings, were Roman letters that spelled out Daba.

The three of them crouched around the tablet. “Daba,” Pete said. “We already knew that.”

“I didn’t,” Brad said.

“It doesn’t mean anything,” Fiona said.

“A dead end?”

High above them, a squadron of jets cur across the now starry sky, leaving their trails cutting across the blackness. The klaxons still sounded. Brad’s digging had made him a little sweaty, and his manly musk was swimming in the air, filling the heads of Fiona and Pete with thoughts. Without anyone speaking it out loud, Fiona and Pete climbed onto Brad, pushing him down, kissing and caressing him, pulling each other’s clothes off, all three of them writhing and moaning and kissing and touching...

Soft moans and panting, bodies writhing, steam rising from their hot, sweaty bodies in the frigid air.... When it ended they lay tangled in each other’s arms... Pete realized something. He had found himself thinking about the tablet. “We’re supposed to read the tablet. Here.”

“All it says is Daba.”

“It’s a chant,” Pete said. “A summons.”

“How do you know?”

“I just do.”

Still naked, starting to shiver, he found a flashlight, found the stone. He was kneeling in front of it, pushing his hair to the side. But then, he realized something. “I don’t care,” he said. “I don’t want to go back.”

“Really?” Fiona said, though she wasn’t sure she’d ever believed Emma’s crazy time travel story.

Pete reached out and cupped Fiona’s soft cheek. “I want to stay here with you. Friends forever. We’ll go everywhere. Climb mountains. Live!”

“Really?” Fiona said, touched.

“I love you,” Pete said, even as he realized it for the first time. “I’ll do anything for you.”

Fiona found herself crying. Ugly crying. She reached out and gathered Pete into her arms. It was good to have one true friend. Neither of them heard the sound of the Soviet missile approaching, and they were barely aware of the explosive crack. The nuclear missile detonated right above them, and they died holding each other, feeling only love.

The End

If you enjoyed this story, please come on over and join me on Patreon! Gain exclusive early access to all my TG Comics, Illustrated Stories and Fiction for as little as 3 dollars!

www.patreon.com

And keep up with all my creations at my blog: www.genderfluidnews.com