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Queer Ramblings

for queer women
& their many admirers

June, 2003

Issue #32



Jeanine & Angel

Who you calling Queer?

Lesbian, bisexual, deaf, trans-gendered, fat, questioning, tall, slim, short, differently-able, multi-colored, multi-cultural and poly-lingual women we are.

QR is intended for mature audiences, so enter at your own risk



The butch-femme dance...

About me, my vision of grandeur, and other such queer ramblings...

Welcome to the thirty-first issue of *QueerRamblings*, a fabulous monthly publication featuring the creativity of queer women. I started this magazine because of the abundant talent in our queer community that often goes unrecognized due to limited amounts of publications that will feature queer-themed creativity.



While I do encourage coming out, being visible and feeling proud to be queer, I also respect that many of the readers and contributors are not out of the closet for a variety of reasons. *QueerRamblings* is a safe space, with the option of sharing your talents and still remain anonymous should you choose.

I look forward to a lifetime of issues filled with the creativity of the fabulous queer women who have the courage to share their work, and a little bit of themselves. Written experience is especially significant to me because it allows the space for

the reader and writer to have their own reality under a common idea. The writer pours in to words her experience and the reader absorbs it within a different perspective. Two minds, two worlds, same words. Cada cabeza es un mundo.

Please do send me your work. If I include your work, I'll send you a free copy. Don't forget that your work inspires many. You may snail mail or email to the address below. I encourage material of any kind and subject, but don't bother sending violence-themed material.

Finally, a special thanks, hug and big kiss to my darling partner Cid. I am truly blessed to have him.

This month's cover models/ photographers: Jeanine & Angel

Sandra R. Garcia / QueerRamblings Publication
12800 Florence Blvd/ Blythe, CA 92225

Note: I'm moving to NY next month to be with my FTM partner CID (huge grin) You can send mail to the CA address and I will receive it. I will give my new address as soon as I get settled in.

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did ya know you can look at the covers for past issues? Yeah, just click on "Images" and then "Covers" Pretty neat!



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Cars and Insurance

What do you get when you cross one car salesman, an insurance representative and two lesbians? One foreign car registered into two names, one American SUV driven by one lesbian but registered to another, one loan in two names with a high interest rate and insurance coverage for all with a multi-car discount. Whew!

When I was a little girl my parents traded in the family car every five years for a new one. Being that it was a family decision, many times I accompanied them on the trip to the Buick dealer. I remember it vividly.

We would meet a salesman, pick a color, take a test drive, my father would fill out the paper work, we would drive it home, one phone call would be made to the insurance company and voila? The new car deal was done and we were off to the land of "Are we there yet?" and "Don't make me stop this car!" Even in a child's mind, where time often stands still, the process of buying a



Gia Carangi, the Lesbian Supermodel who so tragically died of Aids, playing in the water with another model.

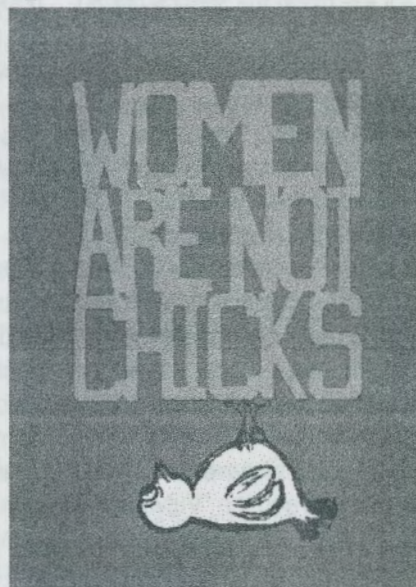
new car never seemed to take very long. So imagine my surprise when five and a half hours later my partner and I were still at the dealership waiting on the completed paperwork to be signed.

In today's technologically advanced society of online loan approvals, one would think the process of car buying would be significantly shorter. And it may be for the blissfully married heteros. But for us life-partnered gays, the process was longer than the 1982 Buick LeSabre that I inherited from my parents upon my high school graduation.

A process that took less than the better part of a Saturday for my parents, became a three day ordeal for my partner and I. Let me start from the beginning. My partner, Jennifer, is a Realtor who drives what might as well be a million miles a week in her V8 Ford Explorer, causing a severe deficit in our household budget under the line item "gas." Therefore, the decision was made that we would look for her something stylish, safe and roomy but with a smaller engine. We did some suave, Internet research and the 4- cylinder, Volvo S-40 was chosen. In short, it took us less time to research and choose a car than to actually purchase the car.

The plan was to trade in my old clunker, which was registered and insured in my name, for the new car that Jennifer would drive and I would begin to drive the Explorer as I don't travel the county hocking houses.

Simple enough, right? I truly believe it would have been easier to solve the Martha Stewart Insider Trading scandal than trying to purchase this car as a gay couple. Upon arriving at the dealership we played "20 Questions" with the sales staff in order for them to understand that we were buying the car and making the decision to-



gether. After they determined that we were indeed a lesbian couple who, following the stereotype probably didn't make much money, they pawned us off on an international salesman working his third day on the job. Our salesman was very kind but spoke with an extreme accent for his nationality that made what should have been short and concise conversation

more lengthy. Not to mention the fact that every time he said the word "Volvo" it sounded like "vulva" which made it difficult for me to focus on the task at hand.

After a satisfying test drive we accompanied our salesman to his glassed cubicle and began to answer more questions regarding our finances.

Again we were faced with scrunched foreheads, the national sign for confusion, of how it was that we two women owned a house together and shared bank accounts. I wanted them to stamp "LESBIAN" across our application just to make it easier for the loan processing. Not only did we have to answer the same questions, that we had just five min-

(Car Salesman continued on page 4)



utes earlier answered for our salesman, for the girl in the finance department, we also had to be lectured and chastised by the Credit Manager on how co-signing wasn't always the wisest decision. How about this? If we were allowed to be legally married there would be no co-signer, the loan would just be in both of our names as a couple without us both having to fill out separate loan applications and give all of our information, that is initially the same, two separate times to three different people!

Needless to say, we survived the buying process and the "Vulva" drives great! We rested on Sunday and began the insuring process early on Monday. We have a great insurance agent, Caroline Pistole of State Farm.

Caroline has all of our insurance policies and knows that we are a very cute, responsible, lesbian couple, so we anticipated no problems getting the Volvo insured. And indeed, compared to buying the car, we had few. But take a look at the list of situations that we had to resolve because we are not recognized legally as a married couple. The only way we could receive a multi-car discount was because Jennifer happened to have her name on both car



loans since she bought the Ford preme also making both cars registered in her name with only the Volvo in my name, which I don't even drive. We had to have two separate insurance policies. And forget about Jenn's good driving record spawning a discount for me! Also, we were not eligible for any couple or family discounts and once again found ourselves filling out two separate piles of paperwork.

So, ladies and lesbians, the lesson here is simple. When you begin the process of buying a car you need to be sure and clear your calendar,



each carry your own ink pen and be prepared to answer every question that can possibly be asked regarding finances, incomes and bank accounts about three times each. Or, you can simply order the "LESBIAN" stamp and hope for the best. *****

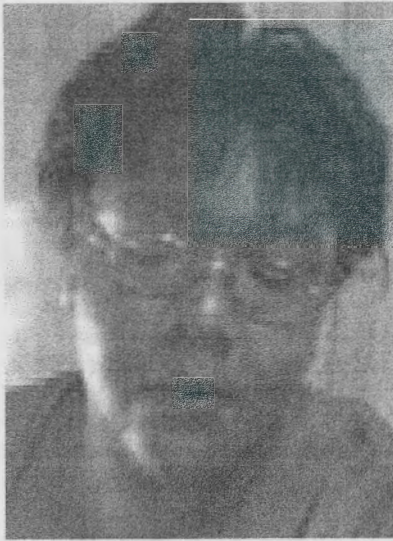
OUT THERE: BIO

I was born in Havana Cuba and came to the states when I was 2 years old in 1962 (now you know how old I am) I was raised in Astoria, Queens, NY and lived there until I met Tina and moved to Upstate, NY in 97. Tina was born and raised in upstate NY, we live in a cute little town house with our 3 babies (our cats)! I have 4 children all grown up who live in NYC and whom we adore dearly! Don't know what else to say about us except we are kinda nutty and have the same sense of humor which is very important especially if you are a cartoonist! And I kid you not 90 percent of my material is stuff that has really happened to us with a few embellishments here and there.

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON





Blind Love

by Glitter

I can't believe I'm going to prison.

