

Maternity Home Confidential

by Carter Cheviot

Prolog

In the middle of a not unfashionable housing development located amid the suburbs of West Chester, Pennsylvania, in a modest split-level home, The Conversation began. In this year alone The Conversation will take place more than fifteen million times. But each time is different, each tells its own tale.

Joyce Redmond was thirty-eight years old and had been praying for the last 3 years she would never have to have The Conversation. So much for wishing. Now she sat at her kitchen table across from her daughter. She wasn't sure where things had gone wrong. She had read all the parenting books, attended the courses on childrearing at the university, but still everything was turning into a nightmare.

Christine sat at the opposite side of the table. She dressed in that odd mix of modesty and sensuality common to teenagers. She wore a red, sleeveless t-shirt with a high neckline that left her belly exposed and a pair of Capri pants in red and white stripes. What few curves she had were accentuated perfectly by the outfit, much to her mother's chagrin.

She had obviously been crying recently and the dark circles under her brown eyes and smeared makeup only confirmed that fact. Her long brown hair was pulled backwards into a ponytail, although stray hairs had come loose and fell across her forehead. She looked diminutive sitting at the massive table, being very thin, and her body language only made her look smaller.

"But Christine," Joyce said from across the kitchen table, "We've been all through this. There just aren't a lot of options."

"Mom, I know, but I want to keep her!" Christine cried from across the table.

"But you're only sixteen years old... How will you provide for your child?"

"David and I will..."

"Honey, I just got off the phone with David's parents." Richard Redmond said as he entered the kitchen "David is now in a boarding school out west and they gave me their lawyer's number."

"Dad?"

"Honey, they say it's not his child... and if we want to pursue it we'll have to go through their lawyers."

“But, but... how could he,” Christine said, barely holding back tears, “He said we’d always be together!”

Joyce stood and walked around the table to her daughter and gave her a warm, enveloping hug. “I know dear, I know. We’ll work something out...”

“But what.... “

“That’s entirely up to you. You’re the one that’s pregnant. We will back you whatever you decide.” Richard rolled his eyes as Joyce spoke and walked quickly out of the room.

Entirely her decision? That’s a joke, Christine thought. Nothing was ever anyone’s decision except her mothers. Let the browbeating commence.

“I’m going to have my baby!”

“Okay. That’s a start. Did you look over the brochures the guidance counselor sent home for you?”

“Yeah... I don’t know though.” Christine pulled a folder in front of her and opened it, fanning its contents out in front of her. I’ve seen how they treat the girls in school that are pre... going to have a baby. I can’t go through that...”

“What about the maternity homes?”

“You know they cost too much!” Christine yelled through her tears. She hated the way this was going. There was only one choice that actually worked. She didn’t know why her mother was pushing her to say it herself.

“What’s left then?”

Christine wiped her eyes and pulled out a large booklet from the pile. A bright photo on the cover showed a green rolling pasture with a large Victorian house on a hillside. She pulled it open to the first page.

“Under a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Shreve Institute has created the most advanced and comfortable home for pre... teenagers to...”

“Chris, you’re going to have to say it sometime.”

Christine just stared at her mother before continuing. “ to live and learn while awaiting the birth of their child. Our expert medical staff is on-call twenty-four hours a day and with four certified instructors and a nationally accredited educational program your daughter will be ready to continue toward her continuing education.”

“I talked to Dr Michel about this place... he’s heard great things about the program in general. It sounds too good to pass up.”

And that was what Christine hated. Every conversation with her parents was like this. They always had an answer to everything. And what she hated most was that she couldn’t disagree this time. It *was* too good to pass up. Dorm housing with one roommate, a fifty acre working farm, accredited college prep curriculum, onsite doctors and nurses. Everything but horseback riding and white-water rafting. Christine continued reading. Okay, Everything but white-water... Damn. This place has everything! Hell, it might actually be fun.

Okay... Now Christine knew she was in trouble. Equating a maternity home with fun should be the furthest thing from her mind... yet this place seemed more like a summer camp than anything in any of the other pamphlets, even better than ones that cost a thousand dollars a month. There was really only one answer she could give.

“Yeah, it’s too good to pass up. When do we call to set it up?”

“It’s all arranged” her father said, “We set it up this afternoon. Now are we done in here? It’s past six-thirty and the game comes on in less than twenty minutes. What are we having for dinner?”

“Richard!”

“Joyce, I’m old school. Christine’s our daughter. She does what we tell her to do, goes where we tell her to go. At least for two more years. Spending an hour discussing something that’s already decided? I’m just not up for it.” Richard walked back into the living room as Christine broke down into tears.

§

Joyce’s nightmare may have begun the day before, but Christine had been living with it for more than a week. She was late. Took the home test, went to the clinic in town. Waited nervously for the results and they were as bad as she feared. She was going to have a baby. The clinic people had been very nice and suggested lots of things, but Christine was numb. She had to tell someone, but then she remembered Amy.

Amy had been her friend since fifth grade, but that all changed last year when Amy got pregnant. No one said anything, it wasn’t like it was planned, but everyone stopped hanging around Amy after she told them. They still saw her at school, hell, by the end they couldn’t miss her. Still exchanged hellos, but that was the end of their contact. Christine knew she couldn’t face that. She had to tell someone, and that meant telling her mom. Unfortunately there was only one person she knew with experience in that area.

“Uh Hi” Christine said as she walked up to Amy in the hall.

Amy looked at her oddly, as if not sure of what to make of this unexpected contact. “Hey, what’s up?”

“You have a minute to talk, its important.”

It was awkward at first, but it didn’t take long to get the basics. There would be yelling and name-calling not to mention crying and long periods of silence. The silence would be the worst. Amy asked her to call after she had told her mother. She said she would, but wasn’t very convincing.

It took two more days and five attempts for Christine to tell her mother. Amy was right, the silence was the worst.

Chapter 1

Shreve Institute

It took more than 2 hours to drive to the Shreve Institute, nestled as it was in the countryside between Allentown and West Chester, although it seemed longer in the silence of the car. It had been like this for the last two days. The house had been almost silent aside from the television. Now the only sound was the radio.

As they made their way northward the highways slowly narrowed, becoming two lane roads then twisting and turning as they made their way into the hills. Suddenly, there it was. Just a small sign by the side of the road, like outside an industrial park. The driveway snaked through the middle of a huge field of rolling hills, looking for all the world like a golf course. The driveway was about a half mile long, but it wasn’t until they crested the last hill they could see the Institute itself. My God, it’s beautiful, Christine thought. The institute itself seemed to be a massive Victorian house, known as a painted lady. Colorful shingles covered its sides and wrapped around the curved tower at one corner. Large flowerbeds surrounded the foundation and flowed down the walkway to the parking lot.

When they parked the silence followed them as her father pulled her bags out of the trunk and handed them to her. She started toward the front door then stopped and looked back. Her parents hadn’t moved from the side of the car. She looked at them quizzically, and then her expression went cold as she turned and walked up the steps to the front door. She didn’t even look back when she heard the car start and pull away.

§

The receptionist looked up as Christine pushed the door open and struggled in with her bags.

“Can I help you?”

“Thanks, these bags are kinda...” Christine started, but realized the receptionist hadn’t moved from her seat. She pulled the bags through the door and walked up to the desk. “I’m Christine Redmond, I have an appointment.”

“One moment.” The receptionist said and picked up the phone.

A moment later the inner doors of the reception area opened and a young woman entered wearing a multicolored lab coat. She seemed relaxed and at ease with herself, “Hi, I’m Janice. I’m your resident assistant”

“Hi, I’m Christine.” She replied, looking around the room.

“It’s okay, everything’s been kinda stressful, huh? Don’t worry, you can relax tonight and tomorrow morning you’ll meet everyone.”

“Tomorrow?”

“We have orientation, then the tour of the faculties, then the introduction to our services and some standardized tests for you to take, plus a visit with our doctor. You’ll be very busy today, but don’t worry, it’s a lot better after the first day,” Janice added as she helped carry Christine’s bags in through the double doors.

§

It couldn’t be much worse, Christine thought, sitting on the edge of her bed. It was long past nightfall and she was exhausted. An hour of orientation, two hours of standardized testing, a three-hour walking tour of the grounds and faculties and a doctor visit, complete with a vitamin shot with one of those pneumatic syringe guns. Funny though, he didn’t ask any questions about her pregnancy. I guess he has the charts, she thought, but still it seemed odd.

Even more odd was how tired she felt. Granted it had been a busy day, but this was ridiculous, she thought as she kicked off her shoes, I can barely keep my eyes....

She slept so soundly she didn’t hear the orderlies enter her room.

Chapter 2

Meeting the Others

Christine woke early as the sunlight streamed in the high windows and hit her bed. She groggily pulled herself to her feet and went in search of the bathroom. As she walked she looked down at her pajamas. When did I put these on? Anyway, the bathroom wasn’t in the room, there must be a common restroom. She walked past the sleeping form on the other bed and made her way into the hallway, barely registering that the smell of freshly

cut grass she had noticed yesterday had been replaced with the smell of hospital disinfectant. Luckily the bathroom was marked with a large sign, otherwise she would never have found it. Why can't I clear my head...

An orderly met her outside the bathroom and took her back to her room. She was finally beginning to wake up as she walked back in the door.

"Hi. I'm Marcie, I guess we're roommates" Marcie pulled herself to her feet, sliding on her slippers as she got up. Marcie was a little shorter than Christine, with dirty blonde hair and a slight heaviness about her frame. Not that Marcie was fat, but she wasn't the rail-thin stick girl that Christine and most of her friends were.

"Hi, I'm Christine," she replied as she grabbed a bathrobe off the hook next to the door. "How long have you been here?"

"First night, you?"

"Me too... I don't remember seeing you yesterday when I went to bed."

"Me either, I was kinda zonked out after that day... orientation sucks"

"Tell me about it. Want to go look for some breakfast?"

"Sounds like a plan."

They stepped out into the hallway, Christine leading the way and Marcie following close behind. "How far along are you?"

Marcie seemed taken aback. "About 8 weeks, you?" she asked, rubbing her lower belly.

"Same here. Guess the itching goes with the territory, huh?" Christine added, scratching her abdomen just below her belly button. Marcie just nodded as they padded down the hall.

It wasn't very hard to find the cafeteria, it was only a few doors down and you could hear people talking within. That, and the big sign saying "cafeteria".

It was smaller than Christine thought, only 3 tables with four seats each, but there were only two other girls here anyway.

"Mind if we sit with you?"

"Sure! I'm Tia and this is Eve," the Japanese girl at the table said, gesturing toward the other girl. Eve waved but didn't say anything. "Come on, sit down. When did you two get here?"

“Last night,” Christine replied, looking them both over. Christine had never met anyone from Japan before, but her black hair and eyes were typically Japanese, not to mention her figure. Eve was built a lot like Christine, a little taller, but otherwise similar, aside from Eve’s flowing blonde hair, Eve wasn’t intrinsically beautiful like Christine was, but still, with a little work...

“Us too. I guess they wanted to start us all together on the program. How far along are you?”

“Eight weeks” Christine and Marcie replied.

“Weird. So are we. Whydontcha grab something to eat and we can talk some more.”

As it turned out they all had very similar stories. *They* were very similar, aside from superficial appearance differences. All of them were 15 or 16, all had been tested at their local clinics just a week or two before and they had all had decided to give their babies up for adoption.

A little weird...

Janice joined them shortly and gave them a quick tour of the interior of the building. A lot crammed into a small space. First off was the entertainment room, stocked with cable TV, video games and a large videotape library, a classroom, several office and administration rooms, the medical suite and an exercise room. A lot smaller than it had seemed yesterday Christine thought.

Janice led them back to their rooms to get dressed for classes.

“Janice, where are the other girls?”

“You four are the only ones so far. It’s a pilot program, which means they’re testing everything out, making sure it works before we go into full production....well, you know what I mean.”

