

6. *Truman's Year*

A few weeks after our Labour Day sojourn, the California girls sent us a big envelope with 3 prints of each picture. It was really generous. Many of them were excellent and none of us, I believe, ever regretted that photo shoot. The one with me standing on the back of the horse was a full 8-½" x 11" size, and Lee loved it so much, he had it framed and put up in our bedroom.

When I think back to that, I can't help feeling, all young girls should do at least one naked photo shoot at the time they are at their most lovely and in their most physically perfect state. I would only a little later that year finally be 18, and I believe it was the perfect time for me. Even Jen, whom I had feared might have some second thoughts about our nude pictures, was very enthusiastic. She and Gary had become happy nude living supporters after that week-end. Within a year, they joined a naturist group, and from then on often spent vacations visiting naturist clubs, beaches and facilities around the country.

Other than that, those pictures ended up with an unusual destiny. The fledgling magazine only survived a couple of issues, and then folded. Some kind of press syndication outfit bought whatever assets there were, and that included ours and other pictures. They then sold the copyright to any number of publications world wide on a non-exclusive basis, so they could keep on making money of it. As a result, our naturist pictures would appear and reappear in various unlikely publications, not least 1940s and 1950s pin up magazines and the like, but I cannot recall, that ever caused us any problems.

In June George Marshall, the new Secretary of State since January, outlined the aid plan, which later came to be known as the Marshall Plan. I am of the conviction, it should have been called The Truman Plan, because it was Truman's ideas and concepts, which formed the basis for the framework and substance of the program. Truman, however; realized he would have a hard time getting it approved by the Congress, and that the likelihood of success would increase if it was left in Marshall's hands. Without the Marshall Plan, it is entirely conceivable both France and Italy would have come under communist domination, even more or less by democratic means. All of Western Europe would have ended up looking very different without this aid plan.

The famous ship "EXODUS" with more than 4500 Jewish refugees mainly from Germany arrived in Haifa, where the British refused to permit them to disembark. This was roundly condemned in many parts of the world, and became part of what finally convinced the British to leave Palestine later that year. The ship was forced to return to Hamburg with its passengers in September. Britain's engagement and activities in Palestine post WWII never made any sense to anyone and had the support of no one. It was even thoroughly unpopular in the U.K. itself. It did in fact a great deal of harm, and Britain incurred substantial losses to no benefit of anyone, least Britain itself.

The so called House Committee on Un-American Activities was very active and pursued Hollywood with claims of communist infiltration and subversives in the movie industry. Ronald Reagan, who was president of the Screen Actors Guild, testified before the committee, often then referred to as the HUAC. He stated that the guild was not controlled by leftists, and anti HUAC demonstrations were staged by well known actors.

The food supply situation in Europe was so bad, Truman pleaded with Americans to eat less meat and poultry to make more food available for Europe. The famous Liberty ships, that had carried the bulk of the supplies to the WWII theatres, were now hauling food supplies to nearly every major port in Western Europe. As I write these lines, I can't help wondering how many of the current generations in Western Europe today, know anything about the aid and help Americans provided for many years after the end of WWII. It was unknown in the annals of recorded history.

India and Pakistan attained independence in August, followed by spontaneous, vicious fighting between Moslems and Hindus. Something like 500.000 were believed to have been killed in what could only be considered a genocide. The former colonial power Britain had sought to oversee and direct the independence process, but had failed to anticipate the combustible predicament that existed between the two major religious groups. Britain has usually appeared to be quite self-satisfied with the way it conducted this independence process. A view not shared to any degree elsewhere.

That year Lee had invited our dear friends to be with us for my birthday. It was festive and very enjoyable. I was feted on what everyone thought was my 21st birthday. If they just knew, I thought. I would have loved to tell them, but I couldn't, and in any event, this was something I had to tell my husband before anyone else.

Jen was in high spirits telling us about their new found passion for naturism, and about everything she was reading about the subject. This even extended to literature, and she used the occasion to introduce me to that great American poet and writer Walt Whitman. She gave me some exerts she had typed for me from something he had written in 1892, the year he died. It was taken from a chapter named "A Sun-bathed Nakedness" and it is so joyous and timeless, it could have been written yesterday:

"Never before did I get so close to Nature; never before did she come so close to me... Nature was naked, and I was also... Sweet, sane, still Nakedness in Nature! - ah if Poor, sick, prurient humanity in cities might really know you once more! Is not Nakedness indecent? No, not inherently. It is your thought, your sophistication, your Fear, your respectability, that is indecent. There come moods when these clothes of Ours are not only too irksome to wear, but are themselves indecent."

And Jen left us with another Whitman quote, I love: "Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you."

My studies and my translation work was going very well. It chocked me, how badly we, and indeed most people, tend to eat. The garbage that is consumed and the ill health that follows. No one in those days knew or realized, that canned vegetables and canned fruit is devoid of any nutritional value. No one then, and only a few now, knew that consumption of complex protein in excess of what the body can make use of within the day, is a waste and the body then is obliged to convert excesses of meat, fish, dairy and eggs into fat. The actual amount of complex protein the body can use on a daily basis is surprisingly small. For example, it could be during one day, a couple of eggs with a little ham, a small bowl of plain yogurt, a couple of cheese sandwiches and a small piece of meat for dinner. That is plenty. Everything else should be fresh vegetables, a little rice or potatoes and fruit.

Another thing I remember from that time, was the subject of how to prepare vegetables properly. Nearly everyone in those days cooked their vegetables in water. This is fundamentally wrong. The vegetables end up soggy and completely tasteless, and most of the vital vitamins and minerals stay in the water. Vegetables should never be boiled in water. In fact, the only vegetable I can think of, that may be cooked in water is artichokes, everything else should be sautéed with a little oil or butter or baked. Beetroots are much better, and much more tasty, when they are baked. Eggplant is best baked, and even Brussels Sprouts can be baked.

The big killer in American nutrition is sugar, and on a cumulative basis, one of the deadliest substances of civilization. Food processors put sugar or syrups in everything, because it is cheap and the sweetness is popular and addictive. Worst of all, of course, is soda pop, which in addition provides consumers with assorted undesirable chemicals, and takes the place of what people should drink, water, tea, herbal teas, coffee, even a little wine, and children should certainly drink milk. Even some fruit juices should be avoided, such as orange juice, apple juice, grape juice and pear juice. They all have a very high sugar concentration, and even though this is the naturally occurring sugar from the fruit, it becomes some 3 times as concentrated as it was in the whole fruit. Eat the fruit, don't drink the juice.

Another drink I have serious reservations about is beer. I believe there are in fact a number of reasons to avoid beer, but the 2 most serious problems with beer are not generally known or understood. First of all, beer has a very, very acidic reaction in the human body. That means it leaches minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc and others out of the body, and to a degree stresses the body, which has to control and neutralize this acidity. It has been my observation, heavy lifetime beer drinkers need hip and knee replacements much sooner than anyone else.