____Damn, I was trying not to think about it. But it's not like you can really ignore it as you're on the bus, driving on the highway, chained to someone you don't even know. I kept looking out the window, staring at all the cars, trucks, and mini-vans, wondering where all those people were going. It was Saturday, so probably shopping, vacation, or maybe a road trip to see family in another state. Who knew? They had many possibilities. As for this bus, everyone who saw it knew where it was going.

____My eyes caught a black Cadillac SUV, and I was immediately reminded of Dre. She loved her Caddy almost as much as she loved me. Or how much she claimed to love me.

____No, no, no. Don't go there, I told myself. Dre loved me...I knew she did. No matter how rough this shit gets, I had to hold onto that. Because in the end, she was who I was coming home to. Whenever I was going to be able to come home.

____"You think that Andrea cares about you?" The detective had asked me again and again when they had me in the interrogation room the day I got arrested. "She's going to let you take the fall for this, Astoria. You are going to go to jail and she's getting away with it, and she'll take up with someone else."

____I had just sat there silent, smoking my fifth cigarette in an hour, my heart pounding in my chest, but on the outside I looked calm as ever.

____"Don't be stupid, Astoria. Look at what you're facing. Up to fifteen years in

Young woman but
with years beyond told.
Childlike mind, but with a
wise elder's soul.

Massachusetts, born and raised Jamaican heritage,
full of pride and rage
Eclectic, alternative,
and with a sharp wit
Gemini personality and
even a modern Witch
Future in journalism, novels, and poetry
Not surviving this world, but changing it,
you'll see
Life full of changes
and sparkles at every turn

Born D. Alexandria Williams, but known as Glitter

prison. And the state is definitely going to ask for the max. Are you really going to let Andrea make you take the fall for this? And don't say that she isn't in on this, because we know she is. I know she put you up to this. She's not going to rescue you, Astoria. She'll let you take the fall and run. And you'll be facing all this alone. You are going to have to stop this yourself."

____Still silent. I just puffed away, my eyes trying to picture Dre's face. Dre's comforting, warm, beautiful face. God, I needed her right now.

____"You are a fool if you don't admit it. You're going to throw your life away for someone who won't even remember who you are this time next month. I hear you have a wonderful career ahead of you. You spent years working on making a life for yourself. And you're just going to throw it all away." He suddenly slammed his fist on the table, making me jump in my seat.

"Dammit, Astoria! Admit that Andrea Walker was the head of this. We know that you couldn't have pulled this whole thing by yourself. Only Andrea could have done this. Why don't you just admit it?"

____I had finally turned and looked him straight in the eye. "I was alone on this. No one was in on this, but me. Andrea didn't even know about it."

____His eyes clouded over in anger and he stood up. "You're going to go down for a crime she committed. I hope whatever you had with her was worth it, Astoria. Because your future is gone, and so is she."

____Lies, all lies. Dre wouldn't leave me. Not like this. She had promised to take care of me. And I believed her. With all my heart.

____But it's hard to believe much when all you can think of is a tall, nerdy-looking white man, reading a piece of paper and saying, "guilty", and knowing that your fate

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is sealed. The first thing I had done was turn around in my seat and looked at my mother's horrified face. She belted out a wrenching cry and we had immediately reached for each other.

____"Just talk, baby." She said quickly. "Please. I know you didn't do this. This isn't you. Don't go to jail, just talk. It can't be worth it, please."

____But with tears in my eyes, I just squeezed her hand and got to my feet as the bailiff came for me, handcuffs ready. The last thing I saw, as they took me away, was my mother laying her head on my father's shoulder, crying so hard her whole body shook. Not cool. You never want to be the reason your mother cries like that. But I had no choice; I had to keep stay silent. But that moment would always haunt me.

____I watched as the bus finally left the highway, taking an exit that lead to a dirt road. After about ten minutes, the building came into view. The first thing I saw was the metal fence that surrounded the entire building. About forty feet tall with barbed wire on the top. And that's when I broke. That's when the tears came down and I realized this was going to be my new home. My freedom was truly gone.

Countless times I wondered how I got myself in this mess. Throughout the entire trial I silently wondered in my seat, trying to pinpoint the exact time I had decided everything that I had worked for didn't matter to me anymore. A year ago, I was happy, graduating college with a BA in fashion design, and I was the apple of my parents' eyes. But a year ago, I didn't realize what true love could feel like. And as soon as love hit me...all hell broke loose.

____Love is blind. It took me a while to truly understand that phrase. I think everyone understands it to some degree, but QueerRamblings issue 30, p. 5

(Blind Love Continued from page 5)

until you're actually in love, full realization and understanding doesn't hit you yet. I think I kind of laughed at it, like most people do. Come on, love is a beautiful thing. I could always see myself falling so deeply in love that I would practically do anything for the person I loved. But never, in my life, did I think I would fall as hard as I did. Have the urge to protect someone so much. When you realize that nothing matters more to you than the safe, well being of that person. That taking risks don't matter to you anymore. I fell. I fell so hard that I got so blind to what love was costing me.

_____It was my senior year at college, and I was partying like a madwoman. Graduation was less than a month away, and I only had to worry about finals that I knew would be a breeze, and my week vacation in Jamaica that my parents were sending me on. I had already landed a job as an assistant illustrator for a prestigious fashion house. My dorm roommate and best friend, Anya, and I had already paid and

signed the lease for our new apartment that would be waiting for us when we came back from Jamaica. Life was pie as far as I was concerned. All I was thinking of was celebrating.

_____Friday night, Anya and I were getting dressed for the club, when she suddenly groaned aloud.

_____ "What's wrong?" I asked as I swiftly lined my eyes in purple.

_____ "I'm out of trees." She said. "Do you have any?"

_____ I shook my head. "I thought you had gotten some more?"

_____ "Ran out. Fuck, I wanted to smoke before we go to the club." She searched her bag. "All I got are woods. We're gonna have to make a stop ok? Let me call one of my peeps."

_____ Finished with my make-up, I stood back and looked in the mirror and smiled. I had bought a new outfit, black hip-hugging jeans, a metallic purple corset, and matching purple, heeled boots. My long, light brown braids were pulled back into a loose ponytail, and I wore an array of purple and

silver bangles on my arms. I turned to see my profile, and my big ass jumped out, loud and proud. I was voluptuous, with no shame in my game. I loved being thick and would always be. If you were going to hold me, you were going to definitely feel me.

_____ "Damn, girl, that outfit's hot." Anya said as she came up behind me. She was dressed in a red lace cat suit, and you could see the black short panty and bra set she wore underneath. Her short black hair was adorned with glittered hair clips, and she had lined her eyes so they had a cat-like look.

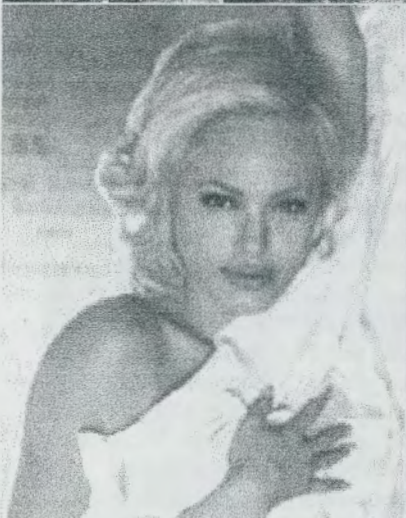
_____ "Thank you. You too." I smiled, making one more touch up to my lip-gloss.

_____ "We gotta stop at Danny's." She said. "He got some. You got twenty dollars?"

_____ I nodded. "I always got money for weed, girl."

_____ It was almost eleven o'clock, so we finished up quickly and ran out of the room to Anya's car. Anya grew up a couple of neighborhoods away, so she knew the

(Blind Love Continued on page 7)



OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 6)

area like the back of her hand, and we were flying. In less than ten minutes, we pulled up in front of a brownstone, and Anya stepped out.

"Five minutes or less." She promised then she disappeared inside.

I pulled down the visor to check my lipstick in the vanity mirror, before I lit a cigarette. When I flipped the visor back, a black SUV pulled up in front of Anya's car. The driver side opened, and someone dressed in all black stepped out. Whoever it was, wore a hoodie that was over his head, with a baseball cap that was pulled down so low I couldn't see his eyes, and his head was lowered. All I could see was his full-lipped mouth.

I forced myself to look away, reminding myself to never pay attention to anything during situations like these. You never know who's going to notice that you saw them, and you never wanted to be a witness to anything. The best rule to live by was to just mind your own business.

But for some reason I looked up, just in time to see that he was looking straight at me, through a pair of sunglasses.

Unfair. He could see me, but I couldn't see him. But in a quick glance of his body, I realized that he wasn't a he after all. Tall with a shapely body that you could see, regardless of how baggy the clothes were. He was a she.

