

Chapter Five

Schmidt's Farm, Kitchen – Yesterday Afternoon

Jonathan needed to refer to the index card for his sister's phone number. Rebecca's affectionate style of notation for Kevin's cell number drew his attention. His sister, Deborah's, cell phone number should be in black ink, bracketed by daggers and thorns. Instead, he found it in pencil, near the top of the list; family always comes first.

Deborah answered before the first ring concluded. How did she always manage that?

"Yes, Jonathan?"

"Ah! Hello Deborah." She hated the name Debbie and insisted on Deborah. One time, their father brought home a box of "Little Debbie" snack cakes. Dad thought it would be fun to tease her. That had been a bad idea.

"I need a favor. Rebecca is staying with her suitor for a few weeks, and she needs a chaperone."

"This sounds like one of Rachel's libertine ideas."

"Not exactly, it's more of a miscommunication. You haven't seen Rebecca in a while, and she loves sewing and cooking with you. It could be fun."

"Give me the address; I'll be there as soon as possible."

"Deborah, Rebecca is quite serious about her young man and—"

"I should hope so. It's past time for her to marry."

"Yes, well, her suitor is not of our faith."

Deborah didn't respond at first, then, "You allowed one of the immoral English to taint your daughter? This must be Rachel's doing! Very well, give me the information. I will provide the chaperonage needed."

Jonathan winced when his sister spoke about, "The immoral English." He had hoped her distrust of all non-Mennonites would have faded. But, the scorn in her voice indicated otherwise. Still, Kevin's charm should win Deborah over soon enough.

He recited the address to his sister, and after she read it back for confirmation, Deborah hung up. He looked at his handset for a few moments before putting it back onto the hook. Had he made a mistake? He turned to Rachel, and said, "It's done."

McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania – Present Time

Kevin Butcher:

Awkward would be a good word to describe our morning. This Aunt Deborah character kept herself between Rebecca and me. She chatted with Rebecca while studying everything. If I moved, her eyes locked onto me. She'd glare as if daring me to do something. I tired of her nonsense and stepped towards the kitchen, and she moved to block the doorway! Speaking through clenched teeth, I said, "I'm going to get a cup of coffee."

Aunt Deborah refused to budge. She told me to sit, and wait. Rebecca would bring coffee when she served breakfast. Before I could reply, Rebecca reached past her aunt handing me a mug of coffee. Rebecca said, "Go check the news or something. I'll call you when it's time to eat." From behind her aunt's back, she blew me a kiss, and I smiled. Suspicious, Deborah snapped her head around, but Rebecca returned to the stove. I retreated to my den and fired up my PC.

I heard Rebecca call me to breakfast and replied that I was, "On my way Sweetheart!" I heard Rebecca's laugh. Deborah set the table. She put Rebecca and me at opposite ends, with herself at Rebecca's right hand. After we all sat, Deborah glanced in my direction. Rebecca steepled her fingers to remind me to say grace. I recalled one of my parents' favorites and recited it. After I finished, Rebecca slid her placemat across the table and sat to my right. Deborah scowled at us and relocated herself to our side of the table. Rebecca and I entertained ourselves by rubbing knees.

Aunt Deborah wouldn't drink coffee; instead, she provided her own healthy tea. It had a rank and medicinal aroma. Deborah held up the package and said, "You should drink this tea, Rebecca, it's holistic. It also prevents fat and other indigestible substances from clogging your colon. If your colon becomes clogged, toxins will build up." I peeked at the tea's label; it featured the picture of a TV doctor notorious for promoting pseudoscience and alternative medicines.

Rebecca gave her aunt a noncommittal response of, "Maybe later."

Deborah continued, "Rebecca, I've brought all my sewing equipment. We can make you some new clothes. Let's start with a nightgown. I have a lovely bolt of brushed flannel. A man's T-shirt is immodest and not suitable sleepwear for a godly young woman."

"I'd love to sew with you, Aunt Deborah. Can we make something for Kevin?"

With Rebecca's question, Deborah's head swiveled in my direction. She peered at me with cold and suspicious eyes. She opened her mouth and replied to Rebecca. "Does your, ah, friend, need a flannel nightgown?"

This got Rebecca giggling. "I don't think so, Aunt Deborah."

I looked at Aunt Deborah, "Excuse me, but I don't know how to address you."

"You may call me Mrs. Barie."

"Thank you. Rebecca and I planned on shopping for groceries this morning. But, I'll go myself, you and Rebecca can set up your sewing equipment. If there is anything, you'd like me to pick up while I am out, add it to the grocery list. Rebecca, I'm still up for cooking tonight. Chicken Cacciatore or something from my grill?"

Aunt Deborah looked dubious, "How is it, Mr. Butcher, that you have so much free time? Are you unemployed?"

"I'm self-employed, Mrs. Barie. I work in the electronics industry."

She continued to look dubious. "So, you're some type of television or computer repairman?"

"I could do those things, but lately I've installed and repaired commercial server farms and teleports."

Deborah's eyes narrowed. I doubted she understood what I said. Most people hearing the word "Teleport" assume it's something from *Star Trek*, but a teleport is the ground station for a satellite communication system.

Rebecca got up and began to clean off the table. I stood to help her, but Deborah intervened. "Mr. Butcher, go shower or something. We'll clean up and have the grocery list ready for you."

I glanced at Rebecca, and she nodded.

Rebecca Schmidt:

The Aunt Deborah I've always known has been loving, protective, and very, very, strict. She knows everything about raising babies but never had any of her own. Her husband, Thomas, passed away several years ago, and she's never remarried.

Aunt Deborah helped me clean off the table then busied herself by looking through Kevin's, oops, our cabinets and the refrigerator. She hummed an old hymn, one I recognized, "A Clean Heart."

I felt certain Aunt Deborah would comment on finding me in Kevin's bed. Did she know Kevin and I bundled? Still, her finding me wearing a T-shirt wouldn't suit her strict standards of propriety.

Last night, Kevin had suggested we both sleep nude. I told him we could try it after we married. He then offered one of his T-shirts. Kevin looked so hopeful, I acquiesced and tried it on. While Kevin watched, I checked it out in his full-length mirror. I said, "Kev, it's so short. I don't know."

He stepped behind me and kissed my neck. He said, his voice, sounding rough, "It makes me want to do the wickedest things with you." Then he picked me up and carried me to his bed. I fell asleep cradled in his arms, his dangerous fingers stroking everywhere.

Sometime in the early morning, I woke with Kevin spooned behind me. He stirred and his penis poked against my behind. A wave of desire overtook me, and I wiggled my butt against him. Just as his fingers found me, someone pounded on his front door. Kevin jumped up reaching for his shorts and shirt. I

The Farmer's Daughter

by G.R. Driver

rolled onto my back and watched as he tucked himself into his shorts. I said, "Watch the zipper!" He grinned and ran to the door. The next thing I knew, Aunt Deborah called out my name. Seconds later, she found me in his bed, her face rigid with disapproval.

Aunt Deborah cleared her throat, pulling me from my thoughts, she said, "Let's refresh our cups and talk. We have some catching up to do."

We sat on opposite sides of the table. Deborah had a package of green tinted biscuits, and after opening it, gestured for me to help myself. I passed because Aunt Deborah's food could cause unpleasant aftereffects. The bitter and somewhat medicinal aroma of her "poop" tea wafted across the table.

"Rebecca, I will dislike calling your mother later and informing her I found you in Mr. Butcher's bed. Much less telling her about your state of undress. If, however, you admit he seduced you, and leave with me, I will keep the sordid details between us."

"Kevin and I have been bundling since August and—"

Deborah's temper flared. "Bundling? Your parents allowed you to sleep with that rap—man."

I caught the unfinished word, "rapist." Why does she think that of Kevin? Taking a sip of coffee provided me a moment to gather my thoughts. I sat the cup back into the saucer, and replied, "Yes. I have permission to bundle with Kevin. It's rather nice to stay up late talking, and snuggling, with the man I love."

"We both know more than talking occurred last night. You can talk just fine wearing a modest nightgown."

"Modest nightwear can't prevent a determined couple from having sex. So, whatever I wore doesn't matter. Kevin and I are waiting to marry before we have sex."

"Nonsense! A man like that has little interest in a godly girl for anything other than sex." Deborah laid her hands on the table and leaned closer. "Trust me, your Mr. Butcher exhibits all the signs."