Chapter 3

Six Months

“Bored,” Christine announced to no one in particular. Not that that was an uncommon occurrence around here. The brochure had made it sound like the best place ever, but reality was a lot different. The horseback riding was out, they didn’t have the horses here yet, after all, this is “just a pilot program”. Words all the girls had grown to hate.

Of course, even if they had horses here, now wasn’t the time to be learning to ride, not

shaped like this. Christine walked across her room, pulled up her top and checked out her profile in the full-length mirror on the back of the door. Her belly bulged forward impressively, hard and firm, a very itchy slightly rounded mound. At least one thing in her pregnancy was going by the book. Not that they had any books on pregnancy here, which seemed odd, but she had read one before she left. But at least she seemed to be skipping the worst of the lot. No morning sickness is a definite plus. None of the girls had it. The doctors attributed that to their weekly vitamin shots, but that kinda seemed unlikely. Christine pulled up her pajama top further and inspected her breasts. Nope, still the same size. Her nipples looked the same too, but that pleased her as well. Who wanted huge honkin' brown nipples anyway? Still, she had been excited at the prospect of picking up a cup size or two, but no such luck. At least I'm not gaining anywhere besides my belly, she thought, turning and checking out the rear view. *Still nice and tight. Thank God for small favors.*

§

"Lets get you up on the scale" Dr Whitson said cheerily.

Christine hated this more than anything about the exam. *It's bad enough gaining weight, but to be weighed on a weekly basis, blech*, she thought as she stepped up onto the scale.

"Lets see here, one hundred and," Dr Whitson pushed a weight across the scales bar," eighteen pounds. Not bad."

"I'm huge" Christine found herself saying. *That's 16 pounds so far*, she thought looking down at her belly.

"Not at all, you're right on target. With your starting weight I'd actually prefer you to be gaining a bit more. I'll talk to the nutritionist about it." Christine rolled her eyes at the thought.

"How about you hop up here," he said, patting the cushion on the examination table. Christine pulled herself up on the over-high bench, scrunching up the rollout paper covering as she slid across it. "Is all this really necessary?" she asked as the doctor wrapped the blood pressure cuff around her arm.

"It is if you want to stay healthy... and keep your baby healthy as well." He checked the gauge. "Normal. Could you lay back on the table and pull up your top?"

Christine sighed as she leaned back and slid her top up above her belly.

"Just a few measurements," Dr. Whitson said, pulling a tape measure across her abdomen, first length-wise across her belly button then vertically from her pubic bone, his other hand feeling for the top of her swollen middle."

The doctor made a note in Christine's file and pulled out his stethoscope and warmed the

head in his hand. “Just have to check the babies heartbeat and we’re done for today.” He placed the head of the stethoscope on her belly, moving it around slightly. He listened for a few moments and pulled the stethoscope away. “Sounds good.”

“Can I hear?”

“Sure, just a moment.” Dr Whitson pulled a small box and cable from a drawer under the table and placed its small microphone on her belly, then turned a small switch on the box. A slightly staticy sound filled the room as the doctor moved the microphone around, finally settling on one spot where you could hear a fast, rhythmic thrumming sound. Christine leaned forward, looking down toward her belly, mesmerized by the gentle thumping of her baby’s heartbeat.

§

Tuesday night group session... talk about a joke. The four of us spend 16 hours a day together and still we have weekly group sessions with a psychologist. Just what we need to do, rehash the week with a moderator. Sure, sitting around in a circle and yelling is so much better than yelling next to the TV. Sure it is.

Dr. Ted, however, did make it worthwhile, although not by any action he actually took. Dr Ted, as Tia had so indelicately put it was a “stud puppy” and Christine couldn’t really argue. He was about six foot four, about one hundred and eighty pounds, late twenties, short blonde hair, blue eyes... dreamy...

“So, how was everyone’s week” Dr Ted said, starting the meeting.

Tia jumped in first, as always. “Fine, but we get so lonely here... four young women with no company...”

Dr Ted gave Tia a disapproving look. “Eve, how have you been?”

Eve shrugged and ran her hand across her slightly bulging belly. “Bigger”

Dr Ted was good... he took what he could get... “How’s that make you feel?”

Marcie chimed in, “Good, kinda. Makes it all more, I don’t know...real I guess”

Christine agreed, “Yeah, like hearing the heartbeat, but I haven’t felt any kicking yet. Aren’t you supposed to feel that around four months?”

“You got to hear her heartbeat?” Marcie interjected.

Dr Ted frowned, “You know the rules. Medical questions go to the maternity staff. I’m just here to make sure you’re all as happy as possible.”

Tia leaned forward slightly, resting her chin in her hands, “Oh doctor, you know how you could make me happy...”

Dr Ted broke eye contact and looked at the other girls. “Tonight we’re going to talk about something I’m sure you all feel strongly about. Why you’re here. I’m not getting metaphysical, and no...I know *why* you’re here. I mean why here rather than at your old school, or at another home, or some other place. Who wants to start?”

The girls all looked back and forth to each other nervously, no one wanting to speak first, then Tia started to talk.

“My dad works for Mitsubishi Medical in Norristown. It’s an American branch but everyone important there is Japanese. He’s been second in command there for like 10 years and with the company for like twenty-five years. I guess you all know Japan is very conservative. It’s amazing I got to go to a public school at all. In another few months I was gonna be shuffled away to a Japanese private school. ‘You’re Japanese,’ my father would say, ‘a C in math is not good enough. Especially when you’re being rated against the gaigin.’ That’s what the Japanese call anyone else. Foreign devils. Anyway, when I wound up pregnant he couldn’t risk the embarrassment of having a pregnant teenage daughter. They’d shuffle him to a dead-end desk-warming job and he’d stay there forever. So I bit the bullet and went to the best place I could find that would have as little impact as possible on my family.”

Dr Ted looked back to Tia, “Thanks Tia. How does that make you feel?”

“How should it make me feel? I could never live up to my dad’s ideals, not being raised in the US. I guess I just set out to show him how far from his ideals I really was.”

Dr Ted nodded, “Who’s next?”

Marcie raised her hand halfway then pulled it down again.

“Marcie, how about you?”

“Well, when I found out I was pregnant I knew it was all over. I’m one of the popular people at my school. Getting pregnant and being at school would screw that completely. I’ve seen what they do to pregnant girls at my school and it’s not pretty, much less if your own friends are doing it to you. So I knew I had to disappear. But where to? Any of the local places or official maternity homes would send records back to my school. As soon as anyone saw credits from Gladney Maternity Home they’d know damn well what happened. This place though is quiet, they’re doing the credits as if I was an exchange student overseas for six months so no one will ever know unless I tell them.”

Dr Ted nodded, “Are you okay with all of it?”

“Well, as okay as I can be with knowing I’m a sentence away from being ostracized by

my friends. I'm just scared"

"Thanks for sharing. Who's next? Christine?"

"I don't know what to say. I looked at the maternity homes but they were all too expensive. My family just can't afford it. I didn't want to stay my normal school. I'm in the AC program for college prep and all pregnant girls wind up in the practical parenting curriculum. Might as well stamp 'shoot me' on my transcript. I'd never get into a decent school. Plus I was never part of the in-crowd, but I know what its like to be picked on by them. I couldn't take that."

"Are you okay with your decision?"

"That's what bugs me. It wasn't really my decision. My mom decided then led me like a dog on a leash to make the same decision she already planned. It just...it pisses me off!"

"Yeah!" Tia added, "I know what you mean!"

"I think this is something we'll have to discuss more of next week at group. Eve, why are you here?"

Eve didn't move, but all the same seemed to shrink somehow. She began speaking, almost in a whisper.

"I've never been very popular at school. I guess I'm too quiet. Anyway, I was at school and one of the guys on the football team asked me out. He was all like 'I like your art and stuff'. Anyway, we went out and we did it... but then he started laughing at me... and one of the cheerleaders walked in and handed him twenty dollars. They bet that he wouldn't have sex with me. I was so embarrassed I couldn't even go to school for a week, but then I found out I was pregnant and I knew there was no way I could face them even after what they knew happened. When they knew I was pregnant it would... " Eve started crying..."it would..." she stopped trying to talk as she shook her head and sobbed.

"It looks like we all have a lot to think about for next group. I don't want to bog you all down, lets just digest what we've heard and said today and talk about it all next week."

The meeting seemed to be breaking up when Dr Ted asked one last question. "So, had any other problems this week we should discuss?"

Tia sighed. "Just one... same as always... Wheeeel.... Of.... Fooortune!"

Marcie turned toward Tia, "That's the only show I watch. I don't ask to see anything else, just give me a break."

Tia said, "Why bother watching... ' Look at this studio filled with fabulous prizes'.

‘ Ooh, sorry, no ‘Z’s... ‘Look, five ‘E’s,’ Tia turned and looked directly into Marcie’s eyes. “I’d like to solve the puzzle, ‘Pregnant - sluts -love – stupid – game – shows”

Christine saw it coming and grabbed Marcie’s arm as she bolted out of her seat and lunged for Tia. She couldn’t stop Marcie’s screaming though. Tia just leaned back in her chair, rubbing her belly and smiling. Oddly enough, Dr Ted never did much to try to calm them down or talk through their problems.

Its not like their problems would be hard to solve if he tried. They only argued about trivial stuff. Who left the television on, what they were going to watch, when they would play video games. But still, with nothing to do besides getting on each other’s nerves...

It’s almost as if he wanted them to argue.

§

One of the few pluses was the weekly clothes deliveries. Christine had assumed they’d be in evil tent-like maternity dresses, but all their clothes seemed to be coming from Pea in a Pod. Not stuff she’d normally wear, aside from the Capris, but not bad. Capris did look a little weird on her now, with her bulging belly, but hey, you gotta take what you can get. The only one of them that ever got anything weird was Tia, who got a Sailor Moon outfit one day. Oops. Japanese school uniform. Call it a Sailor Moon outfit if you want to have Tia at your throat for the next week. Anyway, Tia said she was saving it for group when she was nine months along. She wanted to see Dr. Ted’s face.

Still, all in all, it wasn’t so bad, just boring. Just how much television can one person watch anyway? At least the pregnancy was going smoothly. Almost too smoothly, but then again, Christine had always been a worrier.

Chapter 4

Eight and A Half Months

Christine slowly pulled herself to the edge of the bed and rested there for a moment, pulling her tank top back into place. She had given up on her pajamas a month ago and now just slept in a tank top and panties. The pajama top had been irritating her belly button like crazy and interfered with her almost constant scratching. Not that her pajamas would have fit anymore at this point, she thought as she slid off the edge of the bed and pushed herself off with her hands, barely making it to a standing position. She waited patiently for her belly to settle into her hips before she turned and waddled to the door for her daily belly check. *God Damn!* She thought as she looked into the mirror. *I’m huge!*

In fact Christine had been huge for some time and had been making the same comment to herself every time she saw her own reflection. She stood with her feet spread widely apart, leaning backward to compensate for the added weight. Her belly pushed out

massively to the front and to the sides, looking for all the world as if she had eaten a beach ball. *A heavy, itchy beach ball*, she thought as she ran her hands around her sides and under the curve of her bulging belly, trying in vain to rub away the constant itchiness. Her back was already protesting as she twisted slightly in each direction, checking for stretch marks, feeling her fifty pounds of belly shift back and forth. Still clean, she thought happily, running her hands forward to her belly button, felling how far it extended from the tight, full surface of her belly. Still, she was even bigger today than yesterday. She turned back toward her bed and waited for her belly to settle down again, then looked over her shoulder. *At least my butt still looks great*, now it's measurement time.

Christine waddled unsteadily to her roommate's bed and plopped heavily on the edge.

"Come on Marcie, wake up."

"What, huh?"

"Breakfast time."

"Yeah, sure... I know, I know... oh by the way, could you help me measure..."

"Well, now that you mention it..." Christine grinned.

Marcie slid to the edge of the bed and rubbed her eyes as Christine lifted her massive bulk off the mattress. Marcie held out her arms and Christine braced her feet against Marcie's and they grabbed each other's forearms.