She suddenly smirked, then turned to walk inside the brownstone. I caught myself biting my bottom lip. If only she didn't have the sunglasses on, I could have gotten a decent look at her

face. But I knew that I liked what I saw, so far. Something about that smile got to me.

A couple of minutes later, Anya stepped outside and got into the car. "Danny is having some kind of party. We got invited—and I would have said yes, cuz sometimes Danny's parties can outdo the club, you know what I mean? But then the crowd just got kinda hot, so I said nah."

"What do you mean? Who was there?" I asked. Someone had to be pretty bad for Anya to turn down a party if they were present.

She just shook her head as she started the car. "People you don't want to fuck with, that's all." And I knew that meant to leave it at that.



We had a great night at the club, opting to go to one of the few gay clubs in the area. Since I was gay and Anya was straight, we would usually split the club scene down the middle. We'd alternate nights between straight and gay clubs, but when it came down to it, we were going for the music and to just bug out. Both of us were single and had no one to answer to, so we'd have as much fun as possible. Whenever we went to a straight club, I danced with guys as well. No harm in just dancing—but I was always honest when I realized they were getting a bit too attached. And the same went for Anya, who always managed to land the finest women whenever she went to a gay club. Like me, she was always honest, but even she admitted that she liked her studs, saying that was her only temptation to bisexuality. Like tonight, for instance; I was at the bar, ordering a Vanilla Stoli with coke, when I spotted Anya near the centre of the dance floor, grinding her ass on a cute stud, who was wearing all red as well. Anya sure wasn't acting straight now, as she looked back at the girl she was dancing with, holding the girl's hands on her hips as she gyrated.

I shook my head, laughing to myself as I took my drink back to where I was standing earlier.

"Sup, Shorty?"

I turned and faced a person dressed in all black, and I realized it was the same girl with the SUV from Danny's. She had pushed the hood and hat off her head, revealing a long oval face, cute button nose, and round cheeks. Her blondish-brown hair was in micro corn-

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(Blind Love Continued from page 7)

rows, and fell down to her waist.

_____"Hello." I answered, ready to turn back around. My heart was pounding in my chest.

_____"Didn't think I'd luck out and see you again." She said.

_____"What do you mean?" I asked, opting to play dumb instead. Sorry, but I stuck by my rules.

_____"I know you saw me." She lowered her sunglasses, and my pounding heart literally froze. She had the most amazing eyes I had ever seen. Slanted eyes, but such a strong, clear brown that they seemed to see right through you. "It ain't no big deal, but I kinda liked what I saw, that's all."

_____"Just kinda?" I asked, wondering why I suddenly felt my hands getting clammy.

_____"This time, she took the sunglasses fully off and slipped them into her pocket. Up close, she was about five feet nine, maybe ten. Under her clothes, she had a somewhat thick or muscular body, but she had shape; you could see she was big-breasted and thick in the hips.

_____"Well, you never know if you fully like something unless you get to try it." She said boldly. "Feel like dancing?"

_____"As if I was on automatic, I nodded and let her take my hand as she led me to the overcrowded dance floor. I didn't think we would find a place to dance, but a suitable area suddenly opened up for us, and my mystery woman just pulled me close to her. Anya and I loved going to this particular club, because the DJ always did a perfect mix of new and old school Rap, R&B, and Reggae. And as soon as we were on the dance floor, "Murder She Wrote" came on. It was one of my favourite songs, so I lit up and started grinding

my hips.

_____"My mystery woman smiled, watching me lose myself to the music. I felt her hands grab my hips and pull me close, and I moved with her, placing an arm around her neck. Something about reggae just makes you want to act as sexual as you can. All of a sudden, you are moving parts of your body you hardly paid attention to before, and whoever you are dancing with is the audience to your solo sexual tease. And I was happy with the audience I had. I didn't allow myself

to get as raunchy as I knew I could get, opting to keep some innocence, but I wanted to overheat her just a little bit.

_____"We danced a few more songs together, until the DJ switched up to Rap again. Laughing, I stopped dancing and led her back to where she found me. I picked up my drink and took a sip.

_____"You need to learn to behave yourself when you dance." I told her, knowing the alcohol was getting to me.

_____"And what makes you say that?" She asked me.

_____"You and your busy hands."

_____"You liked my busy hands."

_____"I just smiled, knowing she was right. "Maybe I wanted to get to know you better before your hands got so busy."

_____"She was silent for a moment, and I could tell that she was sizing me up. In the silence, I decided to smoke

a cigarette. She immediately produced a lighter, lighting my cigarette for me.

_____"You got a girl?" She asked.

_____"I shook my head. "Not yet. You?"

_____"No."

_____"Good." I said.

_____"She smirked making me remember what attracted me to her in the first place. Damn, that smile was hot.

_____"Give me your number." She said.

_____"I shook my head. "Uh-uh. Give me yours."

_____"She chuckled. But I watched her pull a pen out of her pocket and she scribbled her number on a napkin. "And who shall I expect to call?"

_____"I took the napkin, folding it carefully before I pocketed it. "Astoria."

_____"Astoria?" She asked. Then she smiled. "Cute."

_____"And who am I calling?" I asked.

_____"She took my hand, lifting it to her lips. After the gentle kiss that I could feel all the way to my toes, she winked at me. "Dre. Don't take too long to call me." Then she turned and walked away.

_____"And I stood there, in awe. I watched as she gave daps to people on her way out, and realized I wasn't dealing with just anyone. Just how people seemed to liter-

(Blind Love Continued on page 9)



OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 8)

ally make room around her. She was special. I patted the napkin in my pocket before going back to the dance floor.

I didn't call her for two days. I'm sorry, but I didn't want to seem desperate. And I wasn't calling for a full conversation either. I had a routine that I lived by. If you get a number, you wait two days before making the initial call. And you call to just say hello, verifying the number and the person you met match. Remind them that they gave you their number, say a quick hello, and schedule a time to actually talk. Ever since I started dating, I lived by this plan, and it always worked out well for me.

Dre was haunting me. Regardless of whatever I did, I couldn't get those eyes and that smile out of my mind. I practically forced myself not to call her the first day, going to a movie and dinner when I really wasn't in the mood. The second day was easier; I had two finals, and a few professors I had to speak with. I didn't make it back to my room until almost 5 o'clock, and I was practically drained. My head hurt from thinking too much, my feet hurt from running around campus, and all I wanted to do was rest my head for a moment before my whirlwind night of partying started.

But as soon as I stepped into the room, Dre was the first thing on my mind. I was in the

clear, I could finally call.

The napkin with her number on it was in my nightstand, and I quickly retrieved it and calmed myself before I called.

"Hello?" It was her—I couldn't forget that voice anywhere.

"Hi, Dre, this is Astoria."

"Astoria? Oh yeah, from the other night. Didn't think I'd hear from you. Thought I told you not to take too long to call."

"I'm in college, I get busy." I said as I sat on my bed. Just go through the routine, just say you wanted to touch base, and you'll call her later.

"Busy girls need some down time." I heard some rustling on her end, then she asked, "What are you doing right now?"

"Um, resting. I had some finals today."

"You go to Anderson, right?"

"Uh, yeah...how did you know?"

"Meet me in front of the campus library in one hour. Wear something nice and warm." Then she was gone.

I stared at the phone, hearing the dial tone and I was in shock. How did she know where I went to school? Why did it feel like she had been expecting my call? And who in the world did she think she was just telling me meet her without expecting some kind of agreement? Did she think I didn't have a life? That I could just drop everything for her?

Hell the fuck no. I wasn't some dog that would just come if you snap your fingers. I wasn't going to let her play me like I was some punk. My shock turned to anger, and I hung up the phone, laying on my bed in defiance. She could go fuck herself. I wasn't about to jump just because she said so.

I decided to get comfortable, changing into some sweats, and turned on the small television Anya and I bought together. Cartoon Network. Whenever I wanted to calm down, I turned on a cartoon and laughed my troubles away.

But the clock kept ticking. Loudly. And against my will, my eyes kept shifting towards to clock. It was twenty to six.

Twenty minutes. In twenty minutes, Dre would pull up in front of the library and realize that I was an independent woman who did not respond well to

(Blind Love Continued on page 10)



(Blind Love Continued from page 9)

being ordered.

____Nineteen minutes. She'd realize how foolish she was to speak to me that way. And she'd feel guilty and stupid.

____Eighteen minutes. Maybe I'll call her in a few days. Make up some excuse, some emergency came up. But she won't care. She'll be so grateful to hear my voice that she'd apologize all over the place and ask me to give her another chance.

____Seventeen minutes. To believe, she had the audacity to actually tell me to be ready. Not even ask. How dare she? Who did she think she was?