With his hair still damp from the shower, Kevin picked that moment to step back into his, no, our dining room. He looked at me with a little concern, but I shook my head. He nodded and said, "While the original Five Man Electric Band version is great, I prefer the cover by Tesla."

Aunt Deborah glanced towards Kevin and snapped, "We are having a private conversation, Mr. Butcher."

"Oh, I heard my name and thought you were talking to me."

Kevin announced his readiness to pick up the groceries. Aunt Deborah reviewed the list, nodded her approval, and added a couple of items.

Kevin Butcher:

While dressing, I could hear Mrs. Barie and Rebecca having a discussion. As I walked into the dining room, Mrs. Barie stated that I exhibit all the signs, I'm sure they are not good signs. Rebecca looked a little upset but indicated she didn't need my help. To irritate Mrs. Barie, I made an off-hand comment about the song, "Signs." Deborah and her brother Jonathan are both stiff-necked ass—. I said, "Rebecca, sweetheart, I'm ready to run to the store."

I traded a hug and a kiss for the grocery list. Aunt Deborah added two items, Chow-Chow and Ponhaus to the list. At the store, I needed to ask a stock clerk for help. It turns out that Chow-Chow is a relish made from pickled vegetables. Ponhaus is a grayish block of something. It's in the meat section of the store, next to the scrapple, and another mystery meat product called "Pudding."

Interlude: Berks County Hospital, Room 4311

Grainger looked up at a knock on his door. Mrs. Schmidt stood in the doorway and asked, "May I come in?"

He tried to push himself upright, but his hands slipped, and he fell back. Mrs. Schmidt stepped to his side. She said, "Hold on Grainger. Lift up a bit." He levered himself up, and Mrs. Schmidt pulled his pillows out and fluffed them. "Now up again." She put the pillows back under his shoulders and head. "There, better now?"

"Yes ma'am." He smiled as best as he could. It still hurt but seeing Mrs. Schmidt made him feel much better.

She pushed a chair closer and sat. Grainger watched her dig into her purse, and she brought out two wrapped candies. She handed one to him and said, "Green tea latte candy; it's my favorite. Now then, are you through with the police?"

He opened the candy while he spoke. "Yes, ma'am. I had to revise my statement and sign it. Detective Robertson said he'll ask the district attorney not to press charges against me." Grainger pushed the shiny green candy into his mouth.

"Detective Robertson is a good man, and so are you, Grainger."

"Me? I'm not good. But, I'm not going to be around much longer." Mmm, the candy tasted awesome.

"What do you mean, are you moving away?"

"No ma'am, once Senior learns I ratted out Junior, I'm gone. I don't care. I'm finished being a patsy for those assholes!" Grainger's eyes widened as he realized he swore. "I'm sorry Mrs. Schmidt."

"I'm familiar with the term. I'll even agree it applies in this case. But, you'll be safe here in the hospital until you're discharged. I'll call Detective Robertson."

"They're discharging me today. Probably within the hour."

Kevin Butcher:

When I got back to the house, Aunt Deborah and Rebecca had converted the dining room into a sewing room. With her aunt's supervision, Rebecca operated a Bernina sewing machine. Rebecca stopped long enough to help me put the groceries away. She picked up the Ponhaus and grimaced, "Daddy and Aunt Deborah love this stuff." Then she whispered, "No one else will eat it." Rebecca kissed me while her aunt watched.

I asked, "Tomorrow morning do you want to attend a Mennonite or a Lutheran service?"

Deborah answered from the dining room, without looking up from cutting fabric, "Drop us off at the Mennonite church, you can go wherever." There are over twenty different Mennonite conferences. Some are quite liberal; a few are so conservative their members do not own televisions. Deborah volunteered to pick a local church.

In the interest of keeping things civil, I opted to work on outside chores.

My patio needed work, and I used my time to resand the pavers. Rebecca surprised me with lunch while I spread out the new sand. She said, "Kevin, your backyard is beautiful."

I hadn't heard her come up behind me. "You snuck up on me." She gave me a kiss, a glass of iced tea, and a sandwich. I glanced around. "Where is she?"

Rebecca laughed. "Aunt Deborah found a TV channel playing Dr. Phil reruns. She loves Dr. Phil. Want to take a break and eat lunch with me?"

We sat on an old wooden park bench I kept under a mimosa tree.

I munched my sandwich. "I should buy a patio glider for us."

"Mom and Dad's porch glider is a family heirloom. Momma's parents gave it to her as a wedding present. When we marry, they'll pass it down to us."

"That's an excellent tradition. How old is the glider?"

"I'm not sure, but it's been in the family forever."

Rebecca's iPhone pinged with a text message. She checked it and said, "Grandma Sarah likes my ring."

"Sarah? Your mother's mother?"

"Yes, they live in Florida now. Can we send them a picture of us?"

"Sure, use your phone and take a selfie."

We pressed close together, and Rebecca said, "Smile." It took a few taps before she got her phone to take the picture. Then we had to retake the picture several times. She sent the picture via her message app.

Rebecca caught me grinning and asked, "What's so funny?"

"I thought about you and your mom, and I realized that I couldn't wait to meet your grandmother."

"What are you saying? Grandma Sarah is a proper lady."

"I'm sure she is. You and your mom both look similar. I bet Grandmother Sarah does, too. What about your father's parents?"

"Grandpa Joseph died a long time ago. Grandma Martha passed away a few years ago; she used to live with Aunt Deborah."

We finished our lunch. Rebecca held my hand palm up and drew shapes with her finger. She asked, "Do you want boys or girls?"

Without any hesitation, I answered, "Boys."

She stopped drawing on my hand and looked up. "Why not girls?"

"Daughters are God's revenge on men for being male."

She paused while thinking it through. Grinning she said, "That's terrible." then said, "Am I God's revenge on my father?"

We both laughed at such a ridiculous notion. I said, "Too bad your aunt is so mean. I bet she could tell us stories."

Rebecca said, "Mom and Aunt Deborah used to be best friends. I can ask about it at dinner."

We both jumped when Aunt Deborah's voice came from behind us. "Why not ask now?"

Becky looked at me, and I nodded. She turned to her Aunt and said, "What was Daddy like when he and Mom dated?"

Aunt Deborah should never play cards for money. A range of emotions played across her face: irritation, concern, anger; each one clear and distinct. I didn't expect her to answer, but she did.

"When your parents met, Jonathan was twenty-two and Rachel only fifteen. Rachel's parents wouldn't allow her to date until she turned sixteen. They still found plenty of opportunities to spend time together. I remember one night when the three of us played Scrabble ..." Deborah's voice trailed off. She refocused on Rebecca and asked, "Why are you asking about your father?"

Rebecca said, "Kevin says he only wants boys." She turned to me and said. "Tell her why."

I repeated the quote about God's revenge.

Aunt Deborah nodded, "I'm familiar with the quote, Mr. Butcher, and I'm not surprised that you find it amusing. Men such as you would. If you marry my niece, and if God blesses you with daughters, he'll exact his revenge when he casts you into the lake of fire." Deborah turned to Rebecca, "Come, Rebecca, we need to finish your nightgown." Deborah turned and marched back into my house.

Becky said, "She's always been strict. Now she's—I don't know what she is."

"I think she's crazy. I brought you here to keep your father from sending you to her in Ohio. Instead, he brought her here. I'm calling my lawyer, if he gives me the green light, I'll kick her ass all the way to the state line."

Kevin got his lawyer on the phone and explained his situation.

“You have a serious problem, Mr. Butcher. I recommend you keep Mrs. Barie happy. At least until the DA decides to drop the charge against you. If you had asked me for an opinion, I would have advised you to leave your fiancée with her parents.”

“But, we had her mother’s permission.”

“Even so, Mr. Butcher. You do not need complications now.”

Rebecca and I worked together on dinner. She prepped the veggies; I chopped, coated, and browned the chicken. While we cooked, her aunt watched an infomercial on colon health care products. With Deborah out of earshot, I filled Rebecca in on my lawyer’s recommendation.

Becky nodded and said, “Kevin, I know you. You want to fight, and you can’t. I think God is trying to teach you a lesson. Just avoid talking to her. I’ll try and keep her away from you.”

We served the Chicken Cacciatore over fettuccine. Rebecca and I loved it. Aunt Deborah poked at it with her fork, sniffed, and said, “You didn’t make your own pasta?”