"Ready?"

"Yep"

Christine leaned back as heavily as she could, pulling Marcie off the bed. Marcie immediately leaned back pulling Christine forward until they were standing, bellies pressed together, in the center of the room, leaning forward into each other, unable to move.

Marcie looked down at their bellies then back up at Christine, making no attempt to step back away from their belly contact. "I remember the first time we did this, our faces were like inches apart, now we've got a good foot and a half here."

"Yeah, getting pretty bad, huh?"

Marcie reached across and rubbed the side of Christine's belly, then gave it a light poke.

"I dunno," Marcie said smiling, "You feel almost done."

Christine laughed. “I wish! Doctor says another two weeks for me at least.”

“I get my c-section tomorrow...he he he he”

“Don’t keep rubbing it in! Its bad enough you getting to go first without you bringing it up all the time.”

Marcie looked back down at her chest, “You think my boobs will get any bigger when my milk hits?”

Christine looked at Marcie’s bust line then back to her own. “Yeah, what’s with that? We’re both the same crummy B-cup as when we got here. If I gotta lug around the mega-belly I want the boobs to go with it.”

“Yeah, but not like mega-boobs. Then we’d be standing here with our boobs pressed together too...”

“Where the hell is Janice? This is starting to get sweaty and itchier than normal.” Christine asked, rubbing the side of her belly where it met the curve of Marcie’s belly.

“I dunno... but only one more day of this and I’ll be able to get up on my own and no more rubbing!”

“Quit it! You know how big I’ll be by the time I go? Gigantic! And Eve isn’t due till a week after me.”

“We’re pretty gigantic now? You were what? Fifty-three inches around yesterday? That’s gigantic!”

“Hey! Then you’re even more gigantic. You were fifty-four inches. I dunno. I think we’re too big. Way too big.”

“Nah. They told us we’d get huge... just not how huge. Anyway, must be normal. All of us are about the same size. I could just do without the itching.”

“Whatever happened to all that ‘every pregnancy is different’ crap?”

“Probably written by women that didn’t all spend 9 months living together.”

“Where is Janice? She better get here before Tia and Eve, we don’t want all four of us leaning together like this.”

“Well, the problem is, now they know that standing like this takes all the weight off your back...”

“But last time it took 4 orderlies and Janice to get us unwedged. Its weird enough rubbing

bellies with just you.”

“You know, its really not all that bad,” Marcie said as she shifted back and forth slightly, causing her belly and Christine’s to rock into each other softly, “Kinda comforting.”

Christine closed her eyes as she rubbed her right hand across the top of her bloated belly and ran the fingertips of her left hand across the side of her Marcie’s belly in little circles, “Yeah, I see what you mean.”

Marcie reached out with both hands and began to gently pull her fingertips across the taunt skin of Christine’s belly, stroking lightly in large sweeping circles toward the lower curve of Christine’s belly, “blissful”

It wasn’t until Marcie’s hand bumped into Christine’s that they both looked down at their bellies and hands. It was like a little light bulb went off inside their heads. Both of them looked down then looked to each other wide eyed as they pulled their hands away from each other. Conversation came to an abrupt halt as they tried to find anywhere to look besides each other.

§

Christine stood on the scale, now forced by her girth to stand with her back to the weights and display. “ One hundred and fifty-seven pounds”.

“Gah! Isn’t that a lot?”

“Not at all. Well within the norm.”

“I’ve seen pregnant girls at my school and they didn’t seem this big,” Christine replied, resting one of her hands on top of her belly, rubbing her other hand across it. “And what’s with the itching?”

“Most teenagers gain far too little weight when they’re pregnant. Some even try dieting during pregnancy. It’s just not healthy. You’re just gaining the appropriate amount, given your pre-pregnancy weight.”

“But my belly is huge! It’s the only place I’m gaining.”

“Well, that is the goal here. Neither of us wants you to be fat, just healthy. You’re not gaining a lot of weight elsewhere because you’re diet is very high protein and vitamin enriched. High fat diets lead to a big bottom,” Dr. Whitson smiled, “and I’m sure you don’t want that.”

“No, but what about the itching?”

“Your skin is stretching a lot, and the more it stretches the more it itches,” Dr Whitson

patted the top of the examination bed. “You know the drill.”

Christine pulled herself slowly up onto the table, her belly pushing her legs apart as she slid into a sitting position.

“Blood pressure is good... Lay back and slide up your top.”

Christine leaned back slowly, supporting herself on her elbows as she lay back, and then pulled her top up over the large swell of her belly, her belly button now poking straight up in the air.

Dr Whitson placed one hand on each side of her belly, pressing in slightly, as if feeling for something, then pulled out his tape measure. “Measurements look good too. In case you’re worried, your belly button is completely normal,” he said, running his hand across it.”

“Should it be all rubbery like that she said, reaching toward it, pushing the doctors hand away in the process.

“Completely normal. The texture is from the skin stretching. It will probably poke out a little more before you have your baby. There’s a lot of fluid in there pushing out.”

“Yeah, you’re telling me,” Christine said, looking toward the doctor over the curve of her swollen belly. “You’re really sure this isn’t like way too big?”

“Not at all. Check with the other girls, pregnancy varies from one person to another, but you’re all about the same size.”

Christine wasn’t convinced but held her tongue as the doctor patted the side of her belly. “Okay, all done for this week.” See you next Tuesday.”

“What about the heartbeat?” Christine asked as she pushed herself up onto her elbows.

“You’d like to hear it again?”

“Wouldn’t you?” Christine asked.

Dr Whitson pulled out the small electronic box and placed the microphone on her belly, moving it around until the familiar thrumming sound filled the room.

Something’s not right, but my baby is fine... Christine closed her eyes and listened to the comforting sounds of her baby’s heartbeat.

§

I’ll be glad when this is all over, Christine thought as she slowly waddled down the

hallway back to her room. Her added weight had become quite a strain over the past few weeks. Whenever she walked her belly fell into a slow, steady bounce that pulled heavily against her back. Sitting didn't help much either, just moved the pain from her lower back to her hips as her belly pushed down into her thighs, forcing her legs further apart than they were really meant to go. The constant itching and the accompanying rubbing was getting on her nerves as well, not to mention that she was worried. Her belly had been growing at an alarming rate and despite assurances from the staff she still thought she was too big. Even in her largest top a sliver of bare flesh showed just over the elastic of her Capris, exposing several inches of her belly. Christine tried talking to Tia about it, but Tia wasn't worried. "Ever see a pregnant girl in the last few weeks? They all leave school and don't go out. They must all get this big and just not want anyone to see them. I can't blame them, I look like a cow." Sure, that explanation made sense, but it didn't help her growing sense of unease.

Marcie went for her c-section later that day. In just a few hours she would be recuperating and in just a few days she'd be back home with her family. The girls held silent vigil in the entertainment room waiting for news, not really watching what was on television. Within a few minutes all of them had adopted their favorite positions, sitting on the sofa, a pillow supporting the small of their backs, tops pulled up, running their hands across their full, taunt bellies.

Morning light shone into the entertainment room, slowly waking the girls from where they slept, curled up uncomfortably on the sofa.

"Uh," Tia began, wiping her forearm across her forehead, "my back is killing me and I'm all hot and sweaty."

"Yeah, me too. Why didn't they wake us when Marcie got back?" Christine wondered, stretching her arms and legs and yawning. "Let's go find Janice, she'll know what's up."

All three girls tried to get to their feet, but it took some time, being stiff and sore from last night's sleeping arrangements, not to mention their still unfamiliar bulk.

"Maybe they didn't want to wake us," Eve said quietly as they waddled heavily toward Christine and Marcie's room.

The room turned out to be exactly as Christine had left it the day before. No Marcie.

"This doesn't make any sense," Tia mumbled, "let's go find Janice."

The girls made their way down the hallway alternately supporting their backs with their arms and rubbing their bellies until they came to the resident assistant's door. Christine knocked, but there was no reply.

"Where the hell could she be? And where's everyone else?"

Tia stepped toward the door, bumping into both Christine and the door with her belly and banged loudly on the door. “She’s got to be here somewhere.” Tia continued banging on the door, now with both hands. To reach she pushed her swollen belly into the door. After about two minutes of constant banging the door opened.

Janice was still wearing her same clothes from the night before and it was obvious she hadn’t slept or, if she had, that it had been for only a few minutes.

“Morning. What’s...”

“Where’s Marcie?” Christine demanded.

“There were some complications. Don’t worry, she’s fine.”

“What about her baby?”

“Uh, he’s fine too. I just got back from the medical suite a few minutes ago. Nothing to worry about. Best thing to do is get some sleep.”

“Uh, sleep? It’s almost seven-thirty. That’s in the AM.”

“That long?” Janice asked, trying to rub the sleep out of her eyes, “Listen, grab some breakfast, let me grab a few minutes of sleep and I’ll check on her.

Without many available options the girls had little choice. They grabbed a quick breakfast, each afraid to discuss what they feared. They made small talk, commenting on the clothes, the food, everything except what was worrying them and then made their way back to Janice’s door.

Janice’s door was open several inches but Janice was nowhere to be found. After a time consuming circuit of the rooms in the hall that were unlocked they girls returned to the entertainment room to kill time more than anything else. The girls sat staring at the television as lunchtime came and went, waiting for word.

§

“Hey guys” Marcie said, standing in the doorway to the entertainment room.

All the girls pulled themselves to their feet and headed toward the Marcie, surprised both by her hospital gown and by the fact that it was pulled tightly across her still swollen belly.

Eve spoke first, quietly asking “So.... You’re still...”

“Pregnant? Oh yeah.” Marcie pushed her belly forward, placing her hands on each side as

if displaying it. “Complications. They messed up my dates. My baby’s lungs aren’t developed enough so they started me on steroid treatments to fix her. They said it will take a week or two.”

“Two more weeks?” Christine added, then sighed, “I’m just glad you’re all right!”

“Yeah, I’m fine, just tired.” Marcie said, rubbing the small of her back with one hand and her swollen belly with the other.

“Didn’t Janice say you were having a boy?” Tia asked.

“Yeah, she called the baby ‘he’ when we asked if you two were okay.” Christine added.

“She was probably just tired. The ultrasound showed a girl, anyway that’s what the tech reading it said.”

“Two more weeks huh? Well, at least I won’t be losing my roommate until its time for me to have my baby,” Christine said.

“Two more weeks. I won’t be able to move by then! I’m already the biggest.” Marcie began to cry. “I just want this over with!”

Christine closed the distance to Marcie and tried to give her a hug, but their swollen midsections conspired against them. After backing up and approaching again several times Christine finally settled on standing next to Marcie and wrapping her arm around Marcie’s shoulders.

“You’ll be fine...it’s going to be okay. Understand. We’re all in this together. Lets grab some dinner. You must be starved.”

The four girls turned and walked out of the entertainment room, headed for the cafeteria.

Chapter 5

The Cavalry

The detective sat behind a desk in a stereotypically grungy office, a notepad and pen at the ready. The clients were on the opposite side of the desk, one sitting, and one pacing back and forth.

“And how long has she been missing?” Detective Mewes asked.

“That’s not really easy to say,” Joyce responded from the other side of the desk “She’s been away at a special school for a little more than seven months, but suddenly...”

“Suddenly their phones were disconnected and mail was marked ‘return to sender’? What

did you mean, ‘special school’?”

“A school for girls with special needs, different requirements, other...”

“A maternity home.” Richard said flatly, continuing to pace.

Mewes was totally non-reactive. “And you last spoke with her?”

“It’s not like that at all. We called in for updates every week. Everything seemed fine until...”

“So, about 6 months since you’ve spoken to her, about a week since you could contact them?”

Joyce nodded silently.

I need everything you have about the maternity home and my retainer, fifteen hundred a week, plus expenses.” Joyce looked back to Richard. He had stopped pacing and appeared to be considering his options.

“Well?”

