

ICE STORM

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Chapter 11 - The Jaycees

I felt that asking Denny about the Jaycees would just give her more control over my life, so I didn't. I did tell Andrea I would be late that evening.

Rick seemed all for my going, so I asked him why and what to do. "Just go. Our current sources for projects and bank loans will retire or die. Bank loan committees can change their preferred loans and not tell anyone least of all their loan officers. You don't have to sell a thing. Ask them what they do. Wear your best clothes and that company name tag with 'crane operator'. They will be surprised at a girl up a crane; tell 'em stories from what you see up there. Get active. Your goal is to be remembered as a Good Gal for some unknown reason in the future. That's where I started."

I told Sam what Rick had told me up. He told me Rick had told him for me to leave work on time that day, which would be early for me. Sam almost never commented outright on my clothes or anything personal with me. So he surprised me when he told me he liked the business suit I wore that day. Or maybe my prosthetic bust under my feminine blouse had his attention. He had never said anything like that, and I would never ask him anything so direct.

The Jaycees met in some weird place that had previously served some other purpose. The parking lot did not seem well lit, and the building exterior seemed dark and foreboding. I felt comforted by my secret revolver in my large shoulder bag when I got out of the taxicab.

Inside had better lighting. A huge stone fireplace with a massive timber for a mantelpiece dominated the room. Some overweight guy in an open necked shirt named Joe Lonergran running a cleaning service welcomed me with a gin and tonic mixed drink. "Water, please." But I didn't tell him why. I didn't like him at first, but he grew on me over time. When he said he would do something, anything, it happened on time and delivered at the right place.

The guys were polite, but I had a hard time getting a conversation going with them. They drank too much, too fast, and talked about sports. I had never been a sports fan.

The women didn't quite know what to make of me either, but they would let me stand with them off on one side. They quickly decided I had to be a cross dresser, so I asked them how they knew.

"Your face. You are not animated." She tugged me by the hand. "Come watch." The guys kept a straight face. The gals signaled back and forth to each other all the time.

They wanted to know why I had a job up in a crane. They accepted my version of where else could a cross dresser get a full time job. I didn't tell them the real reason of what I wore under my clothes.

The women drank beers, wines, and mixed drinks, too. But one or two a night. Not four or five or six.

One of the women gave me a ride home that first visit.

On my third visit Joe pressed a membership application in my hand. "Only two visits are allowed. The membership committee hung back a little." His statement meant to me they thought I could be weird enough for them to be unsure. They wanted two character references.

I asked Sam about references, who got Rick and Jodi. Rick really surprised me almost bringing tears to my eyes when his copy of my application arrived at the worksite. They had attached a check for the dues.

Sam saw that. "Guess he likes you."

"Do you like me?"

"Oh, yeah."

So bolstered, I returned to the next meeting with the completed application. One of the women snatched it out of my hand dropping the check to the floor. "Only twenty? They let a twenty year old up in one of those cranes? I'll have to watch and not walk underneath."

I ignored the slight as I scooped up the check and handed it to her. "Yup. When that came back from the office the site foreman said 'guess he likes you'. So I asked him if he liked me, and he said he does."

"OK, I like you too. A little weird, but likeable. You wear a hard hat?"

"Oh, yes."

She peered around my head. "On that beautiful hair? Oh my Lord. Wear your hard hat next time."

I did, and they liked it. Somehow that made me into a coherent piece for those women. One of them served as a bank loan officer who asked me to visit her office.

Rick seemed delighted, and told Sam to make a place in the schedule. Sam didn't like that so much, but he had been a good trooper and a loyal employee. That had been after working in that crane for a few hours, so my hair had been flattened by the hard hat head band. So, I wore the hard hat.

She worked at one of the big regional offices. When I went into the lobby I had to ask, and the receptionist told me. "Fifth floor." The fifth floor lobby seemed plush to me and included all of the elevator door area. Off to one side a reception desk seemed equally imposing of a brown natural wood. "Looking for someone?"

I handed her my and the loan officer's business cards trying to avoid spooking

anyone too quickly with my voice. I had used my diaper once already, too.