Rebecca, trying her best to keep the peace, asked, “Aunt Deborah? Where did Uncle Thomas take you for your honeymoon?”

Deborah finished chewing. She wiped her lips and said, “Thomas took us to Niagara Falls.”

“That’s where Momma suggested Kevin and I go. Can you tell us about it?”

Aunt Deborah smiled. She actually smiled and told us her story. “Thomas and I didn’t have a lot of money, but he got a great deal from a motel in downtown Niagara Falls. We were only a thirty minute drive from the falls. It would have been nicer in the spring or summer, but the ice-covered falls in February were still so lovely. We walked out to the island and took in the views. Then my poor husband Thomas almost lost his toes after he slipped and fell into the water.”

I butted in “Niagara Falls, in February? Did you see any penguins or polar bears?”

Rebecca looked at me and shook her head.

Continuing my observations, "The only thing between the North Pole and Niagara Falls is a barbed wire fence!"

Rebecca brandished the serving spoon and said, "Kevin!" I mumbled an apology.

Deborah kept to herself for a few minutes, then glanced at me before turning to Rebecca. "Rebecca, I've been thinking. You should marry your Cousin Andrew. He has a real job at a neighbor's dairy farm."

"I'm sorry, Aunt Deborah, but I'm going to marry Kevin." She reached and squeezed my hand, probably to keep me from throttling her aunt.

I couldn't keep quiet. "Don't be so hasty, Rebecca; Cousin Andrew sounds like a real catch." My eyes locked with Aunt Deborah's. "How much manure does Andrew shovel a day?"

Rebecca stood up and took my plate. She looked kind of angry. "Kevin, as you can't behave yourself, you're excused from the table."

Aunt Deborah smiled.

Uh, oh!

Rebecca found me working on my computer. She gave me a hug and pulled up a chair. She said, "I'm sorry that I lost my temper."

"Sweetheart, you don't need to apologize. I screwed up."

"Yes, you did screw up. Even I can see Deborah's baiting you. Still, I shouldn't have lost my temper."

"What's wrong with her?"

"Momma never told me the whole story. You know Momma and Deborah used to be best friends and went to school together? Well, Deborah hated it when Momma and Daddy started seeing each other. At about the same time, Momma said Aunt Deborah had a secret boyfriend, and something bad happened to her."

"A secret boyfriend?"

"Grandpa Joseph wouldn't allow Deborah to date. He even picked her husband for her. Mom says Deborah stopped being her friend and became very distrustful of any man who wasn't a Mennonite."

"I owe your dad for sending her here."

Rebecca stood and hugged me. Her warm lips pressed against my temple. She said, "If anyone kept score, you would be winning. You stole his daughter, and you still have her." I bent my head back, and she kissed my lips.

"Thank you, sweetheart. I couldn't see it like that. This," I waved my hand toward the living room, and Aunt Deborah, "situation is temporary. We'll go back next week for my hearing, and drop her off at your parents' house on the way past."

"We should stop and visit my parents."

"Yeah, that'll be fun. I don't want to wrestle your father."

"Kevin, you've won. Remember that and try to be patient with my Aunt and with Daddy. I'm going to finish my new nightgown."

As she turned, I asked, "Will you model it for me?" She gave me an over the shoulder finger wave and swayed out the door. Damn, she does that swaying thing, and I want to chase her into my bedroom.

She came by later and modeled it for me. The elastic cuffs and the mock turtleneck seemed extreme, but it looked well made. It didn't conceal as well as Deborah may think. When Rebecca moved, I caught tantalizing outlines of curves.

The closest Mennonite church suiting Aunt Deborah lay east, over the Tuscarora Mountain and near Mercersburg. Rebecca picked out appropriate clothes for me, and we had a light breakfast before leaving. After the service, Deborah wanted to stay and talk. I didn't mind; the congregation made us feel like part of a big family. I even met two men who, after marrying Mennonite women, joined the church. They are friendly people.

Deborah squashed my offer to buy lunch and declared we needed to return home as Rebecca had a lot of sewing to complete. Rebecca rolled her eyes and shrugged. Back at the house, Rebecca got busy on a new dress. I made lunch: grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup. We ate at my tiny kitchen table. Imagine my surprise when Deborah asked me what I saw in her niece. Rebecca's blue eyes darted from her aunt to me. I replied, "Everything."

"Come, Mr. Butcher, Rebecca is a simple young woman of God, not one of your sophisticated, sexually liberated—ladies. What can she offer you?"

I don't know what Deborah expected to hear. "A happy life. Love, a family. Everything that's important."

"What first attracted you to her?"

I couldn't keep from grinning. My first memories of Rebecca: her cornflower blue eyes, her smile, the way she moved when she thought no one else watched, but there was one thing, "Wildflowers."

Deborah looked confused. "Wildflowers?"

I saw Rebecca's lips curl into a smile. "Rebecca and her mother wear a mild wildflower cologne. It's a light scent, but it's what first caught my interest. Later, I figured out how smart she is. Rebecca and I can talk about anything. I fell in love with her while we talked in her kitchen." I wanted to mention Rebecca's killer hip to waist ratio, but Deborah didn't need to know about it.

Rebecca blushed and said, "Eat your lunch before it gets cold."

"Becks, do you remember the first time we kissed? That night on your porch?" Her blush spread to her ears as she nodded. "I'll never forget the touch of your lips and that wildflower scent."

Deborah got up in a huff and excused herself. Neither Rebecca nor I noticed.

Both Rebecca and I startled as Aunt Deborah dropped two packages onto the table. She proclaimed, "Here, Rebecca, are the only reasons you need to leave this lecher."

Deborah's absence should have aroused my suspicion. It hadn't, and now I knew what she had been doing. While Rebecca and I enjoyed our lunch, Deborah snooped through my bedroom drawers. Her diligence paid off because she found evidence of a previous relationship. The items she dropped on the table: a box of condoms, and a new, in the box, Hitachi Magic Wand.

Rebecca looked confused, but she read the labels. She looked at me and said, "Trojan Magnum Condoms?"

I shrugged and replied, "The smaller sizes don't fit."

"Why didn't you tell me you had condoms?"

My mind veered off onto a dangerous tangent as I considered her question. What might have happened the other night if I had mentioned the condoms? I imagined Rebecca writhing beneath me, her ankles locked together in the small of my back. I answered quickly, "Ah, um."

"We'll talk about them later. What's this Magic Wand?" She tilted her head to better examine the package.

Aunt Deborah could not keep the triumph from her voice. "That, Rebecca, is a debaucher's tool. Deviants call them adult toys. No man of moral character would have such under his roof.

"Hey," I said to Mrs. Barie. "Those things were in one of my bedroom drawers. You were snooping!" I turned back to Rebecca. "Becks, I'm sorry about the toy. I bought it for a former girlfriend, but we broke up before I could give it to her."

"What does it do?"

"It induces orgasms, powerful orgasms. One plugs it into an electrical outlet, turns it on, and applies it to your, um, self. You know, we've never discussed names for our naughty bits."

Rebecca glanced up to her Aunt, then back to me. "We'll talk about that later as well." I nodded. She reached out and picked up the box with the Magic Wand. "It's heavy."

"It may be called an adult toy, but it is the best one made."

Deborah interjected, "Real men do not need degenerate props." I wanted to suggest she would benefit from a magic wand, but however true, it wouldn't help.

My fiancée read the label, paused, and set the box down between us. "Why did you and your girlfriend break up?"

I didn't want to tell the Kristen and Kevin story. It wasn't one of my finer moments. I said, "I'll tell you all about it, but first would you like to see a picture?" Rebecca nodded and said she would. From the living room, I retrieved my photo album. "I've always wanted to show you my photo album. Old pictures of me with my parents, Marine Corps pictures, but here," I flipped to the correct page, "are pictures of Kristen and me when we met."

The short, curvy Kristen looked sexy as hell in her heels, short skirt, and snug fitting T-shirt. Rebecca examined the photos, and Aunt Deborah moved behind her to see them as well. Deborah made "Tsk, tsk," sounds.

Rebecca said, "What does her shirt say?"

I took a quick look and grinned. "It says," I said, "if these were brains, I'd be a freaking genius."

Rebecca smiled, Aunt Deborah did not, maybe she didn't get the joke? Rebecca closed the photo album and said, "Why did you break up?"