“Don’t mind Richard, it’s just that...”

“I know ‘just’ what it is. Listen. I’ve served three years on local police forces, six years on Philadelphia’s Violent Crimes squad.” The detective said, staring straight into Richards’s eyes as she pushed back her long red hair. “The only reason I’m not still there is because of sexual harassment. I didn’t put up with it there and I sure as hell won’t put up with it my office. Can’t deal with that? There’s the door.”

Richard looked down at his feet. “Fifteen hundred a week will be fine. Just find our daughter.”

§

“None? Okay, thanks.”

Cecilia Mewes hung up the phone and pushed herself back from her desk running her fingers through her hair. The ‘maternity home’ had been up for sale for the past two years, hasn’t been rented out, no utilities, only basic lawn maintenance. So it’s a sham.”

Cecilia pulled out a map and found the location of the home, then checked the clock. *Well, I can be there by ten, maybe ten-thirty. Better bring the big flashlight,* she thought.

§

The trip to the 'Shreve Institute' was much faster for Detective Mewes than it was for the Redmonds seven months ago. Mewes didn't hold the speed limit in high regard and her old sedan, while not very much to look at, handled these country corners at high speed like nobody's business. Finding the place was easy enough from the photos on the brochure and the address, although the sign at the driveway was gone, pulled right off the post, leaving electrical wires hanging like torn out roots.

Cecilia drove slowly up the long driveway, over the rolling hills toward the empty parking lot. She didn't even bother to find a space, instead parking in the dead center of the lot. The building looked much like in the brochure, but the large sign on the front lawn was gone, the flower beds untended. She walked past the front door and scouted the exterior of the building and the grounds. Not a lot to see. Service entrance in the back, no trash awaiting pickup. Trails leading off in two directions, one marked 'Horseback Riding'...

Mews ignored all this. The building seemed to be empty and that made perfect sense to her. She came back around to the front steps and walked in the unlocked front door.

The place was a disaster area. Empty beer bottles littered the floor and a hibachi (cold) showed that at some point a party had gone on here, but nothing recent. The receptionist desk was empty as was the rest of the office. Mews found a small service closet and shined her flashlight on the wall. Four telephone circuits wired to a microwave link. The antenna had been disconnected and there was no power, but it was still obvious that this is how phone calls were forwarded out. After noting the make and model of the links, Mewes turned back toward the double doors leading deeper into the building.

They were unlocked, and swung open easily, if noisily, the sound of the beer bottles rattled on the other side. As she reached for her flashlight she felt pressure against her neck then heard a hiss. Everything went black.

Chapter 6

One Week Later

The week had passed as slowly as the one before it and the one before that. *Nothing ever changes around here*, Christine thought. The doctor visits and group were, as always, unexciting and uninspiring. All four girls continued to slowly get larger, although, strangely, no larger clothes were being provided as had been in the past. Same old television shows, video games, food. Even the conversations were rehashes of the same conversations from the previous weeks. Nothing changed at all.

Except Marcie's breasts.

In the last week since she started her steroid treatments she had gone from molehills to small mountains. Everyone noticed and had something to say. It was a mix of jealousy

and happiness that drove the comments, but still, at least there was something new to talk about.

“Christine, wake up!” Marcie called from her bed.

“Huh, gah... go back to sleep...its early.”

“Come on, measurement time!”

Christine sighed with resignation. There was no more sleep to be had this morning. Christine pulled herself to the edge of the bed and swung her legs over the sides, feeling her hips pull painfully as her belly fell into place between her thighs. She paused a moment, rubbing the sides of her belly in small circles, rubbing away the morning itchiness, working her way forward to her large outtie belly button, which now extended a half inch over the curve of her swollen belly.

Marcie pushed herself up into a sitting position as Christine waddled heavily across the room and grabbed the tape measure off Marcie’s dresser. She wrapped the tape measure around her back and held the ends in her hands.

“Check me first,” Christine said, handing the ends of the tape to Marcie.

Marcie took the tape and slid the ends together as she moved the tape up and down over Christine’s belly, trying to find the fullest spot.

“Quit sticking your belly out on purpose. Stand up straight!”

Christine pulled her shoulders back, but they barely moved. “I’m not. I’m straight as a rail.”

“Then you’re up to fifty-seven inches, tubby,” Marcie replied smiling, pulling the tape free with one hand and placing her other on Christine’s belly and giving it a good shake.

“Quit that!” Christine said laughing, as she grabbed the tape measure from Marcie and tossed it around her like a lasso. “Lets see how you stack up!”

“You’re about fifty-seven and a half inches,” Christine stated, and began to pull the tape measure free. Marcie grabbed the tape from her. “Ha! I knew you’d start to catch up sooner or later. Now do the important one,”

“You want to measure your boobs you can do it yourself.”

“Aw...come on, you know you’re curious too.” Marcie replied, but Christine was already headed for her closet to grab something to wear. As Christine tossed clothes onto her bed, Marcie measured. “Jesus... this is getting to be a bit much. I guess I’ll look okay with how I’m normally built, but still...”

“How big?”

“Thought you didn’t want to know...” Marcie smirked.

Christine waddled back to the bed, “Okay, I’m curious. Spill it.”

“Up to a 34DD... ain’t that sweet?”

“Geez, a little much don’t you think???”

“Nah... I’ll be fine. I’m not as thin as you are when I’m not pregnant. I can carry it off. Besides, I’ll probably lose a cup size or two after I have the baby...”

“Yeah, but that’s three cup sizes in a week. Another week before your new due date... that will make you about a 34H... monster tits from hell.”

Marcie tossed the tape measure on the floor and frowned. “Why can’t you just be happy for me. I can’t help it I’m the only one that got boobs from this deal.”

Christine considered for a moment and her angry expression softened to a smile. “I’m sorry, this whole pregnancy thing is just wearing thin. The whole pregnancy has sucked and the only bright side was that I’d probably wind up stacked. But I’m not and my roommate is... It sucks. Sorry.”

“Its okay, everybody’s nerves are shot. Lets check on Tia, she should have had her baby by now.”

§

“Another complication??” Christine complained.

“I know, I know...but this isn’t something we could have foreseen. It’s called ‘white coat syndrome’,” Janice replied, “As soon as we got Tia into the operating theater under the lights her blood pressure jumped to dangerously high levels. We tried three times but it just happened every time. So we can’t do a c-section, we’ll have to wait her to go into labor on her own.”

“Its almost like you don’t want us to have our babies,” Christine screamed, “I want this baby out of me!”

Janice considered for a moment “Well, your blood pressure is normal. You’re not due for another week, but you’re at full term. Let me ask the doctor for you...”

“No way! You mean?” Christine was almost shaking, her smile widening with each passing second.

“Don’t get your hopes up, I’ll have to ask and they’ll have to do some medical tests... let me see what I can do.”

§

Christine slowly awoke from the general anesthetic. She couldn’t move, couldn’t open her eyes but none of that bothered her. She was completely relaxed. She heard muffled sounds, kind of like people, but she couldn’t make out what they were saying.

After her conversation with Janice it had only taken an hour before she was called to the exam room for a final exam, blood pressure test and ultrasound. Two hours after the conversation she was on a gurney under the bright lights, a mask over her nose and mouth, counting backwards from ten. By the time she hit ‘five’ she was fast asleep.

Christine could now make out a dull pink light as she peered through her immobile eyelids. She was still content, but sensation was slowly returning to her body. First to her fingertips and the back of her calves, then her upper arms and shoulders. Sensations began to flow down her back and as the sensations became more vivid she became aware that the huge weight that had been pressing down on her lower back for the last few months was still there... feeling even heavier now that she was experiencing it again as if for the first time.

Still, none of this bothered her. She was in her happy place.

The voices slowly became clearer, but she couldn’t make out what they were talking about.

“sheampa larama ti ineffective, Switching to aswa lem shammasma”

Christine tried to concentrate through the pink fluffy fog of anesthesia,

“Aks not working. I can’t shalmas ftoot dera camorraia.”

The clouds were parting, but not very quickly, Still, the voices continued.

“We can’t des dis go on this way.” A man’s voice replied, “Lock down the buildsesfs kan close the landlines until we get an effective counter-virus working. Until then, keep to the plan. As far as they know, they’re pregnant.”

“We can’t keep them in the dark forever.” Janice said, “They’re going to know something’s wrong, if only by their size.”

“But they won’t know what’s really going on. We need time to work this out.”

Christine expended the last of her energy trying to open her eyes and fell back into the

puffy clouds of anesthesia filling her mind.

§

“I’m telling you, that’s what I heard,” Christine said, the stress creeping into her voice more and more as she spoke over the pop music on the radio.

It had taken two days for her to scout the unlocked rooms in the building to find the few rooms that seemed, logically, not to be bugged. Of course, she had no way of knowing if she was right, or even if any rooms were actually bugged, but it seemed a wise precaution anyway. The group encounter room always had a staff member there with them, had its own stereo system and was pretty much soundproof, so that’s where Christine gathered the girls 3 days after her “c-section attempt”.

“You were spaced on happy gas,” Tia said dismissively. “Everything is foggy and blurry and you don’t give a shit what’s happening.”

“Wait a second, you were awake too?”

“Yes... well, no... well, I remember stuff but it was all slurred and blurry. I couldn’t understand a word.”

“And you’re sure you couldn’t understand anything?”

“No, not one word and you didn’t either.”

“How can you be so sure? You’re certain *you* didn’t hear any thing you could make out. No doubts in your mind right?” Tia nodded. “Well, I’m sure I couldn’t make out anything at the beginning, but by the end I’m sure I could make out every word.”

“If I’m not pregnant, what the hell is this?” Tia exclaimed, pulling her top off, over her head, revealing her swollen belly and flat chest.

“I don’t know, but notice how we haven’t felt any kicking?”

“That’s **normal** this far along...” Tia sighed.

“Yeah, but did you ever feel a kick?” Christine waited, and then looked at each of the girls in turn. “Any of you? Me either. That’s not normal. And we haven’t gained any weight except in our bellies. That’s not normal. Anyone have tender breasts or see any changes to their nipples?”

“I have,” Marcie said, looking down at her chest. I’m up to a 34F cup now and still growing. And my nipples got all reddish brown and huge.”

“Right, just you. And that happened after they said they started to do a c-section on you.

So, why'd they knock you out before they checked the babies lungs?"

"I dunno...I'm not a doctor" Marcie replied.

"Why don't we just check some pregnancy books then?"

"There aren't any here," Tia said, sounding tired of the conversation.

"Right, and **that's** not normal either .I know this is all kinda way out there," Christine began.

"We're all kinda way out," Tia laughed, rubbing her hands over her bloated belly."

"But," Christine continued, "Just keep an eye out. Don't say anything to the staffers, especially Janice; I'm sure I heard her voice. When you're walking around check the doors that are always locked. Someone might leave one open. Watch to see if anyone leaves one of those clipboards lying around. Dr Ted does it all the time, others probably do to. Look and see what we can find out. We'll talk again next week and see what we come up with."

The other girls all looked at Christine as if she had just asked them for chipmunks, but they had spent nearly every waking hour together for the last seven months. No one believed her, but this little covert operation was just the thing to kill time. They were in.

Chapter 7

Nine Months

The next week passed quickly, far more quickly then they imagined it would. Unfortunately most of the news was at least disturbing if not downright mind-blowing.

The first few days were uneventful, although each girl found some thing that roused their suspicions.

Tia began joining Christine and Marcie for their morning measurements a week after they had talked in the group encounter room. Not that she believed them, but even she had to admit something screwy was going on.

"Yeah, my tops don't fit anymore, so what?" Tia complained.

Marcie and Christine looked over Tia as she looked them over. Marcie's belly was a bit larger, but not by much... but her breasts had swollen impressively, filling the top of her t-shirt and pulling the fabric up off her belly past her belly button, her breasts now covering most of the upper curve of her belly.