The other serious consequence of beer drinking, is the ingestion of hops, the herbal preservative added to beer since at least the last five centuries, and today considered

essential for the very distinctive flavour it adds to the finished product. Hops contain a phytoestrogen called 8-prenylnaringenin, which is more potent than any other phytoestrogens in the human diet. Phytoestrogens enhance the hormone estrogen in the body, and suppresses testosterone. The body then must try to rebalance these hormones, and in the long run, and depending on how much beer is swilled, the body tends to lose out.

Too much estrogen is very undesirable, because it is potentially carcinogenic, with implications for breast and prostate cancers at a minimum. Conversely, the suppression of testosterone is equally serious because this is the hormone most closely associated with cardiovascular health, bone density, heart, liver and brain health, the immune system, strength, vitality, muscular maintenance and the libido in both women and men.

Until such time as beer is offered for sale, with a label that emphatically states: 100% hops free, I suggest not to drink it. And keep in mind, beer can readily be brewed entirely without hops. Any number of other harmless spices and herbs can be used instead. Hops is a 500 year old very bad habit. Let's get rid of it.

I am getting a little ahead of myself here, but these are subjects I feel very strongly about, and something I will have much more to say about later.

At Christmas we were all invited to Lou Ann's as usual. It was always festive and lovely. As usual, I had baked a batch of Renata's cookies, as they called them, and Lee's sister said to me: "Now Christmas will never be the same again without your cookies!"

Lou Ann had an amazing surprise for me. Through the Red Cross, a "K.Ulrich" had been located in Argentina, who apparently had arrived in 1936. That could well be Karin Ulrich, my grandparents good friends, who had lived with us at Grunerhof for several years. Nothing was mentioned about Ernst Ulrich, and I had to wonder if he might have died. I remember, he wasn't very strong, always very prone to colds and flues, but lively and energetic to a fault. An address was provided, and I immediately wrote a long letter to K. Ulrich in the hope it might be Karin.

For Christmas Lou Ann gave us young girls and women new, comely house dresses made right here in K C by Ellen Quinlan's factory, later known as the Nelly Don company. They were attractive in delightful colours and very comfortable. Mine had buttons in front down to below my hips, so you stepped in to it, put your arms into the short sleeves, and then buttoned it up.

Lee liked the dresses as well, but quickly commented: "I think they are way too long. If they could be shortened by at least a foot, they would suit you much better." As said, done. After Christmas, when we were home, I hemmed the dresses up by about a foot, as my husband suggested. I just left it with needles in, so Lee could see if he liked them that

way, but he wanted them even shorter. I actually agreed with him, but that was not late 1940s style. Short hem lines arrived much, much later.

In any event, these dresses were intended to be used at home, so we felt free to do whatever suited us, and that ended up being just above the knees. We both loved the outcome, and I wore them all the time both at home and in the garden, where I always spent a lot of time spring, summer and fall. Later, when Jen and Jania saw my personalized creation, they liked it so much, they also shortened some of their house dresses in the same style.

Jania told me, she had a habit, when not planning to go out, just to wear a dress like that and no underwear. "It feels so much better to me", she said; "and it's no different than wearing a dressing gown, which I never do with underwear", she continued. That led me to try something sexy with my sweet husband. Lee had a routine, when he came home from work of kissing me as if he hadn't seen me for a week. I loved those hot kisses and I always kissed him back with as much ardour. But in addition to that, he nearly always reached under my skirt, while we were kissing, to fondle my buns and he always put his hands inside my panties. Then he would move his hand to my front and fondle me. He did it gently but firmly. I loved that as much as his kisses.

Then, when Jania told me about not wearing underwear at home, the thought came to me to try this out with my husband, to see how he would react. Well, it was almost predictable, as soon as he realized I wasn't wearing anything, he became very excited. He picked me up in his arms, carried me to bed, removed what little I was wearing, and made passionate love to me. Afterwards we had a good laugh about it, and I told him where I had the idea from. "You have got to love that girl for such an idea," he said. From then on, I wore no underwear at home, except of course during my monthly menses.

After a few weeks I received a long letter from Karin Ulrich in Argentina. She was immensely grateful to hear from me. She had assumed, we all had been lost, and she was so happy to learn, that at least I survived. Her husband had died about 6 years ago, and she wrote life in Argentina had been very hard for them. No one had any interest in what they could do, and they had to live from hand to mouth for years. Now, she was teaching German and French to children of German settlers, and living quite comfortably, but also very lonely. From then on, we kept in touch regularly, and I told her about what life had been like since she and Ernst had left Germany.

In December, the US approved \$ 522 million in emergency stop-gap aid for France, Italy and Austria. This was also the time Stalin took control of most of the countries of Eastern Europe, one after the other. Democratic governments were either chased out or killed. The US, which after all had agreed to this modus operandi during Roosevelt's meeting with Stalin in Tehran, could do nothing at this stage. Had Truman been president during Roosevelt's 3rd term, this would not have happened, but hindsight as always is glorious.

Once the British had left Palestine, Jewish refugees and settlers started arriving and fighting between Jews and Arabs intensified. The U.N. had decided to partition Palestine without the consent of the present population, but many of those were in any event fairly recent arrivals themselves from other Arab countries. The whole of the Levant had been a part of Turkey for centuries. Once Turkey lost control after the end of WWI, it became a free for all region, which Jews and Israelis obviously had at least as much right to, as anyone else. It has always seemed to me, this is a point Israelis need to make much more forcefully. Many years later, the Palestinians rallied around a charismatic leader, who was not "Palestinian". In fact he was an Egyptian, like so many others claiming prior rights to the land.

Very courageously, Truman was the first to recognize Israel May 15, 1948, just 11 minutes after Israel's proclamation of independence, and against strenuous resistance from the Secretary of State George Marshall. To my way of thinking, Marshall's efforts to prevent the US from recognizing Israel were not reasonable, and left an impression of simple anti-Semitism. Stalin followed suit 3 days later as did many other countries.

Essentially all of Israel's neighbours went to war against the new state, but only for a few weeks. Armistice was agreed and signed in June.

Already early in 1948, Stalin had started to make difficulties for the transport of supplies to West Berlin, even though he himself had signed the accords stipulating that a transport corridor was to be maintained as long as the Berlin status quo existed. By June the Russians closed all the existing corridors, railways, roads and canal traffic. This could very readily have led to open war in Germany between the US and Russia, but the US solved the problem magnificently. The US commander in Berlin, General Clay had already started to ship supplies in by air, and at the end of June Truman enacted the full-scale Berlin Airlift. Stalin had been outmanoeuvred by the wily Truman. Lee and I loved it. We were news junkies and we followed all of these events very closely.