Juli came out almost at a trot. "Yeah, Sandy. I'm glad you wore your hard hat." Her eyes went to my bust and focused on my corporate name tag. I took that moment to focus on her bust and wondered what could be underneath. She turned to the receptionist. "Call that list I gave you earlier. I'd like the second conference room. Oh, and Sandy doesn't touch coffee, so bring us bottled water."

Three more bank people arrived within minutes making three gals and one guy. Juli whispered to everyone. "Just keep standing. I want Jim to see the whole Sandy first." They sorta parted as they stood in a way that anyone seeing through that door saw all of me.

I used Rick's trick on them. "What kinds of loans do each of you work on." And I stuck to the question.

A middle aged guy with a name tag reading 'Raymond Hawthorne' arrived who their deference proclaimed to me that he had to be their boss. Juli explained me in her way which I appreciated.

"Have a seat. What does Wyndham need?"

Juli interrupted with how she had met me and as far as she knew I had a job as a very young crane operator. But such a unique one and had joined the Jaycees.

"Uh, sir, the Wyndham owner encouraged me to join. He also uses me as a trouble shooter. Apparently my hard hat, name badge, and girl clothes quickly separates the well run projects from those that might not be paying attention quite right. Juli is one of the Jaycees who likes me better in my hard hat. So not knowing a thing I wore it here to please her." I smiled. "I can tell you stories from what I see up in that crane. My boss Sam encourages my watching everything from up there for safety reasons. What kinds of banking do you all do?"

That had been the right thing to say. I learned more in half an hour about construction and equipment loans than I thought could ever be possible.

The guy became the first who had to leave for an appointment. Then Raymond Hawthorne.

I walked out with everyone's business cards, and made notes of who did what at the first opportunity in the first floor lobby.

Rick seemed delighted with the copy I sent him.

From then the women always welcomed me, and their comfort with me helped the men too. Various people would tell me from time to time to keep on wearing the hard hat. To them, that kept me in their minds without disrupting their perceived order for the world.

A few meetings later some overly opinionated guy arrived at the Jaycees meeting. The deference to him became obvious, so I asked one of the women. "Oh, he's with the Metropolitan Jaycees. Betcha he heard about you and had to come see for himself. Go over there and introduce yourself." She whispered. "Own your place in the room."

I checked my Wyndham Crane Operator name tag had remained in place and walked straight at him. I used my regular voice. "Hi, I'm Sandy the new member. I operate a big high rise construction crane. Who are you?" I held out my hand.

He hesitated a moment signifying that I had blown his mind with my mixed image. The room went almost silent waiting to see what he did. I took that to mean the Jaycees Chapter had taken my side. He finally got his hand up. "I'm John Davis of the Metropolitan Jaycees Council."

"Well, before you ask, I wear girl's clothes for concealing a medical disability. I really do operate one of those big cranes way up in the sky, and my worksite likes me. The company owner told me to join the Jaycees. The Chapter tells me to wear my hard hat just like I do at work all day. At least it keeps my flattened hair from being ugly. Honestly, I think wearing it helps tame their confusion. Now, what are you doing here? What the hell is a Jaycees Council?" I became instantly glad I proclaimed my gender by using that swear word. But I didn't let go of his hand as I waited to see what he did with that, too.

Two of the women were a little behind him where I could see them without shifting my eyes. Their smiles grew subtly. They were glad I had proclaimed my presence as an honorable member of the space in the room.

He did shake my hand with two more pumps, which also told me he didn't know what to do with me. When he let go I let him.

He gave some Mickey Mouse explanation of the Jaycees Council, none of which I made sense to me and I didn't remember.

I did feel the presence of Rick, Sam, Andrea, and Denny on my shoulders cheering me on.

One of the guys handed him a beer.

Juli hadn't come to this meeting, but one of the women made a silent statement by handing me a frosty mug of ice water.

Later that evening a woman accountant asked me if we could talk.

"Sure." I handed her my card.

She seemed a head shorter than I. We wound up almost by ourselves in a corner of the room with my watching her face and also over her head. "You're a cross dresser, aren't you?" She didn't wait for my answer. "One of my colleagues says she knows of another, and says there is a cross dressers support group that meets on Sunday afternoons. May she call you?"