Marcie saw where Tia was looking, Marcie frowned and said "They're like a 34H or I or

something. I don't know anymore. Your belly looks bigger though, almost as big as Christine's." That comment, unsurprisingly, shifted everyone's eyes to Christine.

Christine's bust line had finally started to blossom, her breasts now looking as large as Marcie's were the week before. But more obvious was the fact that her belly was larger, now much larger than Marcie's.

Christine looked back to Tia, "Grab the tape measure and come over here. I'm having a hard time getting up," Christine frowned. Tia, for once, seemed to be at a loss for words and grabbed the tape measure, waddled heavily across the room and handed the tape to Christine.

"You'll have to wrap it around you, I can't reach that far. I'll just read the measurement," she said, handing the tape measure back to Tia.

Tia sighed and wrapped the tape around the small of her back and handed Christine the two ends. Christine took the two ends and overlapped them, pulling them tight across Tia's belly. "Stand up straight..." Tia shifted her legs farther apart and pulled her shoulders back, her belly dropping down into her hips and sliding slightly forward in the process. "Let me try again, this can't be right, and stop rubbing, you keep bumping the tape," Christine said, loosening the tape and shaking it before pulling it tight again.

"Nope, right the first time. Fifty-eight inches."

"There is like no way I'm that big around," Tia said, reaching for the tape measure and Christine's hands, but she could only just brush them with her fingertips.

"Help me up and you can check me next. You'll see," Christine said frowning.

It took a few minutes to get Christine to her feet but as soon as she was standing it became obvious she was even bigger than Tia, although not by much. Christine pulled the tape around her back and handed the ends to Tia. "Go for it."

Tia pulled the tape tight and checked the measurement. Fifty-nine and a half inches. Shit"

"Yeah, believe it now?" Christine said, looking up past Tia's belly.

"No, but this is pretty damn weird." Tia said.

"We'll talk later tonight. Same as last week"

§

It was almost one AM when they crept, not so silently and not very stealthily to the group encounter room. Pop music filled the air and they were all dressed for bed in tank tops and panties, aside from Tia, who apparently slept topless.

Christine went first. “Nothing much on my end, I found a couple of clipboards, but they just had daily schedules and stuff on them.”

“I didn’t find anything, but I noticed something odd at my weekly exam.” Marcie said, “They were doing the ultrasound and when they had it up on the screen the date was from 3 months ago. The baby was on the display, but really tiny. When the guy giving me the exam saw me looking at the screen he looked it over again then turned it on and off... After that it looked normal.”

“That’s pretty fucked up” Tia exclaimed.

“Starting to believe me now?” Christine replied, tilting her head toward Tia.

“No, but something is defiantly fucked up. I just wish we knew how big we were supposed to be.”

“I do,” Eve said quietly.

All eyes were on Eve as she slowly continued. “Remember when we went to talk to Janice when Marcie was missing, she left her door open?”

Everyone nodded.

“Well, she had a big bookshelf in there and I figured that some of the books must be about pregnancy since she knows so much about it. Everyday I’ve been checking to see if she left her door unlocked. Yesterday she did. So I looked through and found out how you figure how far along someone is by measuring.”

“Eve, you are the best! I’m fifty-nine and a half inches around.”

Eve was speaking a bit more confidently now, “No. It doesn’t work that way. We need a metric tape measure.”

“Is ours?” Christine began.

“Yeah, metric and standard.” Marcie answered.

“I’ll go get it, It’ll be faster.” Eve pulled herself to her feet and waddled out of the room.

“When did she get bit by the confidence bug?” Marcie asked.

“Probably when people started listening to what she had to say. It works wonders,” Tia added.

“Just surprised, she’s always been so quiet.”

The doors to the room opened and Eve came back in, huffing and puffing.

“That was fast” Christine remarked.

“Yeah, I ran”

All eyes were on Eve again. “Just because you can’t... anyway, who’s first?”

Christine pulled herself to her feet slowly, wobbling back and forth for almost a full minute before stabilizing herself, “What do I have to do?”

“Just come over here and stand still... and whatever I do, don’t get freaky, its part of the check... and stand with your side facing me.”

Christine slowly turned, looking at Eve warily, then stopped and waited for her belly to settle down. “Go for it.”

Eve reached forward with her left hand, holding her tape measure, feeling downward under the curve of Christine’s belly. Her fingertips moved down slowly over Christine’s panties, nervously, as if seeking something. Christine twisted her upper body as much as she could, supporting herself by placing one hand on her belly and the other on her hip, craning her neck, trying to see what Eve was doing.

Eve continued feeling downward, a quarter inch at a time. “Are we almost done the freaky part yet, “Christine asked.

Eve ignored her, continuing down until she hit a hard spot. “Done the freaky part. I had to find the pubic bone.” Eve reached forward with her other hand, pulling the tape through her hands as she slid her hand along the curve of Christine’s belly. “Freaky part again, could you move your boobs out of the way?” Christine blushed and lifted her breasts up, allowing Eve’s hand to continue up to her breastbone. She pulled the tape away and checked the measurement, writing it down on her hand. “Okay, who’s next?”

It took about twenty minutes to measure everyone, and a few more minutes for Eve to explain to Marcie where to hold the tape to measure herself. Then Eve looked at the numbers.

“First, the good news. Marcie, you’re measuring 42 weeks and I’m measuring 43 weeks. A little big but still in the normal range.”

Everyone was very quiet, Tia and Christine’s eyes were locked on Eve’s. “Christine, you’re measuring fifty weeks and Tia is measuring forty-eight weeks.”

Tia was the first to speak. “What the hell does that mean?” she said, sounding nervous for the first time. Eve paused for a moment before continuing.

“It means if you’re really pregnant you’re about twelve months pregnant.”

Christine and Tia stood there open-mouthed, staring at Eve, Marcie was staring at Christine’s belly...

“And there’s just no way that’s even remotely possible.”

Chapter 8

The Stark Light of Day

The girls did what they could to maintain the appearance of normality, but their lack of interest in the medical exams combined with their unintentional disregard as to their appearance made the staff suspicious. The other problem was more readily apparent. The girls were just too big for the staff to even continue feigning that they were pregnant.

Christine awoke early, twisting against her added bulk. She found it very hard to sleep these days, as did the other girls. Her legs were held apart by three pillows wedged between her knees, another pillow sat under her shoulders and she had been clutching a third in her arms when she went to bed. Now her arms were just wrapped around her breasts. She had given up on wearing tops to bed. Marcie stubbornly refused to give up on shirts and found a large tent-like t-shirt that stretched tightly across her bust line, not covering her stomach at all. , *It’s just more comfortable without*, Christine thought

A few weeks ago Christine would have thought being this large was physically impossible, but now it was something she faced with determination and an odd sort of wonder. She untangled her arms from her breasts and began kicking the pillows from between her legs, already trying to rub away the normal itchiness. She reached over the headboard of the bed and grabbed the twisted sheets that were tied there and began to pull herself slowly upright. Halfway up she paused to catch her breath, wrapping the sheet around her arm so she wouldn’t slide back down to the mattress. *We’ve got to make our move soon*, she thought, *or there won’t be any move to make*. She began pulling again, swinging her legs over the side of the bed, allowing the weight of her belly to pull her upright. She braced herself for the pain as her belly pushed her legs further and further apart until she was finally upright, her belly stretching out to her knees which were spread almost three feet apart by her massive abdomen. She took a moment to position her breasts on either side of her belly and called out to Marcie “You awake?”

Marcie yawned and began kicking pillows from between her legs. “Just a second,” Marcie replied, pulling herself up the same way Christine had, but with a lot more ease, as her belly was dwarfed by Christine’s. *Marcie does win the booby prize*, Christine thought as she watched Marcie try to arrange the bulk of her twin zeppelins. But it was no laughing matter. Marcie’s breasts were now beyond any reasonable sort of measurement,

each stretching out to either side of her enormous belly, each the size of a normal pregnant belly at term. While obscured by her top, the lumps at the front of her breasts were very evident.

“I don’t think I can do it this morning, a little help?” Christine said.

Marcie looked across the space between their beds. “I’ll give it a shot, thank God we moved the beds closer together.” Marcie braced her feet against Christine’s and grabbed the sheet-become-rope as Christine tossed it to her. Marcie began pulling herself upright, huffing and puffing, but slowly getting herself upright. She allowed herself to sway against the rope until she found her balance and dropped the sheet, holding her arms out to Christine.

Christine grabbed Marcie’s forearms and Marcie rocked backward, straightening Christine’s legs as Christine began to rock backward toward her bed again. Marcie leaned back as hard as she could while they both pulled their arms closer together, leaving them standing in the middle of the room, leaning into each other, unable to move.

They both huffed and puffed for some time before catching their breath. “Wow... that’s, huh huh, getting a lot huh huh, harder.” Marcie gasped. Christine waited until she caught her breath before speaking. “Last time was like a month ago. We were a lot smaller then.”

“Yeah...Looks like I was right, stuck here with our boobs and bellies mashed together.”

“At least I don’t have the mega-boobs”

“Not yet. You’ll probably have these to deal with next week. They’re heavy as hell” Marcie replied, pushing one of her breasts upwards and in until it rested on Christine’s belly.

”Oof! You weren’t kidding about heavy! It must weigh thirty pounds.”

“Thirty four pounds the day before yesterday.” Christine looked at her quizzically. “I was playing with the scale in the exam room while I waited for the doctor to tell me that all this was just normal, peaches and cream.”

“Do they hurt?” Christine asked, staring at uneven bulge at the tip of Marcie’s breast sitting just inches from her face.

“Only when I move too fast and they slap into my chest”. I had to start padding up there, Marcie said, indicating the bumpy surface where her nipples ought to be, “I kept bumping them into stuff. How’s the belly holding up?”

“Okay I guess. Unless I’m sitting, or trying to turn or move fast, or walking or...” Christine rolled her eyes, “Okay, it sucks.”

“Hey, at least the weight isn’t pressing into our backs.” Marcie added, running her hand across the curve of her belly and onto Christine’s.

“Yeah, it is kinda relaxing,” Christine replied, reaching up with both hands to grab Marcie’s breast from atop her belly then stopping short. “Mind if I move this? Its kinda heavy.”

Marcie laughed. “Hell, you can keep it, as long as you take the pair.” Christine laughed as she tried to lift Marcie’s breast from her belly and failed. “Damn girl, how do you manage?” Christine said laughing. “The same way you do,” Marcie laughed back, putting both her hands on the lower curve of Christine’s belly and pushing slightly, as if to lift it. Christine tried lifting Marcie’s breast clear of her belly as...

“Oh my God, get a room whydontcha?” Tia exclaimed from the doorway.

Both girls turned toward Tia looking confused, but then as they realized what she meant their faces reddened and they both pulled their hands away from each other.

“We weren’t...”

“Hey, whatever floats your boat,” Tia said, swaying slightly in the hallway. Her belly was at almost as big as Christine’s and she seemed to be getting around fine, a thought that comforted Christine immensely. Tia continued, “Everyone’s gone. The nurse’s station is empty, so are the front offices. Janice is gone and it looks like she moved out in a hurry.”

“Shit,” said Christine, “They know we know, don’t just stand there gawking, help us apart!”

§

It took a few minutes for everyone to get their bearings and put on some semblance of clothes, but it wasn’t hard to work out what happened. They knew we knew, so there was no need to keep pretending. Most of the equipment in the medical bay had been left in place, aside from the computer terminals and it was easy to see, in retrospect, that the ultrasound machine had been rigged to show someone else’s scan via videotape. Most of the administration rooms were empty, aside from the computer terminal at the back of the group encounter room and some stray sheets of paper lying on the floors.

“Okay, we have to search this whole place. See what we can find about what the fuck they did to us and find a way to get the hell out of here.” Christine said.

“No kidding. I’ll get right on it boss,” replied Tia as she issued a mock salute and waddled ponderously away, one hand pressed firmly into the small of her back, the other resting against the wall for support and balance.