____Sixteen minutes. Well, it doesn't matter anyway. Maybe I'm better off not knowing her. I mean, would you really want to get with a person that had that kind of personality? Didn't she realize what era it was? Women today didn't have to put up with that bullshit. We deserved people to treat us with dignity. And just because she was a woman and a lesbian didn't mean I was going to expect any differently.

____Fifteen minutes. I finally screamed out of aggravation and jumped to my feet. I ran to my closet, pulling out whatever suitable outfit I could think of. Nice and

warm, nice and warm. Wool boot-cut grey pants, and a black sleeveless turtleneck. Good, good, good. I pulled out a pair of black boots, matching purse, and laid out my makeup before I ran down the hall to the bathroom.

____What was I doing? I should still be comfortably in my bed, watching television, and planning my fun night. Not rushing through a shower at top speed. I washed everything that was necessary, and half-naked, ran back to my room to get dressed.

____Five minutes. I now had mastered the art of putting on my makeup while getting dressed. I secured my hair in a ponytail, grabbed my purse, dumped everything I needed in it, then ran out of my room.

____By the time I made it to the library, my watch read 5:59pm. I had made it. I somehow managed to be dressed, ready, and on time in less than fifteen minutes. I made a mental note to never, never confess this to anyone I dated.

____And at 6 o'clock, the black SUV appeared out of nowhere and pulled up. I watched Dre get out, and walk around the front of the vehicle to where I stood.

____"You look great." She said.

____I look great? That's it? No, hello, thank you for meeting me at such short notice, none of that? For a split second, I thought about turning around and walking back to my dorm.

____But, of course, I just smiled. "Thank you. You too." I had to admit that she looked nice. As if we had similar minds, she wore black slacks, and a grey and black knit sweater. Her hair had been re-braided, still crowns, but with these Aztec type designs. Damn, her hair was long. "So where are we going?"

____"It's a surprise." She opened the passenger side, and helped me up and inside the SUV. I couldn't help but notice the Cadillac monogram on the side. "Do you like seafood?"

____"Yeah, I do." I admitted. Lobster was actually a big weakness for me. But you never, NEVER admit your ultimate favourite foods on the first date. Especially if they are expensive. Your date will think you're some gold-digger, and unless you are, you definitely don't want anyone to assume that about you, or you'll get absolutely nowhere.

____"Have you ever been to Nina's?" She asked starting the engine.

____"Don't think so."

(Blind Love Continued on page 11)



(Blind Love Continued from page 10)

_____ "It's wonderful. The best seafood I've ever had—except for when I was in the Bahamas."

_____ "You've been to the Bahamas?" I asked her.

_____ "Yep."

_____ "My roommate and I are going to Jamaica after graduation. I can't wait."

_____ Dre pulled away from the curb.

"You're a senior?"

_____ "Yes." I replied. See, if we had gone with my plan, she would have already known this before our first actual date.

_____ "What's your major?"

_____ "Fashion design."

_____ She grinned. "No kidding? You like making clothes?"

_____ "Sure do. One day, you will see my designs on a runway. I will be famous."

_____ She chuckled. "I don't doubt it. You seem like a woman who knows what she wants."

_____ "And how is it that you know that about me? You hardly know me."

_____ Dre just shrugged. "Let's just say I have good taste. And any woman I like, has a good head on her shoulders."

_____ Good one, good one. She was smooth. I just nodded and sat back in my comfy seat. Was this leather? Goddamn, who was this woman?

_____ "So, are you in school?" I asked, knowing full well she wasn't.

_____ She shook her head. "Nah, just work."

_____ "What do you do?" I asked.

_____ She smiled. "Construction. I love building houses. And I do other odds and ends on the side."

_____ I just nodded. It didn't add up, but I wasn't going to pry. I just sat back and enjoyed the ride.

_____ Nina's turned out to be a quaint restaurant, nestled on the edge of a fishing town that was about an hour away in the next state. As soon as we pulled into the parking lot, my first thought was wondering how Dre had found it. But as soon as we stepped inside, I forgot all about that. I swear to God, it was like we stepped into some movie. We were given one of the best tables, beside a huge picture window with a view of the ocean. The waitress seemed to have been hovering near us, because she would appear as if by magic whenever we needed her. And Dre was on point with the menu. She had me try oysters for the first time, which, I have to add that I didn't want to even look at, at first,



by Jeanine & Angel

but I decided to have an open mind and tried it, and it was wonderful. The lobster—that Dre insisted I had to order because it was her favourite as well—was so good that it had me in tears. Conversation was minimal. We discussed the necessities, but I could tell that she was holding back. Her mannerisms, the way her eyes seemed to always be on the lookout. She was a woman with a lot of secrets. And for some strange reason, that only appealed to me more.

_____ After dinner, Dre left the SUV in the parking lot and took my hand as we walked along the quiet beach. With the moon and seagulls as our only audience, Dre started to talk. I learned that she was twenty-five and was the middle child of three, to a single mother who worked two jobs. Or, I should say, she used to. Once Dre got on her own feet, she made sure that her mother, Lorelei, who was now sickly, didn't have to work again. I asked about her siblings. Her older sister,

Marlene, lived out in California and didn't have much to do with the family anymore. And her younger brother, Antoine, was still in elementary school.

_____ "If I ever had a child, it would be him. He's my heart." She confessed. "I make sure he stays out of trouble so my moms won't have to endure any more shit."

_____ I just nodded. "He's a problem?"

_____ She shook her head. "Nah, just stubborn that's all. A lot like me. But he won't have the opportunities that I had, so I look out for him."

_____ "Can't you just teach him what was taught to you?"

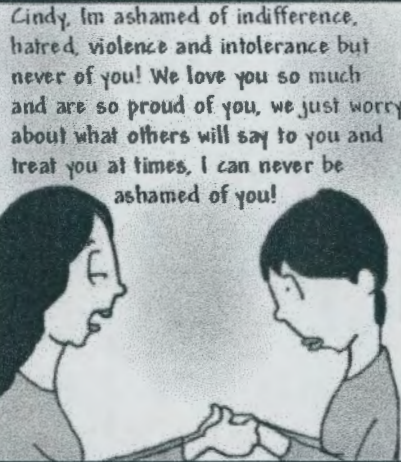
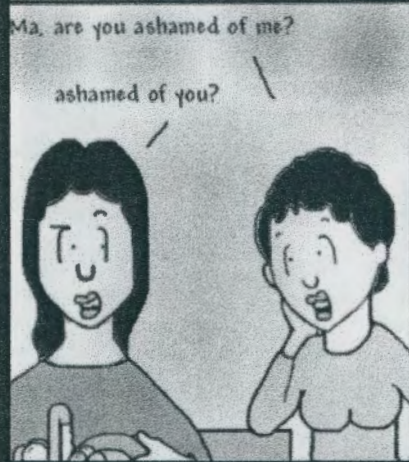
_____ I could feel her stiffen. "He doesn't need to know all that. Let's just say that my opportunities aren't for everyone. As long as he sticks with the books and goes to college, he'll be alright."

_____ I knew when to stop prying, so I just changed the subject. By the time we made

(Blind Love Continued on page 12)

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 11)

it back to the SUV, I felt more comfortable in her company. Somehow, she managed to open up a bit and let me get to know

who she was, without really telling too much. And I respected that.

_____ Dre had me back at the dorms before midnight. As I was getting out of the SUV, she grabbed my hand.

_____ "I want to see you again." She said simply.

_____ "I'd like that."

_____ She leaned forward and gently kissed my lips, and I felt my nipples harden at the contact. With one kiss? Damn.

_____ "I'll call you." She told me. I had already given her my number.

_____ I just nodded as I closed the door. As soon as she took off, I lit a cigarette, and slowly walked back towards my dorm. Something about her was so damn attractive yet mysterious. I wasn't sure what it was, but I promised myself I would soon.

_____ From that day on, my life was total chaos—but in a good way. Shocking my friends and my-

self, I ended up seeing Dre three more times that week. Usually, I don't stick to one person like that. I loved my freedom and would just date people instead of inching towards anything exclusive. And spending a lot of time with one person may give them the impression that having something exclusive can be an option. But for some reason I just really enjoyed the time I spent with Dre. How I found the time, I have no idea. Dre was supportive though. One day, after my last class, I was heading towards the library to do some research. I had made plans with Dre earlier, but had to cancel them, because my professor had thrown the class a curveball of a last minute assignment. Dre had sounded disappointed, but had understood. But as I turned the corner to walk into the library, I saw her SUV parked out front.

_____ Walking up to the vehicle, I met her grin with a cynical smile. She was reclined in her seat, and smoking a blunt of all things—and in broad daylight. The girl was crazy. "What are you doing here?"