"About three or four weeks after we started seeing each other, I learned she wasn't single. The entire time we saw each other, she cheated on her husband."

This set Aunt Deborah off. She said, "What a surprise, our Don Juan here seduces married women."

I said, "Give me a break, I told you I didn't know she was married."

"See, Rebecca! He associates with harlots and adulteresses."

"It gets even better. I found out Kristen had already divorced and remarried once. Now she wanted to divorce husband number two and make me number three, I told her, 'No.' She got mad, threw coffee at me and I haven't seen her since. She still leaves messages on my answering machine. If you check, I'm sure there are one or two still on it."

With all the problems instigated by Aunt Deborah, I almost forgot to pay my bills. My computer took forever to boot! After it booted, my internet access seemed sluggish. I tried to open the task manager, but nothing happened. Yesterday, Mrs. Barie used my PC to locate an appropriate church. Did she download a virus or something? My antivirus and anti-malware software didn't find anything. I rebooted into Safe Mode and checked things out. Someone had installed a Christian approved internet filtering software package. I shook my head and restored from a recent backup. This didn't take long, and I set up a separate and limited account for Deborah to use.

Rebecca slipped into my den. She pulled over a chair and said, "I want to talk about Kristen."

"Kristen? What about her?"

"Kev, those pictures of her, she's so beautiful. I don't know how you'd be happy with someone plain like me."

I hadn't expected this, was Aunt Deborah stirring things up? "There's a lot I didn't say because of your aunt standing there. Kristen's not a good person. She's never been faithful to any boyfriend, or to either husband. There's something wrong with her. I think she *needs* to have men come on to her. I don't know how many men she's slept with, but it's in the double, heck maybe even triple, digits."

"But, look at me, Kevin." She stood up, gestured to herself and spun around. "I wear plain clothing. I've never worn make up. I look like a plain Jane next to someone like her."

I stood up and wrapped my arms around her. How do I explain that she was everything I wanted? I bent my head and touched her lips with mine. Her elusive wildflower cologne hid on the pulse points of her throat. "I've seen both of you without clothes, or makeup, or jewelry. You are the more beautiful woman." She tried to protest. I told her she should trust my judgment. "I can prove it." This got her, and she asked how. "After we ditch your aunt, I'll buy you a Kristen style outfit, and get you a Kristen style

makeover, including a Kristen style hairdo. Then we'll get pictures taken, and you can compare them side by side. I'll even take you out clubbing, and you'll see what it's like to be the most beautiful woman in the room."

She shook her head, "I can't do that. I wouldn't know how to act."

"That is the thing, you know. What makes you more beautiful." I cupped her cheeks in my palms and bent to kiss her. "You don't act. You're not with me for any reason other than you love me. It took me too long to understand it, but it's why a Kristen will never be in your league."

Rebecca Schmidt:

My iPhone rang. The caller ID displayed "Mom and Dad." I answered, "Hello, Momma."

"Hello daughter, I had an interesting conversation with your Aunt Deborah today."

Uh oh. "I can imagine."

"I thought you and Kevin were going to wait?"

"We are, Momma. Aunt Deborah is like Daddy; she jumps to conclusions."

"So, you weren't naked in his bed?"

Another five or ten minutes and I would have been. "No Momma, I wore one of his T-shirts, a long T-shirt. It's very comfortable to sleep in."

"Uh huh, T-shirts are comfortable for a lot of things. I sleep in one of your father's from time to time. Do I need to remind you to be discreet around your aunt?"

"No, Momma. Aunt Deborah barged right into our house and surprised us. She's kicked Kevin out of our bedroom; he slept in the guest room last night. We're careful."

"How did your first and only night alone together go?"

“Kevin has been very sweet, Momma. He’s teaching me to slow dance.”

“Your grandmother called earlier and said Kevin is a handsome young man, and the two of you make a lovely couple. Your grandparents want to visit soon and meet him. Before I forget, send me pictures of you two together. I love you, daughter.”

“I love you too, Momma.”

Kevin Butcher:

After dinner, Rebecca suggested we sit out on the patio. She helped me carry our wooden bench. I lit the fire pit, and we sat there facing the Tuscarora Mountain as the sun set behind us. Of course, Aunt Deborah came out to join us. I expected her and left a single chair on the other side of the fire pit. That’s where she sat: facing us, and the setting sun. Rebecca and I enjoyed the temperate evening. Aunt Deborah enjoyed squinting and trying to block the sun with her hands.

The opening notes of Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D Minor sounded from Aunt Deborah’s pocket. She reached into her pockets and removed her cell phone. She flipped it open with a flick of her wrist, and her ringtone silenced.

Deborah spoke, “Yes, Andrew?” While she listened to the response, her gaze lifted to Rebecca and she smiled. “I am chaperoning your second cousin Rebecca.” Her eyes flitted to me, and her smile broadened.

What is she up to?

Deborah listened intently then nodded “Yes, that is correct.” She continued to listen and nod for another half minute before saying, “Yes, that will do thank you.” Then a brief pause before she said, “Goodbye.”

The phone vanished back into her pocket. Aunt Deborah focused on Rebecca, “Your cousin Andrew hopes that you and your parents are well. He also asked if Tommy still needed to borrow his notes on Introduction to Agronomy?”

"I can ask Tommy to call him about the notes."

"No matter, Andrew will be here tomorrow morning. He will bring the notes, and we can take them to Tommy ourselves."

I sat up shocked she invited Cousin Andrew, "Wait, you asked someone to my house? Without asking me? How long is he going to stay?"

Rebecca Schmidt:

It takes a long time for Aunt Deborah to fall asleep. Long enough that I fall asleep myself. Fortunately, she lets out one of her loud snorts, and it jars me awake. After her breathing smooths out, I slip out of bed and tiptoe to the door. The bedroom door opens and closes without a sound, and I pad down the hallway.

The latch clicks as I shut the guest bedroom door behind me. Kevin stirs, the slight noise disturbing his sleep. Before he fully wakes, I slip under his covers and wrap myself around him. With my touch, his muscles tense but he relaxes again almost as fast. His eyes open and he smiles. I feel his hands upon me, and I surrender to his touch.

My girlfriends and I used to wonder how it would feel to be with a man. I can't speak for anyone else, but with Kevin, I almost lose control. He touches me, and my body responds. Our first kiss, all those months ago, left me dazed and wanting.

With our increased familiarity come heightened responses. My breasts tighten, and my neck and cheeks warm. Kevin's lips press against mine, and then to my throat as a ball of liquid heat builds within me. The stubble on his cheeks grazes my skin, and I feel each distinct point. His hands follow my curves through the thin flannel. Kevin's attentions leave me weak and defenseless.

In a quiet voice, Kevin asks, "What's a godly girl like you doing, sneaking into a heretic's bed so late at night?"

I felt anything but godly. Kevin's question gives me a few seconds to collect my thoughts. I answer, "Aunt Deborah hasn't called you a heretic yet."

"Probably because she hasn't run out of words that start with the letter 'D.'"

My free hand slides down his abdomen to his penis. I can't bring myself to say, "Cock" aloud without Kevin teasing me into it, but sometimes, I think it to myself. I wrap my fingers around his cock and think about that box of condoms, I can't help but chuckle.

"What's so funny?"

"I realized this," I wiggled his cock "is Magnum size."

I felt his lips bend into a smile as he nuzzles my neck. He says, "It is, isn't it?"

My earlier concern about Kristen came crashing back down on me. How could I compete with her? I asked, "Did, I mean, Kristen has so much more experience. How can you be happy with me not knowing how to f—?"

"Whoa Becks, where did that come from?" His hands stop their teasing, and he hugs me tight. "Look, you have nothing to worry about. Yeah, she has a ton of experience. Heck, she had more experience than everyone else I know put together. But, Kristen uses her experience to hide her inability to love. I'll trade that for your love and enthusiasm any time."

I turned my head and saw his sincerity. Kevin is the best of men.

He gave me one of his "Naughty Kevin" looks. "If you want," he says. "I can pull up your nightie and give you some experience right now." While he spoke, one hand tugs my nightgown up a few inches, the other hand returns to teasing.

"I'd like that, but if Deborah caught us playing, I dunno. It would be bad. Besides, I talked to Momma earlier, she made me promise to behave."