§

Eve, being the most mobile of the four, headed for Janice's room. The bed was still there, as were the bookshelves, although the books and computer were gone. A few sheets of paper were on the floor. The time it took to actually squat down and pick them up, it turned out, was wasted. Random pages from some long chemicalish document.

Eve pulled herself back to her feet and continued searching.

§

Marcie wobbled unsteadily forward and sat down at the computer terminal in the group encounter room. It wasn't a real computer at all, instead it was just a dumb terminal hooked up to some sort of network. The real problem for Marcie was being able to use it, or rather, being able to reach the keys. Sitting at the desk, her belly forced her back sufficiently that typing would be difficult, but compounded with her massive breasts hanging to either side of her belly? There was just no place for her to put her arms.

After puzzling over the problem for several minutes Marcie turned her chair sideways and began to type one handed.

§

Tia made her way to the first door she ever remembered seeing in this place. The doors to the reception area. From this side they were the same grey steel as the other doors, but she knew on the other side were wooden doors, carpeting and, most importantly, phones.

She tried the doorknob and was unsurprised by the tight click of a locked door. She peered through the crack in the door, seeing the reception desk beyond and the chairs in the waiting area. But that's not what she was looking for. She could also see the bolt of the door.

Tia waddled slowly away, pausing every few moments to regain her balance and catch her breath. All she needed was a thin piece of metal. She waddled up to the door to Marcie and Christine's room, misjudging the distance and bouncing her belly off the door. She instinctively reached down to rub the spot but it was, along with her belly button, well out of reach. Luckily what she needed was right inside the room. She reached into the closet and pulled out a red dress. *Not bad at all... not my style though.* She tore the dress from the hanger and headed back to the door.

It took less than five minutes to bend the coat hanger back into a semi-straight metal wire and slide it against the bolt for the door. "FUCK" she yelled, dropping the coat hanger and pressing against the long, deep cut it had made on her hand. She looked down past the curve of her belly at the coat hanger and frowned. *Easier to get another one.* Five minutes later she was back and a moment later there was a popping sound as the door swung several inches inward.

Tia waddled into the reception room, a room obviously not designed for someone who couldn't see their feet. She banged her knees against a low chair, nearly tripping over it, then turned to the wall and rested both hands against it until she regained her footing and caught her breath. The receptionist desk had a phone, but the phone wire hung, unconnected beneath the desk. She looked around. *Hell, the room isn't even finished*, she realized. Half the walls were unpainted and most of the furniture was missing. Tia dropped the phone, turned and headed back to the doorway. From that vantage point the room looked complete but any surface not visible looking into the room from the hall was either missing or unfinished.

Then she realized, *The Exit!* She waddled slowly across the room, hurrying as much as she could, again misjudging the distance and bouncing slightly off the door. Only it didn't move. Even the big steel doors inside the medical bay moved slightly when you pushed them. This one didn't. A quick check revealed why. It wasn't a door. It was just half a door nailed in the right place in the wall.

§

Tia waddled heavily into the group encounter room, exhausted. She'd just confirmed in the medical bay that she now weighed one hundred and eighty three pounds. Not that that was in and of itself a problem. The problem was that, not counting her belly, she weighed ninety-five pounds soaking wet. Sweat ran down off her face and chest and down the curve of her belly. She could feel it dripping off her belly button slowly, one drop at a time.

Tia rested her hands on one of the chairs and leaned into it, allowing her arms to take up some of the weight her overtaxed legs had been supporting.

"You find anything?" Marcie asked.

Tia flinched, her arms flying up into the air, almost losing her balance and toppling forward. "God, don't do that! I didn't even see you there!"

"Sorry, I didn't mean to..."

"Whatcha find?"

"Nothing much," Marcie said, turning her head back toward the screen. Just Dr. Ted's notes on our group sessions. Kinda weird seeing it from his perspective."

"Why are you typing like that?" Tia asked, noting Marcie's sidesaddle, one handed typing.

"I just can't reach the keyboard past all this," she said, motioning toward her breasts.

Tia, for a change, spoke quietly, “and all this doesn’t worry you even a little bit?”

Marcie spun her chair around to face Tia. “A little worried??? I’m a lot worried! Aren’t you?”

“Yeah, but I thought it was just me... no one seems to talk about it...”

“Maybe we better,” Marcie replied, resting her hands on the upper curves of her breasts as she looked down at them, “It might do us all a lot of good. Lets go find the others.”

§

Christine sat in the medical bay, looking through a stack of files that had been left on the floor. All their medical files from their OB exams. A couple of forms, some notes... and page after page of doodling. *He wasn’t taking notes.... Doodles! Fuck me harder!*

Aside from the girls files the rest of the folders seemed to have to do with mundane matters, food prep, laundry, cleaning schedules. Boring. Christine pushed the folders toward the back of the desk, into the space where a computer terminal once sat, then pushed herself across the wide aisle to the opposite desk and tried to pull open the middle drawer. It opened about half an inch before hitting her belly and bouncing closed. Christine felt her eyes begin to tear and pushed herself back from the desk, rubbing her eyes.

“Eve, you find anything?”

“Nope, just piles of crap and a few locked doors. Oh, and a copy of ‘The Hobbit’.”

Tia and Marcie walked into medical, shoulder to shoulder, supporting each other as they waddled slowly in, each using their spare hand to rub their bellies. “We need to talk,” Tia said.

“About what?” Christine asked.

“You know damn well about what. About how freaked out and scared we all are.”

“You too???”

“What? You think cause I’m loud I don’t get worried?”

“I guess I’ve just been so worried I didn’t want to think about it, I mean, what’s going to happen to us. How big are we going to get?”

“And if we’re not pregnant, what’s inside here,” added Marcie, slapping her belly with an audible thump.

Christine twisted her neck around to look at Marcie, and then back towards Eve. "This place isn't the best place to talk. Lets go to the entertainment center, then at least we can all see each other at once."

Tia nodded, "The comfy chairs and sofa won't hurt either. I think my knees are gonna go on strike any minute."

The girls gathered themselves up, as quickly as they could under the circumstances, and headed back into the main hall.

"I just don't know what to think. I think the worst part is not knowing. Every day we get bigger and bigger and I just don't want to grow any more." Marcie said.

"Yeah, and we have to look at what size we're going to be soon all the time," Christine said, "Every time I look at Marcie I think, 'Oh my God, how am I gonna deal with that,'" and waved toward Marcie's massive breasts. Marcie looked down embarrassed and almost raised her hands to cover herself, despite the impossibility. "I know what you mean," she replied, "Every time I see you or Tia I wonder how I'll be able to get around with a belly that big, especially with my boobs like this"

"At least you have someone to look to, some guesstimate of what next week will bring, Tia said quietly, "Christine and I are the biggest belly-wise. I don't know about her, but I can barely walk anymore. I get so tired and my legs and back are so sore... and its just so much worse cause I don't know what to expect.

Eve pushed open one of the doors into the entertainment center and the girls stopped, transfixed at the sight before them.

At first none of them were sure what to make of it. First they saw the familiar shape of a woman's back, her red hair flowing down over her shoulders, her legs hanging down and in front of her, her ankles resting on the floor. Her body seemed suspended about a foot off the floor, as if she was attached to the three large spheres in front of her. One, the largest, rested against the floor below her and she almost seemed to be lying against it, but somehow she wasn't sliding off despite the angle. The other two spheres were about half that size and rested to either side of the larger sphere.

Speechless, the girls walked in and surrounded the newcomer on all sides. Her head hung limply forward, her arms laying straight down the cleavage created by the meeting of her gigantic breasts and even more gigantic belly. She was unconscious.

"no, no, no, no ," Christine began, her speech slowly speeding up and rising in volume as her eyes grew wide."

"Maybe we better get her..." Marcie began, looking over at Christine.

no,no,No,No,No,No,NO!NO!" Christine just began to scream as Eve clamped her hand

over Christine's mouth and began to pull her backward out of the room. The other girls, startled out of their shock, grabbed a hold of Christine and helped drag her back into the hallway. She was still screaming against Eve's hand.

§

The girls sat on the floor in the group encounter room, silently looking at each other. It took almost ten minutes after they were out of the entertainment center before Christine's voice was at a low enough level where they dared uncover her mouth and five more minutes before she finally stopped muttering to herself.

Marcie was doing her best to comfort Christine, but her attempts to hug Christine seemed to just inflame her more. Any time her belly or breasts touched Christine she seemed to begin to panic again until Marcie withdrew. Marcie finally settled on resting her hands on Christine's shoulders, squeezing slightly. Several minutes later Christine eventually began to speak.

"I really saw her, didn't I? It wasn't just me?"

"No...it wasn't just you... We all saw her," Tia replied in an uncharacteristically quiet tone.

"Was she de...?"

"No...She was breathing. She was just unconscious."

"Should we try to wake her up? She's gotta know something," Marcie added

"I don't know if that's a good idea. I'll stay here with Christine. Why don't you and Tia check on her," Eve said.

"Sounds like a plan," Tia said, as she pulled herself slowly to her knees, leaning against a chair for support. Marcie hadn't moved. "You coming?" Marcie looked skeptical. "Come on, we have to do something," Tia said as she finally pulled herself to her feet and offered a hand up to Marcie.

§

The entertainment center was very quiet, the normal noise of the television was absent and the overhead lights were out. The only light shone in from the high, narrow windows near the ceiling, casting odd shadows around the room.

Tia entered first, waddling slowly around the redheaded woman, giving her a wide berth just in case her knees decided that it was a good time for a fifteen-minute break. Marcie followed closely behind, too closely as a matter of fact, occasionally bumping into Tia's back with her breasts. Tia looked back over her shoulder, and despite her silence her

expression made her meaning clear. Marcie backed off.

Tia stepped closer to the woman and reached down one handed, running her fingers over the woman's hand. No reaction. She placed her palm against the woman's forearm, pushing slightly, then lightly grasping the woman's arm and lifting it. Tia shook the woman's arm slightly, then more vigorously before allowing her arm to drop heavily against her belly. "She's drugged. If she was just sleeping she would have woken up."

Both girls now took the opportunity to actually look the woman over, something they had been too shocked to do before. She seemed to be about twenty-five or thirty, fairly slim, not bad looking either. Her belly and breasts occupied much more of their attention than her face. Her belly, which had appeared to be a sphere from behind, was actually much more oval, stretching out in front of her far more than its height. Her belly button stuck out impressively, a huge rounded cone, about 3 inches wide at its base, narrowing to an inch wide at its tip. Tia reached down and placed her hand on the woman's belly, her skin barely denting as she pushed against its surface.

The doors opened slightly behind them and Eve stuck her head in, looking at Tia curiously. "It's okay, you can talk. She's like drugged or something. Out like a light." Tia responded. Eve pushed the doors open, and walked in, her left hand clasped in Christine's right. The waddled in slowly, Christine dictating the speed of their movement as they walked around the woman, opposite the other girls.

"God, look at her breasts!" Tia exclaimed, pointing at the woman's nipples. Her breasts were at least the size of Christine's belly, her areola taking up the front quarter of her breasts, pushed out into a wide puffy curve. Her nipples stood erect, hugely swollen, about the size and shape of an old-fashioned soda bottle, each leaking a slow but steady stream of a thick, clear gel. Marcie was shaking, hugging herself, her arms wrapped around her upper torso, her hands on her shoulders.

Christine looked down at the woman then back to Marcie. "Well, at least we know we're not headed to her size." Christine said, trying to keep the mood light, "Your nipples are nothing like those monsters."

Marcie shuttered slightly and said something quietly.

"Huh?"

"They're not that big yet, but they're getting there."

"Come on Marcie," Christine said, gesturing at Marcie's breasts, "You don't have anything like those beasties."

Marcie looked sadly over to Christine and then to the other girls before looking down at herself. "I was just embarrassed at first, the way they stuck out so much" Marcie lifted up her top, pulling it over her head and tossing it to the floor. The front of each of Marcie's

breasts were covered with a roughly cut piece of padded fabric with pastel stripes, probably part of a mattress, secured with medical tape. She began peeling back the pieces of tape, one by one, slowly, wincing as they came loose.