By June the political parties nominated their candidates for the November election. The Republicans re-nominated their candidate from the 1944 election Thomas E. Dewey, the governor of New York state, and all the major media predicted he would win hands down. Not one paper or magazine at the time saw any hope for Truman and not much for the Democratic party either.

Truman faced formidable odds against re-election in November 1948. His popularity and approval rating were both in poor shape, but much worse was the outright disloyalty and duplicity of the old New Dealers in the Democratic party as well as those identified as "Eastern Liberals", as well as another potential splinter group calling itself Americans for Democratic Action, who all joined together in a major effort to try draft General D. D. Eisenhower as the party's presidential candidate. Two of Roosevelt's sons were among the leaders of this scheme. The way they conducted themselves was no credit to

their family or the memory of their father.

Truman took it all with astonishing patience and equanimity. He called the Eisenhower drafters “double-crossers all” adding: “But they will get nowhere - a double dealer never does”. The entire draft concept was idiotic, because no one had the slightest idea what party, if any, Eisenhower supported, and he repeatedly stated, that he was not, and would not be a candidate.

That was not all Truman had to contend with by any means. Two splinter parties emerged from the Democratic party, and siphoned off support, and as well made any re-election seem even more improbable. One of the splinter groups was born right at the convention and consisted of reactionary southerners, who were opposed to Truman’s civil rights agenda, and the convention’s solid support for strong and radical laws dealing with segregation and outright racism.

These southerners called their splinter party initially States’ Rights Democrats, and after their convention, they were known as Dixiecrats. Practically their only reason for existence, was to oppose Truman’s civil rights positions, and as such Truman was not unduly concerned. He knew, they would take a small percentage of the vote, but their extreme segregationist views would limit their impact.

The second splinter group was Henry Wallace’s Progressive Citizens of America, and there was much to admire about them. They held a huge convention and their proportion of women, blacks and youth far exceeded the other parties. From the outset, they were saddled with a close association with communists and very left wing public figures, and Wallace categorically refused to repudiate his communist support. That, in all likelihood doomed their campaign. They came to be seen as Stalinist supporters and doing Russia’s bidding, and very few of the electorate could support that.

At the convention Truman made a fiery speech attacking the Republican dominated Congress and the Republican party, which was very well received and did much to reunite the party. He also took the highly political step of recalling congress, demanding pending laws be enacted. He knew full well, the Republican controlled Congress would do nothing, and that suited Truman fine, because it would under score the two wasted years since the midterm election in 1946, when the Republicans got control of Congress.

From the outset of Truman’s re-election campaign, he relentlessly attacked the Republican controlled 80th Congress as the “Do Nothing Congress”, which systematically had obstructed his legislative program, and mainly just passed bills favouring big business, and as Truman pointed out the privileged few. Through the campaign, Truman ignored the other presidential candidates and reserved his efforts to focus on the Republican party and the obstructionist Congress. There was nothing scientific about this strategy. It wasn’t based on opinion surveys to determine what the electorate might like to hear about. It was simply Truman’s gut feeling, and it connected brilliantly with the people.

There was not one major newspaper or media group in the country, who favoured Truman's re-election, and in a sense, he ran against them as well. Among the worst was the Time-Life magazines, that wrote about the election as if they had been paid by the Republican party. This came as no great surprise, since the owner of these magazines, Henry Luce and his wife Clare Boothe Luce, both were Republican supporters, and she even campaigned for Dewey.

There wasn't one commentator in the country, not one of the major syndicated columnists or anyone else for that matter, who gave Truman a chance. The polling organizations, mainly Gallup in those days, all maintained it would be a hands down victory for the Republican candidate and for the party as well.

My dear husband and I followed this on a daily basis, and Lee said to me: "Reading the papers, and the magazines, listening to the news and the commentators, I can't help getting the feeling, the Republicans, their backers and a few handfuls of the wealthiest people in the country, are patronizing us. It's as if, we are being told in a condescending way, how we should think, what our positions should be, and certainly how we should vote."

I am convinced Lee was absolutely right about this observation, and I am sure much of the electorate felt the same way, particularly as the campaign went on. There was a certain arrogance and conceit about the Republican stance, and particularly all their followers and the big media cartels, which Lee and I often talked about. Truman on the other hand, was humble and unpretentious to a fault. He connected with all of us common people, because he was one of us, and never pretended to be anything else.

The 1948 presidential campaign was also a lesson in how little original thought and independent analysis, existed in USA at that time. Journalists and commentators repeated the same babble and twaddle ad nauseam . They copied each other endlessly. It was as if one template commentary had been prepared well before the campaign actually got under way, and then everyone merely copied, embellished and elaborated the same story. All I can say is, the electorate was not impressed.

Lee and I felt Truman and the Democratic party had been very fortunate, when Senator Alben Barkley had offered himself for the Vice Presidential candidate and was nominated. He was very well liked and respected, and like Truman, he was unpretentious and down to earth. He connected with the common people in much the same way.

Campaigning in those days was still done mostly by train, and Truman made the most of it. He had already made one so called "non-political" tour by train across the country for about 2 weeks, with numerous stops, through 18 states and he delivered more than 70 speeches along the way. It was pure and simple campaigning, but it was before the nominating conventions, and before the actual election campaign got under way. As such, Truman was able and entitled to travel as he pleased, and he made the most of it.

The Republicans were disgusted, but it was in fact a very astute move by Truman. It prepared the electorate for what was to come, but perhaps even more importantly, it gave Truman the opportunity to gauge the people's feelings for his message, and that part was very encouraging. On his return to Washington, Truman was in high and fighting spirits.

Once the real campaign got under way, Truman had already had a very successful trial run. In that regard, it came as no great surprise to Lee and I, that Truman attracted much bigger and more enthusiastic crowds than the Republican candidate, but the ever ignorant reporters and commentators could only see, what they called "curious onlookers", who just wanted the opportunity to see the president. Oh well, as always, people see what they want to see. Those were the reporters and wishful thinkers of the 1948 campaign.

During the campaign, Truman made 140 stops and he made close to 150 speeches. By his own estimate, he shook the hands of at least 30,000 people. His energy and determination inspired everybody in the party. On the election day, Truman and the Democratic party had to fend off the 2 splinter parties as well as the formidable Republican machine. In that sense some of the commentary in the press was understandable. The odds on the election day were down to 4 for Dewey and 1 for Truman. One factor, which seemed to escape the pundits, was the Berlin crisis and how competently Truman and the administration had managed this challenge. The menace of Stalin no doubt played some part in Truman's success.