_____ She gave a big, dramatic sigh. "I realized that I couldn't have you just drown yourself in these musty books studying. No fun for you and definitely no fun for me."

_____ I shook my head as I chuckled. "Well, I DO have to study though."

_____ She winked. "I know. But I got an alternative. Hop in."

_____ Against my better judgment, I got in beside her, snatching the blunt from her and took my own puff, as she took off. She

(Blind Love Continued on page 13)



Members of the Australian Olympic Diving Team

(Continued from page 12)

drove me to her loft, which was on the other side of town. And there, she let me have free reign on her computer so I could use the Internet and study. And while I studied, she cooked dinner for us. And even had the nerve to go over my research notes to critique them.

_____"And what makes you such an expert on this?" I asked as I cut into my steak. Damn, she was good. It was like cutting butter.

_____"Construction wasn't always my dream, you know." She said as she made a mark on my paper. "At one point, I actually wanted to be an English teacher."

_____"Well, why didn't you?"

_____"She shrugged. "Things happen. It's too late for me now, but at least you can benefit from my expertise." Then she winked.

_____"Dre was a complete and utter mystery to me. Every time I swore she'd turn right, she'd go left. A lot of things just weren't adding up about her. At first, I thought she was just some regular Joe, probably did a little petty crime stuff when she was younger. She seemed to be like all the other thugs from the neighborhood—cuz no offense, but male or female, almost all the thugs in our neighborhood were similar. But then she would initiate the most intellectual conversations that I ever had, inside or outside of the classroom. I soon learned that Dre wasn't only street smart, but book smart as well. On my many visits to her loft, I found a lot of English and French literature, poetry, and sociology and psychology textbooks. I had

no doubt in my mind that she was as intelligent as each of my professors. But for some reason, she just didn't apply what she had to make herself better. Not that she needed to, mind you. But it's not every day that you meet a construction worker that will debate with you for over two hours on the accuracy of George Orwell's book, "1984". I know professors who haven't even read the book.

_____"Maybe it just wasn't that she was a smart woman who still lived around the ghetto that made her a mystery to me. Maybe it was how she made me feel. For the first time in my life, I actually found myself wanting to spend time with someone...romantically. As much as I loved women, they could be complicated sometimes. And while I was in school, I didn't want to get distracted with relationships. Let's go on a date, have fun, and heck, if we end up in bed, all the more better—but definitely nothing more than that. I saw Anya's many attempts, and I just decided I would wait until I was somewhat settled in my career before I would go that route.

_____"But Dre just had me feeling differently. When I was with her, I felt like a princess. She made me feel alive, important, special, and down right sexy. Through her eyes, I saw life a different way. Life wasn't always

the pretty peaches that my parents had tried to make it be. Life could be cold and heartless. But if you were strong enough, you could survive it. And Dre had accomplished that, and it just made me admire her all the more. And when I wasn't with her, I felt empty, sad, and so damn alone. I found myself thinking about her when she wasn't around. Wondering what she was doing, who she was with, if she was thinking about me. I would actually be counting the days until I could see that damn smile again. Hell, if I didn't know better, I'd think I was really beginning to really like this woman.

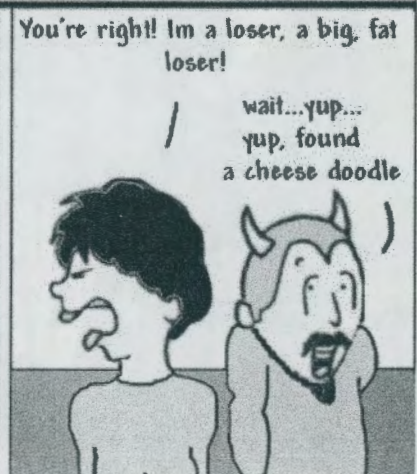
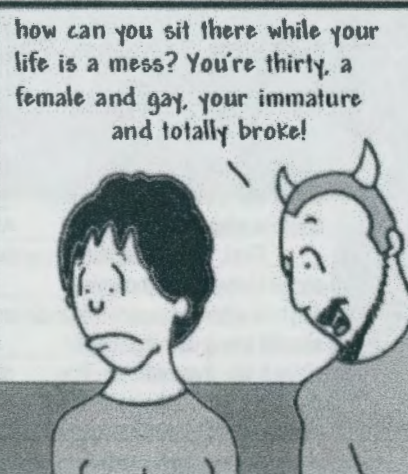
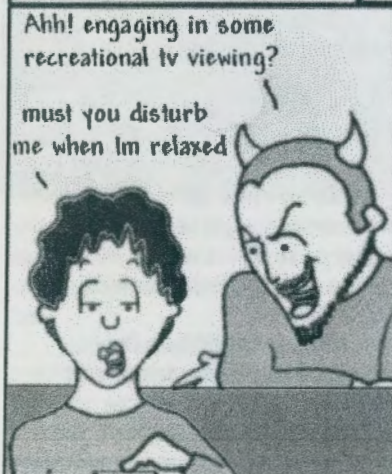
_____"And what was even stranger was the fact that I wouldn't let her touch me.

bisexual Anna Nicole Smith



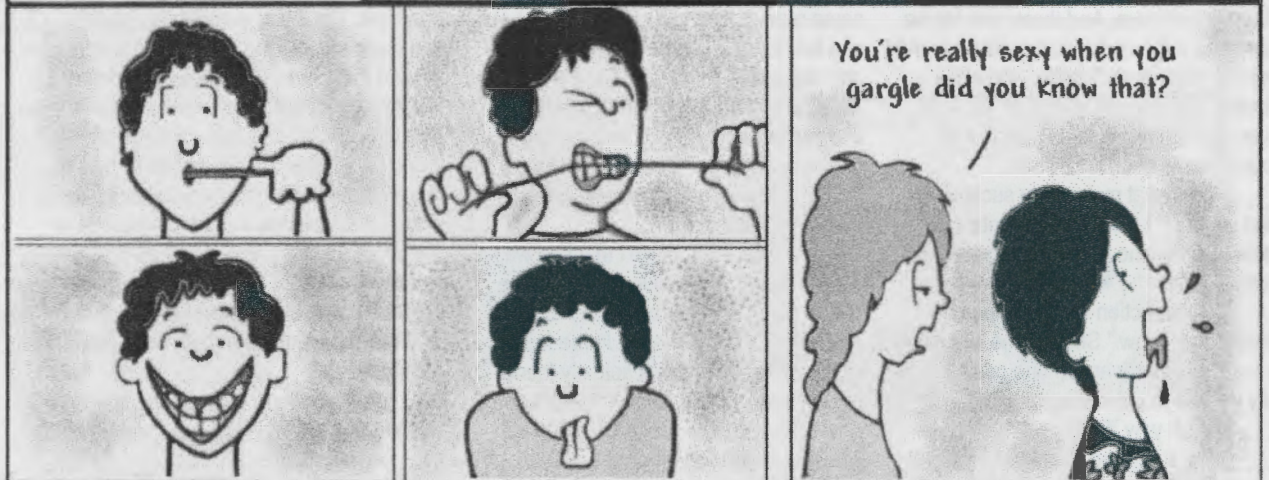
OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 13)
Not that I'm easy, but usually if I'm on a third or fourth date with a woman, we've already slept together. But for some reason, I couldn't go to that level with Dre yet. Not to say that she hasn't tried. Oh, no, Dre can be the most creative person when it comes to trying to get into a woman's panties. She was epitome of sensuality. With just one look, that woman could make me wet my panties, no lie. And when she kisses, you feel like you feel like you feel like you're flying. Every moment is like gliding on air, feeling the rush wash over your entire body and you become light-headed. And there's this edge of danger that teases your lips, tingling your senses,

right down to your very toes.
____ And I amaze myself every single night that I'm able to deny her. And Dre always gives this cute, sad puppy look when she realizes that I'm serious.
____ "You are a wicked tease." She said to me one time. "How can you expect me to remember you're a lady, when you walk the way that you do? Girl, have you ever seen your ass? It's a sin itself to want me to not touch you."
____ I smiled. "You better try your best."
____ "You're gonna give in you know. I can see it in your eyes. You want me as much as I want you."
____ I kissed the tip of her nose. "When the time is right. I promise."

son you used to spend all your time with. Yes, I'll admit it; I was an idiot.
____ It was a little past midnight, and I had just walked in from another date with Dre. I was still a little high, and I could hear my bed calling for me. I found Anya on her bed, watching television. When she saw me, she rolled her eyes.
____ "Oh, you finally decided to come home?"
____ Aw, shit, not now. "What's wrong?"
____ "What's wrong?" She sat up, crossing her arms under her breasts. "Hello, Astoria. Do you remember me? Anya Townsend, your roommate, best friend, future travel partner for next week. Does any of this ring a bell?"