“You don’t have to do this,” Christine heard herself saying. Marcie glanced up then returned to the task at hand. She pulled the fabric away, revealing a second layer, taped down like the first. “But they just kept getting bigger and bigger. I didn’t know how to say anything, cause I hid them at first, but they just keep getting bigger and bigger” Now a large bulge was visible, running up from the center of the circle of fabric to near the top edge. Marcie pulled the last pieces of tape away, allowing the fabric circle to fall to the floor.

Marcie’s areola looked to be about the size and shape of half a soccer ball, roughly textured and dark reddish brown, but they had all known that, they could see that much through her t-shirt. It was her nipple that held their attention. It stood out proudly from the center of her areola, about five inches long. Its base was wide, merging gently into the curve of her puffy areola, narrowing over its length to about an inch wide at the tip. A large drop of moisture hung heavily from its tip. It looked just like smaller version of the redheaded woman’s.

“Uh, you’re leaking” Tia said, as the droplet of clear fluid fell from Marcie’s nipple.

“Huh, what?” Marcie said, looking down at herself. “Shit...just like the redhead. I’m so totally fucked.”

“We’re all in this together,” Christine said, walking over to Marcie.

The girls stared in shock as she removed the padding from her other breast, allowing her other nipple to stand free. Eve walked around the unconscious woman and put her arm on Marcie’s shoulder. “We’re getting out of this. Don’t worry.”

“How? There aren’t any ways out. The reception area is a fake,” Tia replied.

“And we can’t figure out what’s going on. All the files and terminals are missing from medical,” Christine added.

“Wait,” Marcie said, “There’s a terminal in the group encounter room. Couldn’t we...”

“Move that to medical and plug it in!” Eve said, turning and walking quickly out of the room.

“Uh, what about her?” Christine called after Eve.

“She’s out cold, but she won’t be for long, lets move!”

In the end it took them almost an hour to move the terminal. It weighed fifty pounds or so, but any two of the girls could carry that much. The real problem was that none of the girls could get close enough to lift it. In the end they wound up sliding it onto a small table they rolled down from medical, then pushed the table back down the hallway.

Eve climbed out from beneath the desk, the only one of the three who could still fit under it. "It's all plugged in." Tia pushed her seated form up to the desk and turned on the terminal. A menu of departments popped up with an empty password box. "Now what?"

Eve smiled. "You remember whose desk this is?"

"Yeah, Sylvia's."

"Right, Sylvia. A 45-year-old nurse who thinks Microsoft makes tiny plush animals. You think she can remember a password to save her life?"

Eve slid open the left desk drawer and looked in, finding nothing, then Tia checked the right. "Well, 'sampson12' is written on a list marked 'password: SECRET!'. Think maybe that might be it?" Tia said as she grabbed the keyboard, sat it on her belly and began typing.

Tia typed and read for several minutes before saying anything else. "Looks like they were working on something called RHA-5, but it doesn't say what it is. Half the computer is filled with stuff about RHA-5 manufacturing, the other half is about us."

"What's it say about us?" Marcie asked.

Tia typed a few keys and a photo of Marcie popped up in the corner of the screen. It looked like a candid shot, taken when she wasn't looking. "Ever heard of 'Wrightstown Community Clinic'?"

"Uh, yeah... that's where I got my pregnancy test confirmed."

"Well, says here they paid someone named Bernie at Wrightstown two thousand dollars the day you were tested."

The screen cleared and Tia's picture appeared in the corner. "Fuck, same with me. We've been set up!"

"So, what the hell is in here?" Marcie said, rocking on her heels, resting her hands on her belly.

"Dunno, the stuff about us is all about diet, scheduling, clothing orders, nothing medical at all."

“What’s it say about that R2D2 stuff?” Christine asked.

“RHA-5. It’s all weird chemical stuff. I don’t understand any of it. It’s talking about some kind of manufacturing process.”

“I just realized something. How did the redheaded woman get in there?”

Marcie was first to respond. “Who cares?”

“Because,” Christine said, glaring at Marcie, “She’s huge. The double doors to the hallway are big enough to get her through and so are the hallways. But where from there?”

Tia turned around, looking down the aisle they were standing in. “This is about the only place wide enough.”

“Right,” Christine said, “Now, there were about a dozen staff people here, which one didn’t fit?”

“Well, we needed the orderlies.” Eve said.

“And Janice handled all the mundane crap. Exercise program, school scheduling, that stuff.”

“And we needed Doctor Ted, what would be do without a stud puppy?” Tia added.

“Right. But if we’re not pregnant, why did we need an obstetrician?”

All their eyes immediately moved to Doctor Whitson’s office door, a doublewide door ten feet further down the aisle.

“I already checked it, its locked. Is there any security stuff in the computer?” Christine asked.

Tia tapped on the keyboard for a few minutes, then held her key over the enter key as she looked toward Dr Whitson’s door. Then she pressed it. A brief humming noise came from the door, then a buzz and a click.

Eve waddled to the door and turned the handle. It opened easily, swinging outward into the hall.

The office appeared normal from the doorway, but when the girls waddled inside it became clear that this was no ordinary office. The desk was set too far back against the rear wall for anyone to sit at it, the files stacked upon it covered with a thin layer of dust.

A wide path led from the entrance, past the desk and to another set of double doors

leading out the opposite side of the room. Christine and Tia took the opportunity to half sit, half lean on the desk, taking their massive weight off their legs. Eve walked to the double doors as Marcie joined the others leaning against the desk. Eve pushed the doors open a few inches, peering through, and then quickly pulling her head back from the doors and allowed them to close silently. “Looks like a factory or lab of some kind. Lots of people. Lets get out of here,” Eve said, whispering loudly, turning back toward the upper door, her eyes stopping on other girls outstretched bellies and breasts lined up in a row at the doctor’s desk, *Like a factory*, she thought...

§

The girls converged back at the entertainment center, the furthest room from medical, making sure they locked the doctor’s office door and moved the terminal to a cart and pushed it into the linen closet.

The girls took much longer to get from medical back to the entertainment center than it had taken them to make the trip earlier. The weight they were dragging along with them was just getting to be too much of a strain. When they finally made it back to the entertainment center they were exhausted.

Marcie made her way over toward the videotape racks and retrieved her top, moaning softly as she pulled it over her swollen nipples. Tia walked around the sleeping redhead, towards Marcie when her feet went out from under her. To Marcie it looked like a scene out of a cartoon as Tia’s head and belly fell and her tiny feet shot up into the air before she landed with a wet thump against the redheaded woman.

As the girls made their way around the redhead’s massiveness Tia was already cursing. “Fuck me! SHIT!” Tia tried to get her hands and feet under her center of gravity to lift herself to her feet, but the floor was covered with the transparent gel flowing from the redhead, making getting any sort of foothold impossible. All she could manage was to slide her hands around in the mess, bumping repeatedly into the unknown woman’s belly and breasts.

All the girls rushed to Tia’s side, but the first to arrive, Marcie, slipped on the same gel, falling into Tia. Christine tried to back away, seeing what was happening, but bumped into Eve, who was following closely behind her. Within moments all four girls were on the floor, covered with the odd transparent gel. “What is this shit?” Tia exclaimed, wiping a sheet of the slime off her belly. “Uh, wha?”, “I’m totally soaked though”. “How are we gonna get up when we’re all slippery.”, “Ah. Huh?”, “Feels like KY Jelly.”, “What the hell is KY Jelly?”

Eve blushed at the question, but stopped short. “Wait, what’s that?” All four girls quieted down and listened. “Wha, where?” said an unfamiliar but groggy voice from behind them.

“Shit. She’s waking up. What now?” Tia asked.

“How should I know?” Marcie said, sliding toward the woman’s head. The redhead’s eyes flickered for a moment, and then opened halfway in a sleepy, dreamlike way.

“Hi” she said, smiling.

“Uh, hi.” Marcie replied, “Are you okay?”

The woman shifted her back slightly and slowly raised one hand to her face, awkwardly pushing stray hair away from her eyes as her head tilted back and forth. “I feel woozy, but pretty darn good. I’m Cecelia”

“Yeah. I’m Marcie and that’s Tia,” she said, pointing to Tia who was crawling up on the opposite side.

“Hi,” Cecelia said, looking past Tia to Christine as she began to right herself, “Hi Christine”

Christine looked up and replied “Yeah, Hi... Wait a minute, how do you know me?”

“I’m here to rescue you. You’re parents said you were pregnant, but deeeeyam, they’re weren’t kidding, were they?” Cecelia smirked.

“Okay, what are we going to do with her until happy anesthesia time is over?” Tia asked.

“Not much we can do,” Christine remarked, “When it wears off, well, that’s when the hard part stops.”

“I ate too much for dinner,” Cecelia said laughing, running her hands down her belly.

“This is going to suck so much.”

Chapter 9

The Great Escape

In the end it had taken three hours to calm Cecelia down and get the basic story from her. Covering her with a couple of sheets had done more to calm her down than any amount of talking. One of the girls stayed with Cecelia all the time. None of them liked it, it was too much of a reminder of what lay ahead for them if they were unsuccessful, but likewise no one could stand the idea of leaving her alone.

Throughout the next week the girls took turns, late at night, creeping through the doctor’s office and onto the factory floor, mapping what was there and working out their escape plan. The place seemed closed after about nine in the evening, but just to be sure

they waited until after midnight to start their explorations. They all realized that if they got caught it was all over. Unfortunately the lab was much larger than it first appeared and finding the way out was a much more daunting task than they first assumed, especially given how quickly they tired these days.

Almost as soon as they had calmed Cecelia down they noticed the first bits of new oddness. For one, their bellies no longer itched constantly, much to their relief, however they never were able to wash the last of the odd gel off their skin. It spread itself out into a thin coating, covering their skin and slowly soaking through any clothing they wore. Secondly, the deep cut on Tia's hand was gone. Not just healed. Gone as if it had never been there. Thirdly and probably most surprising, despite the repeated tumbling and slipping in the entertainment center not one of the girls had a single bruise or mark on them.

For Christine and to a lesser extent the other girls, time for their escape was rapidly running out. All of them but Eve had started going topless as a practical matter, and Eve grudgingly joined them in a show of solidarity.

Marcie started having trouble before the others. Her breasts, combined with her belly, made her too wide to fit through the narrow door of her dorm room. In the week since they found Cecelia both her breasts and belly had grown, but her breasts were winning the race outward. Now her breasts were as large as her overripe belly, if not a bit larger. Her areola had expanded along with her breasts, each now the size of a salad bowl, each sporting an eight inch long nipple which now constantly dripped, annoying and embarrassing her to no end.

Christine was in far worse shape. Her breasts had swollen out to the size of medicine balls, capped with wide, bowl shaped areolas and nipples that she now referred to as the 'giant motherfucking nipples from hell'. But Christine's real problem was her belly. It continued its growth outward, now stretched out in front of her much further than she could hope to reach. Balancing was becoming next to impossible and walking nearly so. It was at their daily meeting in the group encounter room when they all eased themselves onto the floor that the final straw broke.

Tia waddled into the group encounter room for their late night meeting, her arm wrapped around Eve's shoulder for support. While Eve had continued to grow she was still the smallest of the group, looking like she was about to give birth to triplets as opposed to the whole Italian army. Tia wasn't so lucky. The massive size of her belly combined with her diminutive stature made it practically impossible for her to walk on her own. Unsupported she could barely maintain her balance, forced to lean so far back that you could barely see her face over the horizon of her massive belly.

Christine entered next and held the doors open for Marcie, who backed into the room to avoid banging her very sensitive and very large nipples into the doors. Marcie helped Christine lower herself to the floor as Eve helped Tia, then Eve helped Marcie lower herself before sliding down onto the floor with them.

“So, what do we have?” Eve asked.