"How rough has Deborah been on you?"

"Oh, let's see, Deborah's convinced we've had sex. I'm a borderline slut for sleeping with you, but it isn't my fault because you seduced me. If I admit you've used me, then everything will be okay. You've brainwashed Momma and me. Otherwise, everyone would see how wrong it is to allow a degenerate rapist like you to court me."

I want to stay longer, and Kevin's offer to play has me interested. But I promised Momma we'd behave. He still has his hands on me. One of his thumbs strokes my breasts, keeping my blood stirred. I ask him, "How quick can you be?"

"Quick?"

"Tomorrow morning, if she gets in the shower before Andrew arrives, we'll have ten or fifteen minutes alone. How quick can you be?"

"Right now, I don't think I'd make it past two minutes."

I slip out of bed, and away from his dangerous fingers. Reaching down, I squeeze his penis, it feels so big. I ask, "After we're married, what's this going to feel like inside me?"

Kevin groaned, "I'm going to have to sleep on my back; that isn't going away anytime soon."

I say, "I love you, Kev." then sneak back into bed. It takes me a long time to fall asleep, and then I dream of Kevin's fingers.

Kevin Butcher:

Rebecca made an outstanding country breakfast. I wasn't sure which was harder: ignoring Deborah, not dragging Rebecca off to my bed, or me. Last night, I had done my best to tease her into playing around, but she one-upped me.

At 8 AM Deborah announced she would take her shower. By 8:05 AM, my fiancée had me pinned against the kitchen counter while she “did that thing with her mouth.” She told me to keep my eyes closed. I didn't last four minutes, and she caught me peeking, twice. At my moment of completion, I heard a car engine. I took a chance and glanced outside; an old Buick Terraza rolled into the driveway.

I tried to say, “He’s here.” But my words and thoughts mixed together, and I announced, “He’s coming.” Rebecca looked up at me with a question in her eyes, and I corrected myself, “He’s here.” She nodded and finished me off, and then stood and looked out the window.

Rebecca tore off a paper towel and wiped her mouth, “That’s Andrew. Kevin, promise to be polite. Please?”

“Yes dear, you have me feeling polite and cheerful.” My phone rang, I glanced at the screen. “I have to take this, it’s probably about a job,” Rebecca said she’d greet Andrew.

“Mr. Butcher, we need you back at the Berks County job site, ASAP.”

“You fired me; I replay your voice mail any time I feel lonely.”

“Well, um, we can consider your time away as unpaid leave. When can you be back on site?”

These employment agencies never change. I said, “How about if you consider my time away as paid leave. Remember, you fired me, I didn’t quit.”

“I told them you wouldn’t go for the unpaid leave. Kevin? Let me get back to you, I’ll see what I can do.”

Huh, he sounded human.

Whatever greeting Rebecca originally intended, Andrew had his own plans.

As I stepped out of the garage, Rebecca stood in the driveway. Her arms open, planning a nice big hug type of greeting. Andrew also opened his arms. They met and hugged. Rebecca said, "It's so nice to see y—." Her voice cut off as Andrew pressed his lips against hers. She twisted her head away. Andrew's eyes lifted to mine, and he released her. She stumbled back a step, and I caught her waist making sure she didn't fall.

Rebecca knew what I intended to do. She held onto my arm, and said, "Kevin, no. You promised."

I stopped. To get to Andrew would require me to break Rebecca's hold, and I couldn't do that.

Andrew frowned, and wiped his lips off on his arm. He recovered and said, "I'm sorry if I caused a problem. I just was saying hello to my little cousin."

I smiled warmly. It felt more feral than warm, but at least I tried. I said, "No problems at all. Maybe later, we'll step around back and 'Talk' about it."

Rebecca spun me around to face her. "Kevin, you promised to be polite. If you can't do it, go work on your travel trailer, or something."

"I'm not sure if it's safe to leave you alone with this guy." I took a good look at Andrew, he stood a few inches taller than me and muscular. All that fresh country air and manure shoveling must make for a good upper body workout. He had a farmer's tan and badly needed a haircut.

Rebecca turned to Andrew and said, "Andrew, this is Kevin. Kevin is my fiancé."

Andrew looked me over and said, "I heard about you. You did something to Rebecca. Tricked her into wicked ways. I'm here to do something about that."

Rebecca shook her head, "Andrew, none of that is true. Kevin is a good man, you two should be friends." She poked her elbow into my side. "Shake his hand."

Against my best judgment, I extended my hand. Andrew took my hand and smiled. He squeezed, and the battle of grips commenced. Holy crap, he had one heck of a grip. The sweat broke out on both of our

foreheads. We kept up our polite facades while attempting to crush the other's hand. At best, we came to a draw. Rebecca noticed the byplay and looked concerned. We relaxed our grips. Rebecca knew something happened, but chose to let it go. She said, "Now you two can be friends, right?" We both nodded. This wouldn't be over anytime soon.

Aunt Deborah stepped out onto the porch and called out to Cousin Andrew. Andrew excused himself and ran across my yard to the open arms of Aunt Deborah.

My phone rang again. I glanced at the display and told Rebecca, "It's about the job." She nodded and kept holding my arm. "Hello?"

The recruiter said, "Kevin, we'll pay you a week's base pay, no overtime or per diem. What do you think?"

Aunt Deborah called out, "Rebecca! Hurry up now, Andrew's come a long way to see you." That's great, start off with a guilt trip. Rebecca looked up, and I lifted a finger asking her to wait.

I replied, "That will be all right, thank you."

"Kevin, I'll be straight with you. You're our best technician, we've gotten more repeat work because of you. My boss wants to offer you a permanent position as a supervisor. We think you can be a force multiplier across multiple job sites." I told him I'd call back with my ETA, but Thursday would be the soonest I could start. We both hung up.

Rebecca looked up, and I told her about the job and the possible job offer. She suggested I call my lawyer and see if he had any updates or schedule changes. We decided we would return to Berks County tomorrow afternoon.

I hugged her and said, "This hasn't been as nice a getaway as I wanted."

She replied, "Our first night was beautiful, and we'll have lots more." I turned and bent to kiss her, but she turned her head away. "I need to brush my teeth, kiss me later." Hands entwined we walked in through the open garage door. As soon as we entered the shade, she gave me a hip bump and said, "We both need to keep calm, don't let them stir us up." I agreed.

Back inside, Rebecca went to brush her teeth, and I checked on our guests.

Our guests sat talking in the living room. Andrew spoke in a loud voice. I heard him say, "What do you mean it vibrates? What does he do with a vibrator?" Their voices hushed as I approached. I offered beverages, from water to beer; I had a six-pack of light beer in the back of the fridge. Andrew perked up at the offer of beer, but Deborah quashed his interest. They settled for coffee and tea. Deborah asked me to send Rebecca in to keep Andrew company.

I put the kettle on the stove and made coffee. Rebecca joined me, and we caught up with the kisses. I'd hang with them for a bit, and then get busy on my travel trailer. Rebecca would be the polite hostess, and we'd watch out for each other.

Rebecca and I sat opposite from Deborah and Andrew. Deborah alternated between sipping her special tea and reminding Rebecca about some long-ago childhood obligation.

Deborah said, "I remember when you two played together. You made such a cute couple. Andrew's parents thought you'd grow up and marry." Keep in mind Deborah said this while Rebecca sat next to me holding my hand. Andrew sometimes dropped his guard, and I could see he had it bad for his second cousin. Did Rebecca know how he felt? I'd have to ask her about it. Deborah stood and excused herself, that tea she drank worked fast. I finished my coffee and stood. "I need to get to work on the travel trailer. Becks, check up on me soon. Andrew, I could use a hand if you're bored." He gave me a non-committal reply.

Time flies when I'm doing work I enjoy. This travel trailer is about a year old, I bought it shortly after starting my nomadic work life. I've mentioned before it's cheaper than a hotel. Usually, I'll negotiate a monthly rate and can pocket up to half of my daily expense allowance.

Rebecca walked out bringing me a glass of iced green tea. We talked about Andrew, and she admitted feeling sorry for him. She would speak to him and set him straight. I said, "Your aunt probably stirred him up, be careful." Rebecca hugged me and said I worried too much. She could take care of herself.

I slipped into the house later and found Andrew and Rebecca having a serious conversation in the dining room. They both had glasses of iced green tea. Rebecca sipped from hers, Andrew's sat untouched as he stared at Rebecca. He said, "But you promised you'd marry me."