At the time of the campaign Truman was 64, but in excellent health and the campaign, which exhausted everybody else, only seemed to energize Truman. But he was not alone. Alben Barkley, the vice presidential candidate was 71. He flew all over the country in a chartered plane some 150,000 miles, and making as many as 250 speeches. Truman could not have asked for a more loyal and supportive vice president. Lee and I loved Alben Barkley, and we were convinced, he contributed very substantially to their victory.

Lou Ann had invited us all for a nice party the day of the election. We had hoped there would have been a final result by midnight, but that was not to be; however, at that hour Truman was ahead by about 1.2 million votes. It looked very promising. Lee and I went to bed. We had had a long day and we were tired.

Lou Ann stayed up, bless her heart and listened to the radio. At breakfast, she told us, by somewhere around 4 in the morning, Truman was ahead by 2 million votes. By then, she couldn't see how Dewey possibly could overcome that lead, and of course he never did. It was past 10 in the morning before Dewey finally had to concede. I thought it would have been more impressive if he had done so a little sooner, but it didn't matter. We were all very happy and celebrated.

To this date, and as I am writing these lines, this is the greatest electoral victory ever won by any presidential candidate in the US. To me, it was a demonstration of democracy executed in absolute perfection, which all future candidates for that office, would be well advised to study and emulate. Not only had Truman won a solid victory himself, but he had

carried the party with him, as the Democrats regained control of Congress. It was stunning, unprecedented and magnificent.

To the credit of the Republican party, I want to mention, there was never any attempt on their part to “buy the election” by outspending the other parties or candidates. In that respect, sad to say, US political life seems to have been a great deal more democratic and principled in 1948, than is the case today.

About a month before the election date, I had asked Lee if we shouldn't try to contribute a little to the Democrats. It wouldn't be much, because we didn't have much money, but we could probably scrape a few \$ together. Lee thought about it for a while, and said: “We never did that, but perhaps we should, at least for this election;” and so we did. Between us we got \$ 50 together and sent to the Democratic party.

In the months after the election a number of important events occurred internationally. Of particular interest to me, the Berlin Airlift had been so successful, Stalin gave up and ended the blockade around the middle of May. Truman's patience, perseverance and firmness in dealing with this challenge, demonstrated to the democratic world, how to deal with the Russians. The firm, steadfast response, is the only thing they understand.

Also, of great interest to me, the last vestiges of the Morgenthau-Roosevelt plans for post WWII Germany, were eliminated. The Western Allies agreed in May on the establishment of the new German Federated Republic, in which Germans would elect their own government and rebuild the country. Although, by 1949 I was very far removed from Germany physically as much as emotionally, I could not help feeling very thankful for this event. It was for me like, we Germans, were going to be considered civilized human beings again.

Early in December 1947, George Marshall informed Truman, he wished to retire. He was to undergo an operation to remove a diseased kidney, and did not feel he should remain in office. Truman chose the deputy Dean Acheson as the new Secretary of State. This was announced in early January.

Acheson's first important assignment in the new administration, was the creation of NATO, then simply called the North Atlantic Treaty, in which the US and Canada and ten Western European countries joined in a mutual defence alliance. When I consider how important NATO became and how durable this alliance has proved to be, I believe a great deal of credit is due to the new Secretary of State.

In the weeks after my birthday, I started to become a bit obsessed with somehow finding a way to tell Lee about my age, my real age. I was apprehensive about it, but perhaps I should not have been. It wouldn't change me, and how he knew me, but he could certainly hold it against me, that I had not told him the truth from the day we met. It might also upset him to consider the fact, I was only 15 when we got married, but that was not so critical in the 1940s, when young people often married very young.

For some reason, thinking about my own chronology, made me reflect on what I considered my intimate life course, and I had to wonder, how I had been able to respond to my husband sexually, like a grown woman. The answer, of course, was the Russian, and all that he did to me and with me. He taught me, literally, to learn how to perform sexually, and fully to his satisfaction, or else. I shuddered to think back to the approximately 5 months he possessed and controlled me, and how I had complied to save myself from a destiny infinitely worse.

If I had not been sexually trained and disciplined by the Russian during that first half of 1945, I might not have been so much fun for my young husband. By the age of 15-½ I had in reality become an experienced and very qualified sex worker, and that I now realized may have accounted for Lee accepting my believed age of 18 without questioning me in more detail, or wondering about other aspects of my personality.

I had to figure out how to approach this touchy subject with Lee. It was driving me crazy. I thought about the weekend when I went for a swim at midnight and Lee was watching me from the beach. He had made a comment, something like I looked like a school girl, because I was as happy and energetic as a kid. Perhaps I should try mention something about that.

Finally, one Saturday morning, while we were still in bed and I was gently caressing my husband, I said to him: "Lee tell me, how would you react, if I was to tell you, that I am a little older than I'm supposed to be?" He looked at me quizzically, as if thinking: "Is this some new Renata game, or what?" Then he thought about it for a minute, before he answered: "You don't look a day older, than the age I know of, so I don't see how that could happen. "I know," I said: "It is not serious in that sense, just a little mind game."

So far, Lee was no help, because he was always very logical. "So Lee, please play this little game with me; how would you react if I turned out to be a little older, than I am assumed to be?" "Like a year or two?" he said. "Yes, something like that" I responded. "That obviously would make no real difference to me. You would still be the same sexy kid I met that memorable day in Berlin, and you would still make love like an angel as you do now. In the end, it would make no difference to me."

I had to laugh. That was such a typical Lee Prentice response and it was sweet and loving. I forgot about our little mind game for now, and instead made love to my husband. At least, I felt, the age issue had been broached, and I would follow it up soon. So, over our long, leisurely Saturday breakfast, I pursued the subject again: "Now, Lee tell me, if I was to tell you, I might be somewhat younger, than I am supposed to be. How would you feel about that?" He looked at me and laughed: "The same applies, as I said before. It doesn't change

you. I love you either way, but if you were to get younger by a year or two, how could I object to that ?”

“How about 3 years,” I said. “You would have to be kidding”; he said, somehow suddenly realizing, that perhaps I wasn’t kidding, that it in fact might be true. “3 years,” he repeated. By now he was serious, as if contemplating any possible repercussions. “That would mean, I was making love with a 15 year old girl, when we got married both here and in Berlin. Was I ?” he asked.

At that point, I got up and went and sat on Lee’s lap, putting my arms around his neck. I had tears in my eyes, and I asked him to forgive me. I told him, after my family had been murdered by the Russians, everyone started to assume that I in fact was 18 years old, and I found it easier just to go along with that, not least because I assumed an 18 year old might be taken more seriously, than a 15 year old, not least in the dire straits we were in.