Tia and Christine seemed to be ignoring Eve, sitting, bouncing slightly up and down and trying to look back over their own shoulders.

“What’s with you two?” Eve asked. Christine and Tia both stopped bouncing and looked, first to Eve and then to each other. “You too?” asked Christine. Tia nodded and started bouncing again, this time reaching behind herself with both hands. Soon Christine did the same.

“Something you want to share with the rest of the class?” Eve laughed.

“No, its nothing,” Christine replied, but Marcie was already creeping behind Christine to see what the problem was. At first it wasn’t obvious. She saw Christine’s back, the full swell of her belly and breasts visible to either side. Her hands clutched at the firm roundness of her bottom, one hand centered on each cheek. Then she realized what the problem was.

Christine wasn’t so much sitting as resting on her belly. It had expanded so much that her body was held aloft, supported on the lower curve of her belly, her butt several inches above the floor. Christine bounced again, her rear brushing against the floor before the firm roundness of her belly lifted her torso back off the ground. Marcie gasped, “Oh God, its just like...”

“Don’t say it!” Christine yelled, almost in tears, “Just don’t, okay”

Christine wiped her eyes, “I think we’re out of time. Did we find the exit tonight?”

Eve looked to Marcie, then to Christine and Tia before answering. “I think so. At the far end of the building is door marked ‘emergency exit’. It has those little windows with the wire running through the glass. It looks like it leads into a small room, then outside.”

“Was it locked?” Marcie asked?

“Yeah, but it had those emergency bar type latches. You just push and they open.”

Christine started flailing about, trying to get some purchase so she could stand up. “What are we all sitting around for then? Lets get the hell out of here!”

“One problem. Cecelia... we couldn’t move her if we tried. Anyway, I don’t think she’ll fit through the doors anymore. She’s been growing for the last week.”

“If Tia and I don’t get out of here soon we’re going to be spending all our time in the entertainment center with Cecelia. I don’t think we’ll be able to walk for much longer.”

“Okay, then we move now. We’ll have to send help back for Cecelia. Anyone have anything else?”

“Anyone else feel like their mouth is full of pudding?” Tia said, spitting a mouthful of clear gel across the room.

“Yeah,” Christine replied as Marcie nodded, “I just wasn’t going to spit it across the room.”

“What the hell is it?” Tia asked.

“I don’t know, but its time to leave while we still can. Lets move!”

§

The girls crept slowly and carefully across the laboratory floor. The aisles weren’t very wide and carts filled with electronic equipment that would have been minor annoyances a month ago now were major obstacles to overcome. In the end the girls had to stop and rest four times before getting to the emergency exit. It was just as Eve described, two doors with emergency release latches. The windows were dark.

“Okay, this is it. The room is about fifteen feet square. There’s a security desk and then voom! We are outta here!” Eve exclaimed.

“Looks dark in there,” Marcie observed.

“Yeah, they must have turned off the lights.”

“Come on,” Christine said, pushing between Eve and Marcie and pushing against the doors. “Lets go!”

The girls waddled slowly into the room, its inky darkness only illuminated by the light shining in from the hall. The doors swung closed behind them, leaving only the light coming though the small windows to light their way.

“Okay, which way is the door?” Christine asked.

“Straight across the room, past the desk.”

“I don’t think you want to go anywhere girls,” a familiar voice said as the lights came on.

The girls squinted and covered their eyes from the glare.

“You won’t find what you need out there. Now stop where you are,” they heard Doctor Whitson say.

Their eyes slowly adjusted to the light. Dr Whitson sat on the security desk, now turned sideways and pushed against the exit door. He was dressed in business casual and held an odd sort of pistol in his hand.

“Or what? You’ll bore us to death?” Tia said, waddling forward toward the door, still squinting at the bright light.

“Stop!” Whitson called, but Tia seemed oblivious to the pistol he was pointing at her, still partially blinded by the bright light, as she slowly waddled toward the exit.

“Suit yourself,” Whitson said as he fired. The girls winced, expecting a loud bang rather than the hiss that accompanied the firing.

“OWWWWW! Bastard!” Tia exclaimed looking down at the large dart stuck in her belly. It was a tube about 4 inches long, red cloth plumes hanging out the back. As she watched the dart pushed itself out of her belly, falling onto the floor. Within seconds the red wound had sealed itself, leaving no trace of its presence.

Dr Whitson sat the pistol on the desk and turned back to watch Tia.

Tia reached around toward the spot where the dart hit, then, finding it out of reach turned toward Marcie. “Am I hurt? Bleeding? What?”

“Nope, not even a mark. What the hell was that?” Marcie asked, turning back to Whitson.

“Just a little booster shot like we gave your detective friend.”

“Booster shot of what?!?” Tia exclaimed.

“The RHA-5 catalyst. It’s our little project here, and it’s the reason you can’t leave.”

“Why the hell not?”

“RHA-5, Recombinant Healing Amalgam 5, is our finest work. It’s a gel that can heal most injuries in seconds. Damaged cells repair themselves, broken bones knit together. It’s an amazing substance, with only one downside. We can’t synthesize it directly. However, we did find the perfect way to make it. We created a retrovirus that could modify mucus membranes to make RHA-5.”

“Why not shoot up a pig or a cow with it then?” Christine asked.

“We did. Pigs worked wonderfully. Unfortunately the version of RHA created with pigs wouldn’t work on people, just on pigs. Luckily one of our interns came up with the idea for a maternity home. All we needed were four or five girls that thought they were pregnant, but weren’t. Put them in an isolated place, inject them with the catalyst and wait six months.”

“Uh, I feel really weird” Tia interjected.

“That’s just the beginning Tia. Anyway, things were going great until things took an unfortunate turn with Marcie. We injected her with the counteragent, but it had no effect. Worse, we couldn’t remove the RHA-5. Any incision we made to drain the fluid sealed almost as quickly as we made it. Not to mention the side effects of the counter agent.”

“Side effects?” Marcie asked.

“I would have thought they were very obvious by now,” Dr Whitson said, motioning towards her breasts.

“Uh, guys... a little help here?” Tia said

The girls turned to look at Tia and their eyes gaped at the sight. Tia was leaning far back, both hands supporting the small of her back. Her breasts had expanded hugely, going from practical non-existence to a size larger than Marcie’s. Her nipples dribbled streams of clear gel down her expanding belly that ran down its curve and puddled on the floor. She was teetering unsteadily, her hopes of keeping her balance diminishing moment by moment.

“You bastard!” Christine yelled.

“Now, now... not to worry. We’re working on a counteragent. We’re very close despite what our previous three attempts might lead you to believe.”

“Working hard? The labs empty!” Eve said.

“Well, it’s practically midnight. We do have a budget to consider.”

“A budget?” Christine said waving toward Tia, “A fucking budget? Look what you’re doing to us!”

Tia had collapsed to her knees, her belly pulling her forward at a forty-five degree angle. Her belly rested heavily on the floor in the puddle of gel, her breasts pushed to either side by its massive size. If you watched closely you could see Tia’s back slowly straightening as her growing belly lifted her torso off the ground.

“Can’t be helped, I’m afraid. Not to worry, the RHA 5 in your systems stops you from being injured and keeps you from being damaged by the stretching. As soon as we can come up with a counter-agent to stop the retrovirus you’ll all be drained and we’ll drop you in your hometowns.”

“The virus is still active? So we’re like contagious or something?” Marcie observed.

“To an extent, but nothing to worry about. The RHA-5 would need to come into contact with someone else’s mucus membranes to cause a problem and we aren’t about to let that happen.”

Christine looked to the other girls and nodded. They nodded back and turned back toward the doctor.

“So, lets get you all back to your rooms and we can...”

The girls rushed Dr Whitson as he tried to reload his dart gun. Marcie knocked it from his hand as Christine’s belly hit him dead center, knocking him to the ground. “Grab his arms!” Christine cried as she leapt upon him, doing a belly flop with her now two hundred and thirty pound frame. Marcie and Eve grabbed his arms, sitting on them to hold them down as Christine slid herself up Dr Whitson, until their faces were two feet apart.

“So Doctor, what now?”

“The security men will be here shortly. You’ve accomplished nothing. Now GET OFF OF ME!”

“Not just yet,” Christine said, straightening her legs. Her belly acted as a pivot and as her legs pushed her butt into the air, her head came down until her face was only an inch from Whitson’s.”

“You’re mean,” Christine said, in a half serious tone. “What you need is a big kiss.”

She leaned in, pressing her lips against his, pinching his nose with one hand. A few seconds later he gasped and Christine shoved her tongue into his mouth, allowing her saliva-come-RHA-5 to fill his mouth. She held is nose for several more seconds until he swallowed, then let go, allowing her legs to relax and her head to pivot away from his.

“Now... what was that you were saying about this stuff being infectious?” Christine asked, a look of mock concern on her face. “Could someone hand me that dart gun?”

Christine and the other girls began to laugh.

Epilog

Things were touch and go when the security guards arrived an hour later, but after a little roughhousing they were returned to their dorm rooms. Tia was placed next to Cecelia in the entertainment room.

The first big surprise came the next morning.

“Rise and shine girls!” Janice called from the doorway to Marcie and Christine’s room.

“Huh? What?” Christine said, trying to push herself up. “What the hell are you doing here?”

“Well, I don’t know what happened last night, but there was a meeting this morning. All the... others working here...”

“We know about the lab,” Marcie interjected.

“Oh...OH! Well, all the doctors are in the lab. They’re running three shifts a day until they work out how to help you girls.”

“And help Dr Whitson,” Marcie laughed.

Janice looked confused. “Whitson? Oh... He wasn’t at the meeting this morning.”

“Probably out buying a bigger jock strap,” Marcie laughed, nearly rolling off her bed in the process.

Janice looked confused for a moment, then her eyes opened very wide. “No! You didn’t!” she laughed.

“Yes we did... well, Christine did anyway.”

Janice’s voice dropped in volume. “Good for you. He always was a big prick, despite how he looked.”

“Well, now people will know just by looking at him” Christine said smiling.

§

In the end it only took them four days of round the clock work to come up with a new solution. Christine was overjoyed as she was very close to joining Tia and Cecelia in the entertainment room club.

Eve went first, and once she was done each of the other girls was walked or wheeled though the halls to medical, sedated and injected with the counteragent. When they awoke several hours later the girls found themselves side by side on gurneys in some sort of recovery room. Christine awoke first, barely able to move her head. It took tremendous effort but she eventually managed to lift her head and look down at her sheet covered body. *My feet...* she thought, looking down at the small lumps at the end of the gurney, then fell fast asleep.

§

Christine awoke early, kicking off her comforter and heading for the shower. It had taken a great deal of effort to get used to rising early enough for school after almost nine months of sleeping in everyday, but school was much better than that lab anyway. Christine turned and looked in the mirror, admiring her moderately large, firm breasts. After she woke up in recovery the next thing she remembered was waking up in West Chester Hospital. She'd been dropped off at the emergency room, but no one saw by whom. It was all very mysterious. Still, the only physical reminders she had of the incident were her now large, bouncy breasts and a complete lack of scars anywhere on her body.

It took about three months for the girls to find each other, separated as they were over three counties but soon they were exchanging emails. It was strained at first, but over time they came to embrace their common experience.

Christine stepped out of the shower and dried off, tossing on her bathrobe before returning to her room to get dressed.

They had a sleepover a few weeks ago after they got together with the police for yet another debriefing. All the girls came though it pretty much unscathed, although Cecelia had needed some therapy to deal, but in the end they were all fine. The police and FBI never did manage to figure out who ran the maternity home, but that probably wasn't helped by the girls lack of candor about exactly what went on there. They knew the police would never believe them and kept most of the real story to themselves.

Christine got dressed, pulling her wool skirt up and trying to button it, but the ends just wouldn't come together. She pulled off the skirt and tossed it across the room, absentmindedly scratching her lower belly as she pulled out another skirt.

Christine walked over to the window and pulled open the shades. *Looks to be a great day.*

finis