She said, "Andrew, we were children, I may have been six or seven years old." Maybe I lack sensitivity, but Andrew sounded creepy.

After lunch, I saw Andrew and Deborah closeted together in the living room. Deborah gestured and spoke forcefully. Andrew nodded a lot. Rebecca continued organizing my kitchen. There must be a Mennonite form of *Feng Shui* that involved stand mixers. She moved my old KitchenAid mixer from spot to spot searching for just the right location.

My trailer went back together with no problems. I prepared to remount the trim. There came a sound from inside my house, a surprised shriek. I leaped from my trailer and dashed across my garage. At the door, I heard Andrew talking. "What's the matter, Rebecca? We've always been kissing cousins."

At my touch, the door cracked open. Most of the kitchen cabinet doors stood open and the contents of several lay stacked on the countertops. Rebecca stood in a corner, facing away from me. Andrew close behind her. His left hand cupped her buttock, I could not see his other hand, but it might be anywhere. Opposite from me, Deborah stood in the dining room doorway. She had a perfect line of sight on Andrew. With Deborah's ardent protectiveness over Rebecca, she would deal with him any second.

Rebecca said, "Andrew, I've asked you to end this behavior. If Kevin catches you he'll—"

Andrew interrupted her, "He ain't gonna do squat. Deborah told me she'd call the police if he touches me." He took a breath and continued. "Rebecca, you need to stop whoring around with him anyway. You promised you'd marry me and I'm gonna hold you to it."

"I was only six years old; we were playing house. Andrew, you need to take your hand off my behind."

Deborah continued to watch, Why didn't she help Rebecca? Andrew's head bent, and he pressed his lips to Rebecca's neck. He murmured, "You gave it up to Mr. Vibrator, you can give it up to me, and I'll show you how good it can be."

Rebecca spun to face her cousin. Ooh, I hope she never looks at me like that. Andrew lined up for another kiss, but she had other intentions. Both of her hands lifted to his shoulders. He smiled, misunderstanding her intent. Rebecca used his shoulders for leverage. Her right knee came up, as she executed a vicious knee strike. Poor Andrew, one moment he bent to kiss her. The next moment, her

knee compressed his testicles down to a fraction of their normal size. Blood vessels and delicate tissues rupture under such sudden pressures. He crumpled to the floor, his hands spasming while he clamped them to his groin.

He curled into a fetal position making a high-pitched groaning noise. It sounded something like, "hhhuuuuummmggghhhiiiiieeee."

Deborah stomped around the corner and demanded to know what happened. I'd expect her to look upset, but she looked disappointed. These recent events with Andrew made sense. Deborah set things up giving herself two ways to win. The least likely would be Rebecca leaving me for Andrew. The most likely would be me beating the hell out of him. With a battered and bloody Andrew needing a doctor's care, Deborah would have called the police. She would have mentioned Rebecca's age, and the police may have arrested me. I didn't think Deborah knew about my recent legal problem in Berks County, but once the police ran my name through their system, it would have damned me.

I stepped inside and said, "You already know, you set the whole thing up." She sputtered something negative. "Enough of your shit Debbie, your boy Andrew needs an ice pack." Deborah and I helped Andrew into the spare bedroom. I said, "Get his pants off. I'll get you an ice pack."

She said, "Me?"

"You brought him here, and you set him up. He is *your* responsibility." I left the room as Deborah bent over to unfasten his belt.

I returned with an ice pack. Deborah had Andrew's pants open, but couldn't pull them down. I shook my head and said, "You lift him up, I'll pull his pants down." It only took a second. I handed her the ice pack and went to find Rebecca

I found her sitting on the bench in the back yard. I said, "Your aunt set us up."

Rebecca shook her head, "I lost my temper and hurt Andrew; how bad is he?"

I considered my answers. I could tell the truth and say she may have rendered him unable to sire children. But I didn't want her upset over damaging that white trash piece of shit.

“Andrew? He’ll be fine. Your aunt is holding an ice pack on his testicles as we speak.” I allowed that to sink in. You could almost see Rebecca think it through.

Her eyes lit up, and she turned her head towards the vicinity of the guest room. She said, “Aunt Deborah is putting ice on his”

“Yep. I helped Deborah pull Andrew’s pants down. You know, I should have suggested she, ‘kiss it and make it better.’”

That got me a half-hearted glare and a finger wagging. I shrugged and apologized. Rebecca said, “How bad did it look?”

“He looked a little pink down there, but his testicles aren’t his biggest problem. No, after what else I’ve seen, Andrew’s nickname should be ‘Little Wee-Wee.’”

She grimaced. “I need to apologize.”

“Becks, you can do whatever you feel is necessary. But your aunt should apologize first. She set the whole thing up.” I told her about Deborah watching from the doorway, and explained my theory about her plan.

“She watched the whole thing? I didn’t see her.”

“Yeah, I saw her peeking around the corner.”

I let Becky think that through for a moment before saying, “You know, it’s time we called your parents. They need to know we’re coming back. Your father can end this mess before you or I get hurt.”

We used the cordless phone from the kitchen. After setting it to speaker phone, we sat at the dining room table. Rebecca recited her parents’ home number, and I dialed. Mr. Schmidt answered on the second ring. Our conversation started off with a verbal duel. He denied the validity of our engagement; his point being I hadn’t asked him for his daughter’s hand. I accepted his point. Old business taken care of, we moved on to new. Rebecca and I took turns bringing him up to date. I could almost hear his wince while Rebecca described kneeing Andrew. We assured him we had behaved ourselves and hadn’t

embarrassed anyone. He then counseled Rebecca about her temper and her violent reaction to Andrew's assault. The funny part? He told Rebecca she needed to set a better example for me.

Aunt Deborah must have heard us talking because she came into the dining room and joined us at the table. At the first pause in the conversation, she announced that Andrew seemed better, no thanks to us. This caused Rebecca to look upset, and it angered me. I accused Deborah of deliberately setting Andrew up. Mr. Schmidt listened to us bicker back and forth before he interrupted. "Excuse me please, I have a few things to say." Everyone quieted. I could hear Andrew moaning from down the hall.

"Deborah, it sounds as though you've done more than chaperone. I thought you and Rebecca would enjoy some time together. Sort of in a big sister, little sister fashion. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. Kevin, you are a fine young man, but you lack patience and sometimes react without proper consideration. To be fair, as my wife pointed out earlier, I also lack patience and tend to jump to conclusions. Rebecca, with the sole exception of your temper, you have become a fine young woman. Your mother and I are quite proud of you. Kevin is lucky to have you by his side." Rebecca reached across the table and took my hand. I couldn't exactly agree with his assessment of me.

Mr. Schmidt continued, "Deborah, please call me when you have a few minutes. I want to clarify a few things. In the meantime, leave Rebecca and Kevin be. If they want to stay up late talking, I don't mind if they fall asleep together." Rebecca squeezed my hand, and I relaxed for the first time in days.

I said, "Thank you, Mr. Schmidt."

"Kevin, we still have business to settle. Do you have a question for me?"

A question? What now? I must have paused too long because Rebecca rapped my knuckles against the tabletop. "Ouch." Oh yes, The Question!

I pushed back my chair and stood, rubbing my stinging knuckles. "Yes Mr. Schmidt, I do. Your daughter, Rebecca, means everything to me. She is the part of me that I never knew I lacked. I love her. May I have your permission to marry her? You know I will keep her safe."

"Yes Kevin, you have my blessing to marry my daughter. As I've said before, you two will do well together, and," he chuckled, "I am confident you will keep her safe."

Rebecca handed me her engagement ring, she'd been carrying it inside a pocket. There in my dining room, in front of Aunt Deborah and accompanied by the distant moans from Andrew, I dropped to one knee. I held up the ring and said, "Rebecca Rachel Schmidt, will you marry me?"

Beaming, she said, "Yes Kevin, I'll marry you." I took her left hand and slid the ring on her finger. This time, it's official! I stood and took my time kissing her.

Mrs. Schmidt's voice came over the phone. "Oh Rebecca, I'm so happy for you."

Deborah slinked off somewhere.

I gave Andrew some generic Aleve and kept changing his ice packs. The key with that sort of injury is to minimize the swelling. The results from a Google search recommended he also elevate his knees. I passed that information along.