____ And she always relented and never pressured me. I think, in a way, she loved the teasing as well. And I had to admit, I never thought about it before, but teasing can be a beautiful thing when you adore the person.
____ When my graduation came around, it was a pretty much done deal that Dre and I were becoming quite an item. I was spending most of my time between school, studying, and Dre. I wasn't able to really find time for other things.
____ First, let me say that I should have seen it coming. Anyone who has a close friend should see it coming. Especially if you live with her. You can't just spend the majority of your time with someone new and not have it affect the per-

____ "Yes, yes, yes, what's going on?" Why, why, why? Anya knew me. She knew I was high, why mess with someone while they're high? That's just cruel.
____ "Astoria, I hardly see you anymore! You're never around, you run from your classes straight to wherever, and you spend all of your free time with Dre."
____ "So that's it. You think I'm spending too much time with Dre and not enough time with you."
____ "Well, duh!" She cried. "What do you need, a rock to fall on your head or something?"
____ I rolled my eyes. "Give me a break, Anya. Whenever you get serious about some guy, you're MIA as well."
____ Anya got to her feet. "This is different. Dre is different."
____ "And why is that? Why is Dre so different from the guys you date, except for the obvious."
____ "I just don't trust her, that's all." Anya
(Blind Love Continued on page 15)



Anniversary
by Jeanine
(painting she did for Angel for their anniversary)

(Blind Love Continued from page 14)
said. "Listen, there are a lot of people you can hook up with. Why does it have to be her?"

Now, I was getting upset. "Why not her? Anya, Dre is a wonderful person. I like being with her. She's fun, caring, intelligent, and independent. What more can I ask?"

"Independent." Anya muttered.
"Yeah, whatever."

My eyes narrowed as I glared at her.
"And what does that mean?"

"Are you a complete idiot or what?"

I could feel my blood starting to boil.
Oh yeah, I had definitely sobered up now.

"Be careful of the words you use." I said through clenched teeth.

"Believe me, I'm using the right words." She started to pace. "Are you gonna stand there and tell me that you don't realize who Dre is?"

"Besides a human being, I'm at a loss."

"Come on, Astoria! What construction worker do you know can afford a brand fucking new Cadillac Escalade and a Cadillac Deville in the same year? Do you see the clothes she wears? Or how about her jewelry? When was the last time you saw a construction worker wearing iced-out platinum?"

"So she has expensive tastes, that doesn't mean anything. Some people do save money for the things they really want, you know? And construction workers can make good money."

Anya shook her head as she opened a window. She sat in the chair before it, and lit a cigarette. "Astoria, you are so blinded. I seriously thought that you were just gonna mess around with her for a little bit then let her go like

you do the others. That's why I didn't say anything to you before. But for some reason, it's like you don't see what's in front of you, and you're actually interested in her."

"Jesus, Anya. Stop with the games and just talk. What is it about Dre that you don't like."

"She's a fucking dealer, Astoria! She
(Blind Love Continued on page 16)

(Blind Love Continued from page 15)

sells trees."

_____I just stared at her. "What do you mean? She sells a little weed?" I chuckled. "Who fucking doesn't? Didn't you date Danny? Isn't Danny one of the people you buy from? Anya, you yourself sell weed when we go to the club sometimes, it's no big deal."

_____Anya shook her head. "Danny can't even compare to Dre. Not even in his wildest dreams can he compare to Dre."

_____I sat on my bed slowly. "What do you know?"

_____She sighed. "Dre is big. How big, I don't know, but big enough that she's one of the biggest suppliers in this city. She's top shit around here. It's a fucking chain of command, Astoria, and she's on top. She got mad heads underneath her. She deals with various heads, who deal to other people, who deal to other people. Shit, that last person supplies to all the small assholes we get our shit from, even Danny."

_____ "How do you know all this?"

_____She sighed. "Danny. I was curious about how he got started and he told me." She gave me a pointed look. "But none of what I say to you can ever leave this room, okay? He was an idiot for telling me in the first place, and the only reason I'm telling you is so you can smarten up."

_____I just nodded absentmindedly.

_____ "Honey, that's why I broke it off with Danny. He was getting to be too much for me. When you end up dealing so much



Fashion models Alice Dodd and Sybil Buck lip-kissing

that you're actually making some money from it, that's when you get hot. Most just do it so they can smoke for free. Danny's talking about buying a Jetta. Cash. This time last year, I had to pay for dinner if I wanted to eat out with him."

_____I didn't know what to say. It didn't seem possible to me. I mean, if Dre sold weed, who cared? I smoked weed, so hell--perfect relationship right there. But if she was as big as Anya said she was it meant she could be trouble.

_____ "I'm not saying she's a bad person." Anya finally said. "Just that I think you're getting in over your head here, that's all. Hell, honey, you may be tough, but deep down you're as innocent as they come. It's too dangerous."

_____I just nodded, feeling my eyes beginning to water. I wasn't sure what hurt most: the fact that Dre didn't even hint anything about this to me, or the fact that Anya was right and I'd have to stop seeing

Dre.

_____I didn't waste any time. Not my style. The next day, I jumped the gun and took the bus over to Dre's loft. Graduation was the next day, I obviously had no classes and Dre was supposed to be at work. I don't know what I was planning on doing when I got there. I knew that if Dre truly wasn't home, I wanted to be there when she arrived after work. I didn't want to play any games, I wanted straight answers.

_____I walked into the lobby of the building, and took the elevator up to the top floor. As soon as I stepped out of the elevator, Dre's door opened and she stood in the doorway, wearing a tank, boxer shorts, and a robe, smoking a cigarette.

_____ "How did you know I was here?" I asked.

_____ "I could ask you the same thing." She countered; her voice still had traces of sleep.

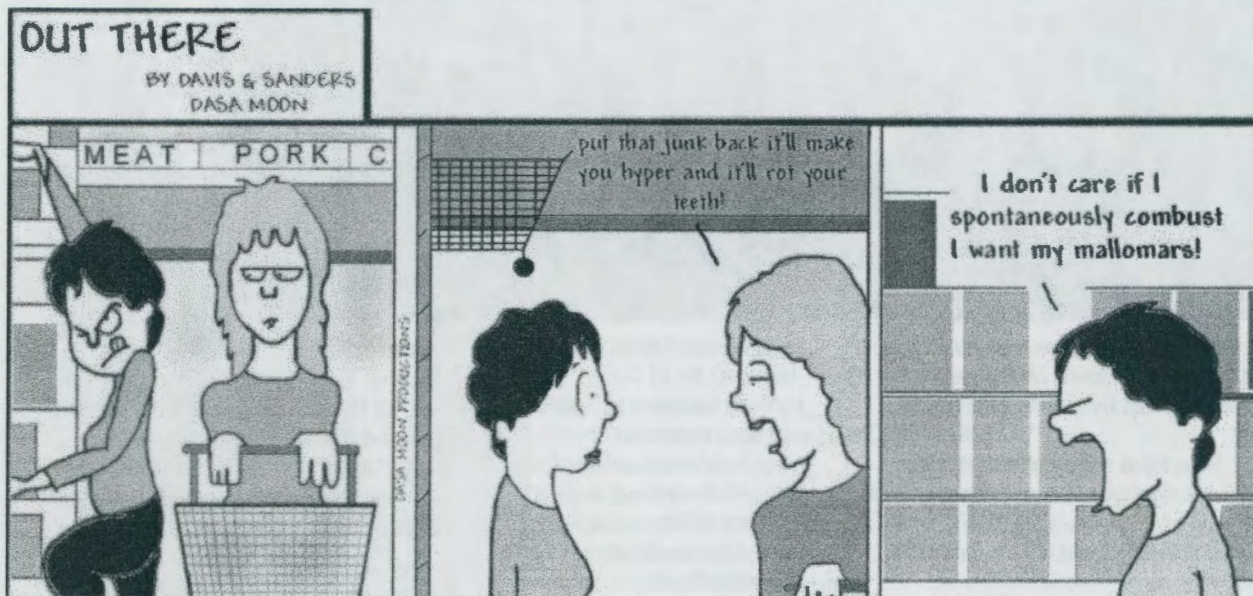
_____ "Can I come in?" I asked.

_____She nodded and stepped aside, letting me inside. Out of nervousness, I lit my own cigarette before I even sat on the sofa.

_____Dre walked over to the bar that separated the kitchen from the living room area. I watched her pour a drink. "You gonna tell me what's up?"

_____ "What makes you think something's up?" I asked her. My hands were getting clammy. Why in the blue hell do I get so

(Blind Love Continued on page 17)



(Blind Love Continued from page 16)

nervous around her?