Lee hugged me and kissed me, then he smiled: “I know, life with you will never be boring. I understand your predicament. I might well have done something similar, had I been in your place. Another thing is, had I known you were only 15, I would not have dared to make love with you, when we met in Berlin, and I was aching for you, from the moment I saw you! And you sure didn’t disappoint. Making love with you that first night together, was like hearing the angels sing, and it still is.”

What a husband I had. I kissed him and I cried tears of joy. I said to him: Lee, you are the sweetest, kindest man I have ever known. I have had this awful feeling of guilt all these years, because I had never told you, I was in fact born in 1929. Now you know, what a little knave I have been.” He looked at me, with his usual kind and bemused smile, and said: “Now, that I know everything, I’m in fact very happy you did what you did, because otherwise, I do not think we could have gotten married. I cannot imagine, Reverend Jennings would have married a 15 year old girl. That little harmless scam, has in the end enriched my life beyond anything I hoped for. Thank God you did it Renata.”

It was very emotional for both of us, obviously for me in particular. Lee and I agreed, this would be a strict secret between the two of us. As he said: “As long as no one knows, no harm is done. It’s like a minor piece of red tape, which we dealt with expeditiously. In the greater scheme of life, that was in reality the appropriate solution. You and I were in love, when we got married. That’s all that really matters. We were both like made for each other. It would have been inconceivable, that you and I should not have been together, and you solved that problem in advance, just by adding a few years to your age, amazing.”

I loved the way Lee interpreted the outcome of my not so subtle deceit. I had not fully thought all the implications through, and I had to agree with him, it had been nearly a tailor made solution for him and I.

I could not help asking him, if he ever had any inkling, that there might be some questions about my age. He thought about that for a few minutes, and finally said: “No, not that I was

ever aware of. In fact, I have always been impressed with your maturity and your level of life experience, compared to girls your age here. In some respects, I could even have wondered, if you were older, but I never did. When we made love the first time, to me you looked and felt like an 18 year old girl, and nothing ever caused me to question your age.”

“Not even that time, we went for our midnight swim, and you were watching me from the beach. At that time you said I was playing in the water like a school kid; remember ?” I asked him. He smiled and said: “No, that was just how you looked at the moment. There were no other thoughts in my mind at the time.” That laid the subject to rest, but from then on, Lee would on occasions tease me a little with comments like: “My beautiful kid wife” or my “Adorable child bride”. This was always in strict privacy, and how could I object to such endearing words.

I don’t know if it was my imagination, or there was some substance to it, but from then on, Lee at times seemed to treat me more gently or attentively. Not that he was ever anything but gentle, but for example, when we made love, he could get very energetic at times. I had been conditioned to that, before I met Lee, and I always responded to it just as vigorously. From then on, he seemed to move a little more slowly, a little more gently, and it was certainly just as enjoyable.

Late that winter on a Friday night, we were together with our 4 friends, and Jack had mentioned to Lee, he had to go away for a couple of weeks. Lee suggested to me, to invite Jania to stay with us for company, if she liked. I loved that idea. Even though she was about ten years older than my real age, we were already close. She was in a way a bit like an older sister to me by then, and I convinced her to come. We did in fact have 2 extra bedrooms, so it was not as if we lacked space.

Monday after work, Lee picked her up after work and that night I had made Hungarian spicy sausages for supper, with onion and potato salad, as well as sautéed collard greens. Jania loved it, and said to me: “I hope you didn’t go to a lot of trouble to cook those nice sausages just for me.” “No,” I said, “We love those sausages and eat them every few weeks, whenever we can find them. We also like Hungarian Goulash and make it often. In my childhood home we cooked a lot with Hungarian paprika, so I have been fond of this kind of food most of my life.”

At dinner, Jania told us her studies were going well, and she expected to graduate that coming June. She was going to try find a position as the legal officer for one of the larger companies in KC, and if that did not work out, she thought seriously about opening her own legal office specializing in family law, as well as property, insurance and real estate law. It sounded like this girl was really going to go places, and we were impressed and supportive.

In the mornings she got a lift with Lee, who was able to drop her off without going out of his way, and she would make her own way back early or mid afternoon according to her

schedule. My school was within half an hour's brisk walk, and that suited me well. Since I also mainly got back by mid afternoon, Jania and I would have plenty of opportunity for some good girl to girl talk; something I missed and felt a need for.

Already on that first afternoon, we had about 3 hours before Lee came home, and I started to tell Jania the full story of what happened to me during the first half of 1945. I made her promise never to relate, what I told her, to anyone, not even to Jack, and she promised me that. She listened very attentively and very sympathetically. At one point, she put her arm around my shoulders and hugged me.

I felt a need to tell her details, I had never even told Lee, because I was not comfortable to tell him that, but I felt I could unburden the memories of these events to another girl, specifically Jania, whose life experience carried some resemblance to mine. She was very understanding and comforting. I told her: "I feel this need to relieve myself of the memory of some of these events, because from time to time, it bothers me. There are times, when the way I feel about myself, is as if I was still a Russian sex slave. I know it's irrational, and I usually manage to reason myself out of it, but I wonder if I will ever be able to get rid of it entirely."

We were sitting at the kitchen table, and Jania took my hands in hers and said: "Renata, you have to work on your self-respect. You, single handed, accomplished something no one else was able to do. You alone managed to survive that massacre on the highway, and that was breathtaking and heroic. Then you went on to endure the ordeal with the Russians for upwards of half a year. I know it was demeaning and degrading, and that it left you with some scars, but you are truly a survivor, if I ever knew one. Everyone who knows you, respects you and admires you. Now, you must do so yourself!"

That was as loving and caring a pep talk, as I ever heard, and I thanked her. I said: "With your kind suggestion, I am sure I will learn more self-respect, even if it is going to take some time." That simple and sensible suggestion Jania made that afternoon, was to help me immeasurably for years to come. Whenever it should happen, thoughts and feelings of inadequacy would threaten my sense of self-worth, and particularly when it might occur, that I for unexplained reasons could feel like a whorish little Russian sex slave, Jania's wise words would come to me, and help me snap out of these moods. Years later, I told her how tremendously helpful her self-respect counsel had been for me, and how happy I was to have had the opportunity to talk with her about all that happened to me in 1945.

Much, much later in life, I became interested and involved in suicide prevention among teenagers, an area I felt to be sorely neglected, and I regret to say, so remaining to this date. My approach to this vital subject, was entirely based on Jania's wise observations about self-respect. A teenager who commits suicide, is all too often a teenager without self-respect, and that in particular applies to girls. Self-respect can be taught, like Jania did for me. As often, I am getting way ahead of myself here, but I can't help occasionally putting subjects in perspective.

Later in the week, when we had more time together, Jania told me a lot more about her life and her dealings with men. I think she did that also to help me understand that I was not by any means entirely alone in having had to endure use and abuse by a man or men.