Rebecca still felt guilty about hurting Andrew. I didn't, not in the least. But she is a better person than me.

I finished my travel trailer and decided to bring it with us. Tommy's cool and all, but I didn't want to bunk up with him. If necessary, I could rent a spot at one of the local campgrounds. Options are great.

That night, we reclined together on the couch and watched a romantic comedy. Rebecca had never watched one before. She wore her new flannel nightgown and nothing else. Have you ever put your hands on a woman through a thin layer of soft flannel? I might develop a thing for doing it. After we exhausted ourselves "talking," I pulled a light blanket over us, and we slept.

Andrew seemed better in the morning. Not better, better, but better than yesterday better. I loaned him a pair of baggy shorts. Rebecca made pancakes, and he lumbered out and ate. For the record, I offered to take him to see a doctor, at my expense, but he declined. Andrew and I will never be friends. But I can respect a man able to take a knee like that and still walk the next day. Deborah had nothing to say to us. I don't think she accepted yesterday's resolutions.

Mr. Schmidt called and asked for an update on Andrew's condition. I passed the phone over. They had a one-sided conversation with Andrew listening and replying, "Yes, sir." Andrew handed the phone back to me. Mr. Schmidt told me, "Kevin, I'm sorry about Andrew. If he is unrepentant, or if he continues his behavior, you have my permission to handle it as you see fit. Please bear in mind that Andrew is family, although his line came from the shallower end of the gene pool." Later, I witnessed Andrew's apology to Rebecca; it seemed sincere.

I invited Andrew to hang out with me while I worked out in the garage. Maybe we could start over and be friends? He couldn't, or wouldn't, meet my eyes and remained noncommittal.

My phone rang while I walked out to the garage. I checked the display, my lawyer. This needed to be private, so I stepped into the garage. My lawyer apologized for not returning my call yesterday, but he had news for me. The DA withdrew the charge of aggravated assault. There would not be a preliminary hearing. They would send a letter to my home, and I needed that letter. Also, the police would like to talk to me at my earliest convenience.

Rebecca and I took a walk around back. I gave her the news from my lawyer. We needed to wait for the letter. I'd call my employer, and she'd call her parents. Our plan, wait for the letter and leave. At the time, I didn't think about Deborah. I later learned changing our departure plans, without giving her a reason, drove her crazy.

My employer didn't like my updated ETA, but I think they understood.

While cleaning up my travel trailer, I felt it shake as someone stepped up to the doorway. Surprise! It was my official fiancée, Rebecca, come to pay a visit. She stepped inside and looked around the interior.

"This is nice! It's like a tiny house." She peered into the bathroom and looked through the kitchen cabinets. "It's tight, but I can cook for us in here."

Of course, Rebecca would want to go on road trips with me. Well at least until we had kids, but I could always buy a bigger travel trailer. Or, I could get a real job and stay in one place.

Rebecca gave me a hug when she squeezed past to the bed. The bedroom area featured a real queen size mattress. Just what I needed for the indoor Olympics with Becky.

She sat on the bed and swung her legs up. Becky scooted over and patted the bed next to her. She said, "Don't you want to fool around with your fiancée?" I kicked off my shoes and joined her. We both rolled onto our sides facing each other. Rebecca put one hand on my cheek and kissed me. She pulled back and said, "I forgot to tell you: Aunt Deborah is irritated with me."

"What did you do now?"

"She wants to know why we keep changing our travel plans. All I'll tell her is she needs to ask you."

"Oh, she has to hate that."

"You know what we haven't done in a while?" I shook my head. She pushed me onto my back and sat on top of me.

Back when we started courting, we'd sneak off to a secluded corner in her father's barn. We'd sit or lay on a blanket to keep Rebecca from picking up stray bits of hay or straw. If Rebecca came into the kitchen with straw or hay sticking to her, both of us got "The Look." They didn't give me the same level of scrutiny. I suggested switching to her being on top to keep the straw and hay bits further away from her.

Rebecca pushed me onto my back, and we assumed what had become one of our favorite spooning positions. Her fingers entwined with mine and she pressed my hands back against the mattress. She bent and kissed me. We kissed, and I told her how much I loved her. We spooned like this until Aunt Deborah and Cousin Andrew found us.

I felt the travel trailer shake as someone with weight climbed in.

My travel trailer is small, and except for the bathroom compartment, there aren't any partitions. Whoever climbed in had an open field of view. Rebecca sat on top of me in what resembled the female superior, i.e. cowgirl, position. Her skirt covered the area where we would be coupled if we were having

sex. To be honest, there had been some grinding, not all instigated by me, but I digress. What Deborah saw must have looked damning. Like her brother, she had the same proclivity to assume the worst and jump to a conclusion.

Deborah shrieked, "You lecher! Fornicating with an underage girl! And Rebecca, you, you, harlot!"

Rebecca had tried to sit up and move back as soon as she felt someone enter the travel trailer. Her hands slipped a couple of times, and it might have resembled humping motions.

Andrew must have heard the word "Fornicating," and didn't want to miss the show. He stepped in behind Deborah.

Rebecca scooted back yelling, "We're not fornicating!" She slid off into a kneeling position.

Deborah stared at my groin. I think the lack of nudity confused her.

I sat up and swung my legs over the edge of the mattress, "Mrs. Barie, you have a dirty mind, and you owe us an apology. You should have knocked."

Andrew had the decency to appear disappointed. He naturally expected to see fornication.

Deborah plopped down at the dinette bench seat. She cleared her throat and said, "I'm certain your lewd display was merely a prelude to a depraved act of fornication. Rebecca, I once thought you a victim of this degenerate, but that wicked and lascivious position tells a far different tale."

Rebecca made a noise. It sounded like a growl, and she interrupted her aunt saying, "We were spooning, not fornicating!"

"My father used to refer to your mother and her mother as 'Floozyes.' I should have expected their wanton behaviors would pass on to you. Poor Andrew would not have felt so free with your person if you behaved modestly."

Rebecca slid off the bed and confronted her aunt. She said, "I can't believe you would say such horrible things. My momma and grandmother are not floozies, whatever that means." Then she shoved Andrew out of her way and ran out of the travel trailer. Deborah sat at the dinette, staring through me. I found

my shoes, slipped them on, and reached behind me for my phone. Ignoring Deborah, I called Rachel Schmidt. She could help Rebecca better than I could. I put the phone to my ear and listened to it ring.

Mrs. Schmidt answered, "Hello?"

"Mrs. Schmidt? It's Kevin."

"Hello Kevin, how is my daughter?"

"Not good, I'm afraid. Her Aunt Deborah gave her a rough time. Call Rebecca, please."

"Oh dear, where is my daughter?"

"I think she is in our back yard. We have an anti-Deborah sanctuary back there."

"OK, find my daughter. I'll call her. Bye."

I spoke to Deborah, "Whatever he did to you, it must have been truly horrendous." Her eyes glanced to me and away. I knew she listened. "Otherwise, you wouldn't feel compelled to drive away someone who loved you as Rebecca did. I'd tell you that I feel sorry for you, but I don't. You are a miserable person."

Andrew followed me out and touched my shoulder. I turned, and he mumbled an apology. I nodded and said, "Keep Deborah away from us." He nodded.

Rebecca sat on the old wooden bench. She held her phone to one ear, and she talked while she cried. Rebecca noticed me and patted the seat next to her. Rachel must have called as soon as we hung up; good for her. I listened while Rebecca filled her in.

"She said you, me, and Grandma are floozies, and I enticed Andrew."

"On the bed in Kevin's travel trailer. ... No Momma! ... Just kissing! ... Yes, we both had our clothes on! ... Momma! No! ... Me, I was on top ... I'll tell him, bye." Rebecca tapped end and put her phone back into her pocket. "Momma will call Daddy. He'll decide what to do. Until then, we have to stay away from Deborah."

Interlude: Schmidt Farm, Kitchen

Jonathan Schmidt walked through the back door, and into his kitchen. As he had done so many times before, he first stopped to wash his hands. Rachel sat at their kitchen table drinking a cup of tea.

Rachel said, "Rebecca and Kevin had another run in with Deborah." She filled him in on the details. "It bothers me that yesterday she watched Andrew assault our daughter, and today she blamed everything on Rebecca."