_____ "It's almost nine in the morning on the day before you graduate college. You have no classes, no appointments, and you're awake and here on your own." She downed the shot quickly. "So something's up."

_____ "Do you deal?" I decided to just come out with it.

_____ Dre just stared at me calmly for a moment, then she ran her fingers through her braids and sighed. She grabbed another glass, then poured some of the amber liquid into both. She brought the

what I am. This is the only way I knew how to be successful, and it's worked for me, and I'm cool with it."

_____ "Don't you want better?" I asked.

"Dre, you are an intelligent woman. You are so damn talented, why don't you just do something else?"

_____ "I ain't gonna change, baby." She said softly. "Now, I've gone through this conversation with my mother, and I know how it turns out. I made my choice a long time ago, and I'm not changing my mind. So before you start a whole speech or something, just save it, please."

_____ I stiffened. "Fine." I got to my feet,

wanted to trust. I mean really trust. I want to trust you."

_____ I didn't say anything.

_____ "You wanna hear me say it, Astoria? That I want you in my life? That I need you in my life? That as soon as I first lay eyes on you in that car, I saw how beautiful you were. And not just because you're attractive, but the person that you are. Baby, you got this way about you that just hypnotizes me. The way you look at me is like catching me in this web, and all I want to do is just hold you, be with you, and take care of you. I can't force you to be with me, but I want you to. I've never wanted someone in my life like this before, and I do. And it's you."

_____ "And what am I supposed to do? Just ignore it?"

I asked, still facing the door, feeling a tear run down my cheek at her words. A woman always wants to hear those words. And damn her for saying them before my big exit.

_____ "No. But I want you to accept me. See me, just Dre, for who I am. Not what I do."

_____ Not fair. Not fucking fair. I hardly knew her. Barely a fucking month. No fucking fair that she was able to get to me like this. No fucking fair that I could feel this deeply for her so soon. "You should have told me."

_____ "I'm not perfect. I never pretended that I was. But it's not like I could just tell you something like that. I can't just let anyone know what I do."

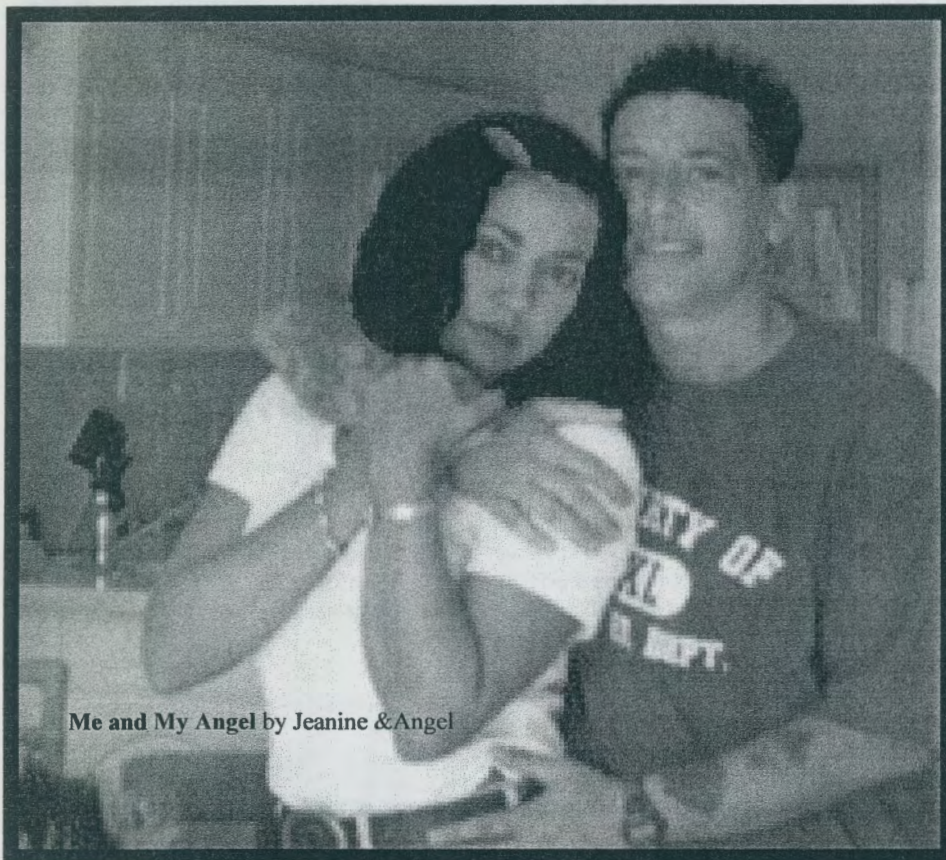
_____ I didn't say anything. I just stared at that door telling myself to open it. Ordering myself actually. Just walk out. It's for the best. Anya was right. This was dangerous territory that I had absolutely no business in. Astoria, just walk out that door and don't look back.

_____ I then heard her sigh. And it sounded so defeated.

_____ Damn, damn, damn.

_____ I don't know what came over me. But for some reason I turned around and just looked at her. And for the first time, I really got to see her. I got to see just how alone she was. How beaten she looked.

(Blind Love Continued on page 18)



Me and My Angel by Jeanine & Angel

glasses into the living room area, handed me a glass, then sat down in the easy chair opposite me.

_____ "I haven't known you for very long," She began, "but I know that you're the kind of woman I'd want in my life. I pride myself on being able to know and surround myself with people I can trust. That's how I've been able to survive this long. I've had to make a lot of sacrifices in my life. But I have only one goal that keeps me going. And that's to make sure that my moms, my little brother, and I can make it. By any means necessary. No apologies. I am

setting the glass on the coffee table.

"You've made your choice, and I'm making mine."

_____ I made it all the way to the front door praying she wouldn't say anything. Just stay silent Dre, and let me walk out the door, out of your life, and out of any chance of heart ache I know I'd endure in the future with you. But as soon as my hand touched the knob, I heard her slam the glass on the table.

_____ "I don't get to trust that many people in my life, Astoria." Her voice was shaking. "And I've never met someone that I

myself to open it. Ordering myself actually. Just walk out. It's for the best. Anya was right. This was dangerous territory that I had absolutely no business in. Astoria, just walk out that door and don't look back.

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(Blind Love Continued on page 18)

(Blind Love Continued from page 17)

She wasn't always the tough Dre that she shows everyone. Right now, she was vulnerable. This was the same woman who stayed up late to help me write papers, who listened to me while I worried, who always seemed to magically be there for me whenever I called.

_____ And against every voice in my head that spoke, I walked over to Dre and took the glass out of her hand. She looked up at me, just as I lowered myself onto her lap and placed my arm around her neck.

_____ "I see you." I said softly. "And I ain't going anywhere."

_____ Dre wrapped her arms around my waist and held me tightly, as I felt her body shake. For the first time in my life, I watched her cry. She buried her face in my chest and just cried. I stayed silent and just held her feeling the tears run freely down my face as well. I kissed the top of her head and just closed my eyes. I didn't know what I was getting myself into, but my heart was telling me that I needed to be with her. And for the first time, I was going to listen. She needed me. And maybe I needed her too, who knows. But for some reason we were being pulled towards each other. And in my heart, this felt right.

_____ Dre tipped her head back and looked at me through her tears.

_____ "It's too soon, I know. But I feel like I love you, girl."

_____ I just nodded. "I feel the same way."

_____ Our eyes met and it was as if lightning struck. God, it's a sin for someone to have eyes like that. I could see the need and lust in her eyes and I knew that she wanted me. And when her lips touched mine, I could feel myself start to take flight. But this time was different. I had this urge to be as close to her as possible. Damn, this was it. This was the moment I was waiting for. I placed her hand over my breast, and when she pulled her head back and our eyes met again, I just nodded.

_____ I let her stand me up, and felt her hands unbuttoning my dress, and I found my own hands pulling her tank and shorts off. I had never had this urgency before. This need to be touched, to be kissed, to be caressed. Every time Dre's fingers touched my skin, it felt like an erotic burn. We somehow managed to fall onto the sofa, kissing so hard, my lips felt like they were going to bruise.



"imp" by "Jeanine & Angel"

_____ Dre slid down to the floor, pulling me to the edge of the sofa as she spread my legs. She leaned forward kissing my lips again and I wrapped my legs around her waist, pulling her close to me.

_____ Her lips found my neck, and I moaned at the exquisite feel of it. I was running my fingers through her braids, realizing just how wet I was, and how wet I was making her sofa. Her lips left my neck, trailing down my chest, until she met one of my nipples. She let her tongue snake out and gave my nipple a slow lick. She then sucked it into her mouth, holding it

gently between her teeth as she gave it fast licks with the tip of her tongue, making me moan loudly.