I do not remember word for word, what she told me, but I will quote it as I recall the details; that was what she told me: “When I finished high school I was 16, and my family suggested I might like to consider spending a year in that, which in those days was called domestic service. Ideally, it should be on a large farm with a large household, where you could take part in all the activities. I know you had much of the same in Germany, they had it in Scandinavia and probably elsewhere. Today, that does not exist any more as far as I know. The closest you might get to it, is something like au pair girls, who spend a year looking after children in a family in a foreign country, so they can learn the language and perhaps something about child care.”

“So I was sent to a large country estate, where we were about 4 young girls doing domestic service. We were housed in a separate wing, with fairly rustic and simple furnishings, a common shower and bathroom, two beds to a room on the second floor and very little furniture. In the same wing were also housed several of the maids and kitchen helpers, as well as about half a dozen young guys, who worked in the fields and with all the farm animals“

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“There was a certain roughness about the household. The couple who owned and operated the estate cared very little about our welfare and needs. We were well fed and could eat as much as we liked and we were given a place to sleep. That was about it. As far as they were concerned, we were there to work. Whatever else we might need, we would have to take care of ourselves. That is kind of rough, when you have lived all your life up to that time in the nest and security of your family, but I thought it would be O.K., I would survive and I might learn something useful.”

“The girl who was to be my room mate, arrived the next day. She was pretty in a strangely naïve way. She had a beautiful figure and thick flaxen coloured hair in long natural curls. When I first saw her, I thought she would have had her pick of boys and men, but that turned out not to be the case. She was 17 and an only child. She seemed to have led a very sheltered life, and I really wondered, if this was a suitable place for her.”

“At 16, I was very interested in boys. I had been playing intimately with boys for years, but I had not yet gone all the way. I had been kissed at length, petted and I had done the same to

boys. My room mate on the other hand, had surprisingly little interest in boys, intimacies and anything that could follow from that. It is natural for teenage girls to talk about boys and making love, when they are alone together, and I asked my room mate about her experiences. She had none. If she had ever been kissed, it seemed to have been something entirely platonic, and she certainly had never explored anything physical with any boy.”

“Other than that, she was very happy and friendly and quite sociable. We both made friends with all the others, and the field boys showed us lots of interest. They were rough hewn, but not bad looking. Finesse, tact and sensitivity did not appear to be part of their vocabulary. We soon discovered, some of the regular maids and the field boys partied at night. That extended to staying overnight, and we would often see one of those girls coming out of the boys rooms in the morning, when we got up.”

“One evening, during the first week we were there, my room mate and I went to take a shower. There were 2 shower faucets in a kind of a corridor open at both ends and with tiles on the walls. I don’t think we had been in the shower more than 5 minutes, when two of the boys showed up in the bathroom. As soon as they saw us, they promptly got undressed and joined us. Within minutes, they both had erections, and almost seemed to take it for granted, we would play with them. Of course, it didn’t really chock me. I had seen boys in that state many times, but my room mate was horrified“.

“We ran out of there clutching our towels and clothes, not even bothering to get dressed. When we saw those two boys at breakfast, they were surly and not very friendly, and they had told everybody else about our flight from the bathroom. Some of the maids made faces at us, and said something like: “You think you are too good for our boys ?”. That was the milieu we had to contend with. There was not going to be any escape from that as far as I could see“.

“It was not very long, a few weeks at most, before the other two outside girls, that had arrived with us, started to party with the boys. They did it this way, that a boy would come to their room and stay there with one of the girls, while the other girl would go and join his room mate. The girls room was next to ours and the walls were very thin. We could hear everything that was going on, and they were both active and energetic, carrying on until late.”

“My room mate was so innocent and naïve, she did not even know or understand what was going on in the next room. “They are copulating, you know having sex, screwing if you prefer,” I told her. She didn’t even know the last term, but she did understand the other two. She was shocked literally. It was as if, she found it very hard to understand how they could do that. It was as if she thought only married couples could engage in lovemaking.”

“For my own part, I was affected by what was going on. I felt, I would have liked to be in that girls place with a lusty young buck like that. I thought, I would not be able to resist it, if an opportunity arose. Within a couple of days, at dinner, one of the boys who had joined

us in the showers, started to talk to me, and a little less indelicate than the last time we encountered him.”

“You want to party with me tonight ?,” he asked. “I have the room to myself. My room mate is away,” he continued. “And what would we do ?” I responded. “You know, make out, make each other happy,” he replied. “And how would I not get pregnant, partying with you?” I said smiling. “I have rubbers, we all do,” he assured me. They all called condoms for rubbers in those days. “Show me,” I said, and he did. He had a couple in his shirt pocket. “What time?” I said. I had made up my mind, if you can’t beat them, join them. “Anytime after eight,” he said. I smiled and left him guessing, but I was going to go. I loved boys and men, and I could not remain in this place without being part of all that was going on.

I told my room mate, and she was essentially disbelieving. “I need it,” I told her. “Everybody else is making out and enjoying themselves. I am going to also,” I went on. I got undressed and put on my usual simple, light cotton night shirt, and nothing else. That was how I went looking for the boy’s room. He was sitting on his bed reading some little magazine, and he was quite naked. He was very happy to see me, and immediately stood up, and put his arms around me. We kissed eagerly, and he put his hands on my nightdress and lifted it over my head. Oh it was nice to feel his body against mine.

I had been a sucker for the touch of boys since I was young. The feeling of a boy’s hands on me was the most seductive sensation I knew. It could be on my arm, my back, my hips, anywhere. Just that touch, for me was lovely, and now I was being touched all over my body. It even made me wonder why I had waited. I could have done this several times within the last couple of years. I told the boy, this was my first time and to be gentle, and he was.

In fact, we remained standing and caressed each other for quite a while. The boy also licked and kissed my breasts, and of course I stroked him. I told him when I was ready and he put the condom on. He told me it would hurt for one minute only, and he was right. Within minutes, it was pure pleasure for me, the best I had ever felt and experienced in my life. He was 19 years old, and already quite experienced. He would stop for a minute and caress me some more, then carry on in other positions. I think we did it for an hour that first time for me, and it was pure bliss.

Then I slept with him, and he woke me up early, so we could do it again. Then together, we went down and showered before anyone else came. By the time we parted that morning, I was in love with him, or at least with his body. Some of the other girls had heard about my visit to the boys rooms, and they said to me: “We know why you are grinning from ear to ear.” I didn’t mind. Over the breakfast, we both smiled happily.

My room mate seemed to have a weird and very unrealistic view of how relations should be and should unfold between girls and boys. She could not seem to muster even the slightest sexual interest. She either registered complete indifference or distaste when I told her about the joys of making love. If at least she had had lesbian tendencies, I would be able to understand it, but that was not the case. When 2 girls share a small room, you will soon know if either is bi-sexual or lesbian, and she was not.