Jonathan said. "Deborah—Deborah needs counseling or something." He had no idea Deborah could be so cruel and hurtful. "I'll call Deborah."

Once again Jonathan needed to refer to the file card for his sister's phone number. As usual, Deborah answered before the first ring concluded.

Deborah said, "Yes, Jonathan?"

"I think you have overreacted."

"You do not understand how evil the English can be. Not like I do."

"Kevin is not at all like your old biology teacher."

"You haven't seen Mr. Butcher casting his lustful gaze upon your daughter."

"I regret you couldn't have seen Rebecca and Kevin from the beginning. They'd sit at the kitchen table for an hour or more each night and talk. Do you remember when Rebecca was little, how she'd talk your ears off? She quieted so much after the problems with that Hanslein boy. Our little chatterbox became a quiet and sober young woman.

"Well, within a week or two, Kevin had Rebecca telling him about her dreams and aspirations. How she wanted to attend college. It almost broke our hearts to hear her talk about a future we couldn't provide. Weeks later, after Kevin professed his feelings to Rebecca, she told him to ask me for permission to court her. Oh, she liked him, quite a bit in fact, but she wouldn't run around behind us. Now that they

are courting, they'll find a private place and spoon, but they're young and very much in love. Rachel and I don't worry about them."

"But he's English!"

"Yes, but he goes to church with us every Sunday. Look, I don't know if he'll ever join the church, but he isn't going to do anything contrary to what Rebecca expects from him. Oh, I imagine if a situation dire enough presents itself, he'll revert to his violent ways, but he'd only do it to protect his family. God does forgive us our mistakes. Overall, Rachel and I are very satisfied with Rebecca's choice."

Kevin Butcher:

Rebecca told me her father called Deborah and calmed her down, again. All I want to do is bundle her up into Andrew's van and watch them drive west.

Deborah and Rebecca used my baking stone and made pizza for dinner. When we figured out the ingredients we needed, it didn't surprise me that Deborah wanted anchovies. They sent Andrew and me to the grocery store with a list. He offered to drive, but I declined. On the way to the store, I asked if he still believed the stories Aunt Deborah told him. He said he didn't know what to think. I called him on it, and he admitted I probably didn't have Rebecca brainwashed. By the time, we came back, we still weren't friends, but we weren't bitter enemies. Aunt Deborah seemed more relaxed. Although, I suspected it would be a temporary condition. The pizza turned out to be one of the best I'd ever had, and Deborah provided the recipe.

Rebecca decided it would be cozy if we slept together in my travel trailer. Although sleeping in a travel trailer inside of a garage seemed odd, I planned to bunker up in case the craziness started back up.

In deference to her Aunt, we took separate showers before going to bed. On my way to the garage, I passed Aunt Deborah while she made a cup of tea in the kitchen. She did not frown or smile, or otherwise acknowledge my presence.

After entering the garage, I made a few preparations then climbed inside, and locked the door. Sugar cookie scented candles lit the interior of our travel trailer. Rebecca lay face down on the bed. I heard the

beeping sounds of a game she played on her iPhone. My fiancée wore footie socks, and one of my T-shirts. With the candlelight, I couldn't tell if she wore anything underneath the shirt. Her blonde hair stretched down her back in a long loose braid.

I must have stared too long because she glanced over her shoulder and asked, "Is everything OK?"

"Yes Sweetheart, everything's fine. I was admiring the view, and thinking about how lucky I am."

"You could have asked me—I know just how lucky you are." She turned back to her game. "Andrew told me about this app."

"App? You have apps?"

"Don't be smart. It's called Gummy Drop."

I kicked off my slippers and kneeled on the bed beside her. She kept playing the game. Bleep, bleep. I reached down and lifted the hem of her T-shirt. To my delight, Rebecca forgot her undies.

Rebecca said, "See anything you like?"

I bent down and kissed the middle of her lower back, I used a little tongue. She shivered, and I saw goosebumps rise on her back. I kissed my way down and shifted from kisses to sucking bites across her buttocks. Rebecca moaned. Bleep, bleep, ... bleep. My lips worked back to her ass crack. Knowing she was fresh from her shower, I worked my tongue down.

In my mind, I heard Gold Five saying, "Stay on target."

Rebecca squirmed. This pushed her comfort level! All this talk about degeneracy must have gotten to me. I got closer and brought my fingers into play. Rebecca's head dipped. She sighed, "Ahhh." ... bleep.

"Stay on target."

Without warning, she rolled over, and said, "Stop that!"

"I told you every part of your body would know my touch."

“Not that part.”

“You liked it, though, didn't you?”

She rolled back to her game, and in a prim voice said, “It doesn't matter. I promised Momma there wouldn't be any hanky-panky tonight.”

Interlude: Hanslein Hunting Camp

“Dude, it's fucking creepy out there.” Ronnie stood by one of the front windows looking outside.

Junior walked to the other window and peeked through the curtains. Just trees, nothing looked odd, or out of place.

Dad would have said that Ronnie was crazier than a ferret on catnip. He couldn't keep still. Normally Ronnie is one of the most chill people I know. Now, he prowled through the cabin, rattling the locked doors.

Ronnie asked, “Why are there so many locked doors?”

“I don't know, Dad always keeps them locked. Asking about those doors used to get me a beating.”

“How can you stand it here, Klaus? It's so fucking quiet.”

“Ronnie, you need to calm down. I'm going to take a nap.” Junior went back to his closet-sized room and crashed out.

Ronnie sat in the living room and stared at the broken television. He couldn't sit still. One of the locked doors in the hallway seemed loose. Maybe he could peek inside?

The door didn't fit well in the jamb, and the dead bolt barely kept the door closed. He lifted the knob and pushed against the door frame. The door creaked open. In the dim light, Ronnie made out a pile of trash bags. The air smelled of something familiar, a dank vegetable odor. While Klaus snored in a nearby room. Ronnie walked to the closest bag, the dank scent seemed stronger. With careful fingers, Ronnie

untied the knot and opened the bag. The damp, earthy odor filled his nostrils. He recognized the smell of marijuana. He remembered an empty soda can outside, with a little work, it would function as a pipe. Ronnie reached into the trash bag and removed a smaller plastic bag full of pot.

After Klaus woke, he immediately noticed the pot smoke. What the fuck is Ronnie doing? In the living room, Klaus found Ronnie high as a kite, staring at the wall. "Ronnie! What the fuck? Where did you get the pot?"

"Dude, your dad has a fucking awesome stash."

"Dad doesn't smoke pot."

"Dude, just take a hit."

Klaus took a hit. The soda can pipe heated up fast, but it worked.

Interlude: Kevin's Travel Trailer

Kevin Butcher:

"Kevin," Rebecca said. "I've been thinking, you should help Andrew."

"Why?"

"He's family. If you know his car isn't safe, and if you can help him, you should do it."

Crap, this non-violent, love and forgive stuff didn't seem fair. What good is having someone do you dirty if you can't get back at them? But, had I promised to try and be forgiving, and Rebecca expected me to do it. She kissed me on the cheek and whispered she'd make it worth my while. Now that got my attention, then I shook my head. I kissed her back and told her, "No, I'll do it because it's the right thing." The joy in her eyes lit my soul.

That's how I found myself working on Andrew's van. Andrew has zero mechanical skills. He told me his forte, and he did say, "Forte," lay in supervision. Now I didn't think Andrew could supervise a bottle party in a brothel. But, I don't know, maybe he's a master of dairy farm sanitation.

Rebecca Schmidt:

"Rebecca," Aunt Deborah called out from the kitchen. "You need to see this."

I stepped up beside my aunt and peeked out through the kitchen window. A small sedan had pulled into the driveway, the driver's side door opened and a petite, curvy brunette climbed out. She wore heels, the shortest denim skirt I'd ever seen, and a tight t-shirt with lace sides. I recognized her immediately.

Aunt Deborah smirked as she watched the scene outside. She said, "Now Rebecca, you'll see what kind of man you've given yourself to."

Kevin Butcher:

I heard a car roll into the driveway, but with my head inside the wheel well, I couldn't see it. Andrew stood up as a car door opened and closed. He murmured, "Holy shit!" I leaned back and saw wedge sandals, manicured toes, and legs that went all the way up to a well-remembered denim miniskirt.

It wasn't easy, but I forced my eyes past that, oh so short, miniskirt and the shadowed junction underneath. Kristen still looked as good as ever.