Now, if she had been a really plain Jane, or just skin and bone, perhaps that could have explained something, but she was not. The girl was gorgeous, full breasts and beautiful round hips, a willowy waist and lovely legs, gorgeous thick hair and a pretty face; but apparently no real sexual feelings. I have since heard of such cases, but I believe, fortunately, they are very rare.

I was starting to be concerned for her, because one of the field boys in particular, was seriously smitten with my room mate, and he was said never to take no for an answer. She ignored him. He was in fact perhaps the best looking of the boys, but he was also rather full of himself, and seemed to think, he was something like a gift to girls and women.

A few weeks after that, the couple who owned the estate were away, and there was some partying and drinking at dinner time. Perhaps just about everybody got a little inebriated, but I do not recall anyone being really drunk. There were as well a few visitors, two young guys and at least one girl. I was spending the night with another boy, and I was oblivious to what else was going on.

On that night, the boy who wanted badly to get close to my room mate, really went after her, and he and others insisted she drink with them, which she did, but not very much I think. In any event, he could not get her interested, and everyone seemed to have gone to the bedrooms. Later that evening, he and two other boys walked into our room and raped her. There were no locks on the doors, and no way of preventing anyone from entering.

I knew nothing of what had happened, before I returned to our room in the early morning hours. There was the poor girl still lying uncovered in a foetal position all dirty and still with a bit of dried blood on her thighs. Without waiting to hear the details of what happened, I got her on her feet, put a night dress on her, and helped her down to the showers. There I washed her gently and thoroughly, and helped her dry herself, before I walked her back to the room.

At that point, she started to come alive again. She thanked me so much for helping and supporting her, and then went on to relate, what had happened. She was asleep, when they walked in, and only fully woke up, after they closed the door behind them. They pulled the covers off her, and started to interfere with her. Initially, they did not tell her anything, but pulled her nightdress off and touched her all over her body. She told me she screamed and told them to get out, but they ignored her.

Since they were 3 strong guys, she could not defend herself, and they did whatever they wanted. They licked her all over, and even slobbered over her vulva, but certainly did not in any way get anything from her other than fear and disgust. One of them told her, they had come to show her how to have normal relations with boys, and that it was for her own good! Two of them held her legs, while a third raped her. Then they took turns.

She thought they stayed for as much as a couple of hours, but she couldn't be sure, and she told me they kept using her repeatedly. They did not use condoms at all and I was covered with their filth, she said. When they left, one of them said something to the effect, they had done her a favour.

Considering what she had been through, she took it very stoically. She was not going to report it to anyone and she didn't want it to be known, what happened to her. She asked me to keep it confidential, which I promised. A few weeks later she left, and I knew that was the best for her. I had become fond of her, and told her I would like to keep in touch. She readily agreed to that.

I never did hear from her again, and I had no opportunities to contact her, but much to my surprise, I was to discover, one of my uncles in fact knew her family very well. From then on, my uncle would tell me whatever he learned about my old room mate and her family. After we moved to USA, my uncle would still occasionally mention them in letters, and I learned from him, that she finally got married. Apparently, she had several children, but then left the husband, seemingly as soon as she had had the children she wanted. That was the last I heard of her.

Jania said: "I wanted to tell you that story, because I feel the potential for the use and abuse of girls and women, is universal. Certainly, what you experienced, and what the Russians did throughout East Europe exceeds all other instances of mistreatment and abuse of our gender. One factor, I believe, could at some time in the future make a difference, and that is feminine solidarity. Our tendency is to be subservient to men first of all, and then to worry about the unity and mutual support of women much, much later."

"So true," I said, "So very true." Jania then went on, in a much lighter vein, to tell me some more of her "life with men" as she called it. That, which now a days is referred to as sex work, or paid-for-dating." It came about the first year I started university. A certain professor, who was not one of my lecturers, asked me if I would mind dropping by his office. He had some kind of proposition, he wanted to offer me.

He was a fairly distinguished looking, middle aged man, rather tall and slim. I ran into him quite often, and he had a few times made a point of being friendly and chit-chatty. I could be quite bold at that age, and it appealed to me, to go to his private office to hear what he had to say. He told me he had been divorced a few years and that he was somewhat lonely. He was looking for a girl to spend one night with him every week, for which he would pay well.

I guess I was never a shrinking violet, or I might have run out of his office at once. As it was, I was surprised, but not displeased. After all, he must have been finding me attractive, to suggest such a thing, and at that very particular time, I could well do with a little intimacy, with a good looking man, who offered to pay me on top of it. So I asked, which day he had in mind, and that made him very happy, because if I asked that, I would have had to be considering his proposal.

Anyway, he told me Friday, but it could in fact be any day that suited me. He lived in a small cozy penthouse, in a slightly older building downtown, within walking distance of the university. We talked some more, and I became more and more comfortable with the idea. Last but not least, and quite bluntly, I told him, there could be no intimacy with me, unless condoms were involved.

A little grudgingly, I thought, he conceded that, but accepted it. That was after all the only fairly reliable form of birth control available. We talked a little more, and I became more and more comfortable with the idea. He gave me his address and suggested I come around 4 - 5 P M if that suited me. Our first date was to be the 2nd Friday after our meeting, because I needed time to prepare my family somehow. The professor became “a girlfriend” I was going to spend some time with on Fridays / Saturdays. My family was very preoccupied, with day to day problems just to survive, and paid little attention.

On the appointed day, I made my way downtown carrying with me a change of underwear and my toothbrush and of course some school books, but nothing else. I had met my new professor friend walking outside the university a few days before. He was very happy and told me, we were going to have fun. That had kind of dispelled any doubts I might have had, and I actually looked forward to the night as well.

He received me with open arms and kissed me on both cheeks. Then showed me around his apartment. It had a cozy living room, 2 bedrooms, a small kitchen and a reasonably spacious bathroom. Everything was neat and tidy and he told me, he had a cleaning lady who came a couple of times a week, did laundry, cleaned and tidied. The walls in the living room were covered with bookshelves and books, some of which I later made a happy acquaintance with. I liked all I saw, and felt comfortable and at ease.

The professor cooked his own food, and enjoyed doing it. That night, he had prepared a kind of stuffed, roasted pork loin, with fresh parsley between the slices. To be really good, he told me, it had to roast slowly for a few hours. It was done in an open pan in the oven, and fresh chunks of beetroot, carrots and potatoes had soaked in the sauce and cooked along with the meat. It smelled delicious and tasted wonderful. He told me there was also a lot of fresh garlic mixed in the stuffing and the roast was dusted thoroughly with paprika. I was very impressed.

We drank a lovely cool white wine with the dinner, and he kept my glass nicely filled all through the meal. After dinner, we put everything away, and the left over food in the fridge. Then we sat down on a very comfortable couch in the living room and drank an after dinner aperitif. I think it might have been St. Raphael, or something similar. I enjoyed it. Our life in USA had been difficult and we were always short of money, so this was quite luxurious for me, and I really appreciated it all.

After we had had a couple of glasses of the aperitif, he asked me: “You are comfortable ?, you are feeling good ?, you are happy ?”, and I assured him I was very happy and contented. We were sitting close together, and he put his arms around my shoulders and back and kissed me lustily, licking my lips and tongue. It was a little sudden, but not unexpected, and it wasn’t long before I responded with as much ardour and even affection.

Before my professor friend had made me this surprising proposition, I had never been involved with guys more than 2-3 years older than me. It had never really occurred to me, I could attract and make love with a man or men my own father’s age. Now I was discovering a whole new world of love and lust and emotional enrichment. I know that may sound a little lavish, but that was how I felt that night. I even worried, I might fall in love with this man.

We kissed and caressed and touched each others bodies without hesitation, but of course still fully dressed, and it became obvious, we were both ready to make love. Then he made a funny suggestion. He asked me, if I would like to take a hot shower with him and then go to bed. I really liked that idea. It wasn’t something I would have dreamt up by myself, but I was all for it. It would give us the opportunity to explore each other naked, before going to bed.

So, with our arms around each other and still kissing, we went into the bedroom and got undressed as fast as we could. I noticed, he had a nice manly body smell, and I enjoyed it when he touched my bare body. We kissed again and felt our bodies against each other. I enjoyed every minute of it. I had been without a boyfriend for about 3 years and I really needed this.

We managed to get ourselves in the shower, where we proceeded to soap each other gently and affectionately for a while. Then we somehow succeeded to dry each other with nice plush towels, the likes I had never seen before. Finally we got in bed. For some time, we just knelt facing each other kissing and cuddling until neither of us could wait any longer. My good professor had condoms waiting on the night table, as he promised, and we had a wonderful time together. He was warm and tender, and he knew lots of things, that was new to me. I learned many nice moves from him starting that night.

I don’t think it was much more than 8.00 in the evening, when we went to bed, but we made good use of the time, and kept playing around, also conversing until well past midnight.

Then I slept better than I had done in years. I was the first to wake up, and I just stayed very quiet looking at my professor lover, and thought about all that had happened. I was very contented and happy, and I knew, from then on, I was going to be very open minded towards older men. When he woke up, we ended up making love again.

I'm sure he would have been happy to keep me all weekend, I think he said as much, but I begged out of that. I told him my mother worked Saturdays and Sundays and I did both shopping and cooking, which in fact was true. Anyway, I told him, I can't wait for next Friday. That made him very happy. Then he made a nice breakfast, with fresh rolls, rosehip jam, eggs, coffee and other good things.

I left just after noon, and he gave me even more money than we had agreed to. He kissed me and told me, I had made him very happy. On my way home I reminisced about my fabulous night and made plans for the future. I was 21 years old, and I had no wish to tie myself down to any one man for years to come. There were four other days of the week, where I might consider some of the paid-for-dating. Already then, I perceived this to be an empowerment for girls and women. Why tie yourself down to one man, if you can have several.

I was with my Friday night date for 3 years. He was generous to a fault, and took me for long weekends to New York and once to Chicago. After 3 years, he was offered a prestigious position at one of the major East Coast universities, which he couldn't turn down. He even offered me to move with him and live with him permanently, even get married to him, if I wanted, but I couldn't do that. By then, I had other steady dates and I felt I would get tied down long before I was ready. What he did for me, more than anything, was to give me the self-confidence to live and pursue what I desired. For that I will always be grateful."

It was very good for me, to have had those 2 weeks with Jania, because we got to talk about so much and so many things, which helped me put a lot of life and living in perspective. She told me some more about her paid-for-dating career. She soon realized, she had to hang out wherever she could meet men, but she said, that need not be bars. Offices are good, so are coffee shops, evening courses, men's departments in the large stores and so on. So she would take part time jobs afternoons and evenings, and whenever a man would proposition her, she would look him over very carefully, then tell him she only did once a week dating, and she got paid for the dates.

That dispensed with many hit and run types, she said, but there were enough who were all for it. Since most of her steady dates were married men, she soon realized, she would have to get a small apartment, where she could receive them. That was when her dating really took off. After I got my own place, she said, I was dating 5 days a week. I had lots of drive and energy and I loved the men.

Most of my dates would leave by 11 P M or at least midnight. What they told their wives and families, I have no idea, but I can tell you, they all loved their wives, and never wanted to hurt or harm them in any way. They just seemed to need some weekly intimacy with an energetic young girl. After I had my own place, my life settled down very well. My dates introduced me to suitable men, if and when I had a day of the week vacant. It was as if they were protective and wanted to make sure who I tied up with.

I spent Saturdays after midday and Sunday with my family. I cooked and did the shopping and I paid entirely for the groceries. My parents were grateful and didn't ask too many questions. I told them, I was living in a rented room by the university and that I shared it with another girl. That way I slept Saturday and Sunday nights in my parent's apartment, and Monday through Friday with my dates. It was neat, orderly, somewhat gainful and very enjoyable. I never considered my paid-for-dating to be anything like basic sex work. I did, after all, only get together with a single man per day, and only men I liked and enjoyed being with.

I must admit, though, in the long run, my studies suffered. I just didn't have enough time for my reading, writing papers and the like, and eventually had to drop out. After my Friday date moved away, I felt like a change, and I moved to Chicago, where I got in to trade shows, conventions and the like. That was not as seemly and respectable as my dates had been, but I managed. I always tried to seek out dates, who would be in town for a week or more, and I managed to get a lot of steady companions, who came to town regularly. There again, they would refer friends and coworkers to me, so I kind of remained in their circuit.

In the off seasons, I would visit my family and also spend time in KC. That was where I met you guys on that joyous night, and that was when I retired from paid-for-dating for good. Now, I am very happy and settled and I am very grateful to Jack for his love and support. At that point, I couldn't help telling Jania, what had happened, after she had made her appearance at Morgan's on that memorable night: "We knew Jack quickly wrote his number on as many \$ bills as he had, and went to put them in the box. But, what he didn't know was, that Lee and Gary also rushed to write Jack's number on as many \$ bills as the rest of us could come up with, and put them in the box as well. So you see, we were all betting on you. We all liked you, and wanted to do our part to get you and Jack together."

Jania loved that story and we had a good long laugh about it. When Lee came home, I told him I had spilled the beans to Jania about our little intervention at Morgan's and he also thought both she and Jack should know about it. We then left it to Jania to tell Jack the story when he came back.