_____ "I want it." She whispered huskily. "Now."

_____ I sat up, ready to kiss her, but she pushed me back. She pulled herself away from me, raising my legs even higher, resting them on her shoulders. Then she slid her hands under my ass, getting a good grip, then she literally lifted my ass up and off the sofa until my pussy was at her level. I was only touching the sofa by

(Blind Love Continued on page 19)

(Blind Love Continued from page 18)

my upper back, but I didn't panic, because she had a good grip on me. Then I felt her mouth on my pussy and I just sighed. She literally devoured me. Her nails digging into my flesh, I felt her tongue slide deep into me, and I cried out. She was being so aggressive with me, at first I thought I should stop her, but my better half just told me to enjoy.

___And did I ever. The entire morning she had me calling out her name. We made love, then fell away exhausted. At some point, I realized I was thirsty and had walked to the kitchen to fetch us some drinks, when I felt Dre come up behind me and her lips kissing the back of my shoulders. I felt her hand on my shoulder, pressing me down, and I bent forward till my breasts lay on the counter before me. Then I heard her drop to her knees behind me, spreading my legs wide, and her fingers were swiftly inside me, filling me. God this was fucking amazing.

___"Wider." She said, forcing my legs even farther apart. Then I felt her lips on me, and I just closed my eyes relishing in the feel of this. I never knew that sex could feel this good.

___I reached out to grab the other end of the counter for leverage when I felt Dre stand behind me. Her hands grasped my hips, and I felt something being pushed inside of me.

___"Oh, shit" I moaned.

___"You like that baby?" She whispered in my ear. I felt her pull her toy out of me partway, then push back inside making me moan again.



___"Yes."

___"I can't hear you."

___"Yes!"

___Dre pulled out of me, quickly spun me around and lifted me on top of the counter. Just as quickly, she was back between my legs, and inside me.

___"I need you." Her breathless voice said before kissing my neck. I wrapped my legs around her waist, gripping her back. "I need you with me."

___I was gasping with every thrust. "Dre "

___She was moving her hips faster, and I could feel the power in her as she made love to me. This was not to be a gentle fucking. I held onto her as tightly as I could as she pounded into me. Never had I

thought such roughness could feel so good.

___Dre's lips found my neck, and I felt her teeth sink into my skin and I moaned so loud. Suddenly she lifted me away from the counter, and was supporting me on her own, practically impaling me. I was about to cum and I knew it. My nails were digging into her skin, and I was biting so hard on my bottom lip I was probably drawing blood. Everything soon went hot white as this catastrophic feeling seized my body, and I went rigid. Dre continued to fuck me hard until I heard her moaning my name loudly. We gripped each other, gasping for breath, until she started to slow down.

___I don't know where she found the strength, because after an orgasm, I'm sometimes dead to the world. But with my legs still around her, Dre carried me down the hall to her bedroom, where we fell asleep in each other's arms.

___The last thing that Dre whispered to me before I fell asleep was, "Never leave me "

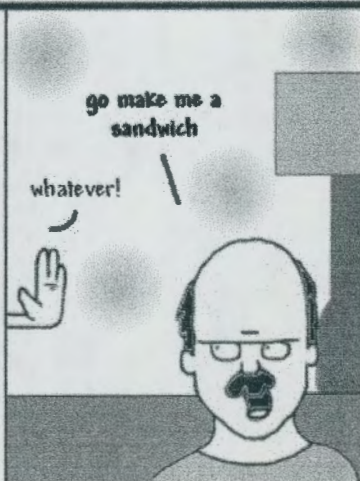
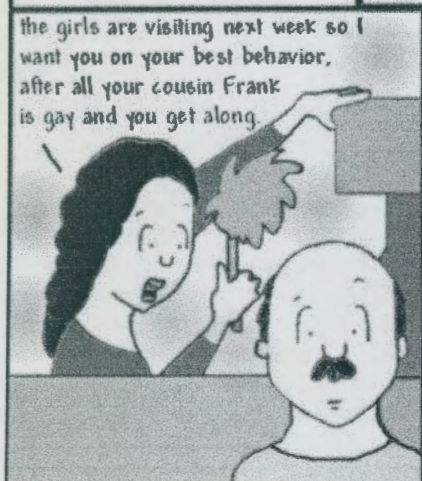
___And I answered back. "Never."

___Was it love? I don't know. No one has ever been able to explain to me what love was. Everyone has his or her own idea or theory, but no one can really pinpoint the exact emotion that love is. Everyone says you'll know when you're in it. And I honestly felt that whatever it was that I felt for Dre had to be love. Or at least, damn near it. I hope it was. Because it helped propel me to do the unthinkable.

(Blind Love Continued on page 20)

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 19)

_____ Guilty, guilty, guilty.

_____ That word will always haunt my mind. I can close my eyes and just see the word permanently imprinted. When you hear that word, and know that it's being said about you, you can only hope that you deserve it. I'm serious. You should only hear that word if you were actually guilty. But I wasn't. I was innocent. But like a fool, I lied and said that I was. All for the sake of love. To protect the woman I loved. A woman who, by all means, was supposed to be off limits. But something kept drawing me to her. Maybe it was the danger; maybe it was the excitement of the unknown, I don't know. But all I know was that the day I finally made love to her nothing was the same again.

_____ The day of my graduation was a big one. My parents were beaming of course, and when they met Dre (who I introduced as Andrea—her real name), they were charmed by her just as I was. My father had loudly echoed my own thoughts, wondering why such an intelligent woman settled for construction, but Dre had just told him that she had followed her heart and she made good money. And that was enough reason for him.

_____ Watching my baby was amazing. How she complimented and fawned over

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my mother, and how she held competitive, political discussions with my father. She was a multi-faceted woman, and even though I fell for who I already knew she was, realization hit me that there was definitely more to her than I had to learn.



Once Again...
by Jeanine & Angel

_____ "I cannot believe you're still with her." Anya walked up beside me, while I watched Dre explain a building structure to my father. My mother was talking to one of the other mothers not too far away. Anya had already taken off her cap and gown.

_____ "Didn't you talk to her?"

_____ "I did talk to her." I said.

_____ "And?"

_____ I turned to look at her. "I don't know, Anya. I'm not saying that you're wrong. I'm probably in over my head. But I care for her deeply. And I want to be with her."

_____ "Are you out of your mind?" She grabbed my arm and pulled me towards a tree and away from listening ears.

"Astoria, you cannot stay with this woman. You are not realizing what kind of person she is."

_____ "Anya!" Dre called as she walked towards us. She slipped her arm around my waist and smiled. "What are you and my girl gossiping about?"

_____ "Nothing, baby." I gave Anya a warning look before returning Dre's smile. "We're talking about Jamaica, that's all."

_____ "Yeah. Jamaica." Anya took a step back. "Don't forget, we leave tomorrow, bright and early. I know you'll want to

spend the evening with Dre and your family, so I'll see you back at the dorms later, okay?"

_____ I just nodded.

_____ Anya nervously smiled at Dre, and then walked away.

_____ Dre kissed my forehead. "She's the one that told you about me, huh?"

_____ I immediately stiffened, not knowing what to say. Think fast, think fast. "She's just worried that I don't know what I'm getting myself into, that's all. She's my best friend, she cares about me."

_____ Dre forced me to look her in the eye. "I won't let anything happen to you. You got my word. I will take care of you and protect you. I swear."

_____ I smiled. "I know, baby. And she'll realize

that soon too. Don't worry. By the time we come back from Jamaica, she'll be head over heels for you, almost as much as I am."

_____ Dre chuckled before kissing me again. But I could see the look of worry in her eyes. I knew what she was thinking. If Anya went off the handle, she could screw Dre over. And I couldn't let that happen. I had to get Anya to at least see my side on this, even if she didn't fully support it.

_____ But Anya had surprised me as soon I walked into our room that night.

_____ "Listen, don't say anything until you've heard me out, ok?"

_____ I just nodded as I sat on my bed.

_____ "I'm not gonna lie. My gut instincts tell me you are making the biggest mistake of your life. But I know that love can be blind, so I'm not going to start a war with you on this." She lit a cigarette and sighed.

"I talked to Danny for some advice. And word is that Dre never really had a girl

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(Blind Love Continued from page 20)

before. I mean, she dated and shit, but she never got serious with anyone. He said that if Dre's serious about you, it's gotta be a good thing. And maybe he's right. I don't have all the answers. But maybe you're supposed to be her savior or something her conscience, who knows? But I just want you to keep your eyes open and be careful, alright?"

____ I nodded. "Alright."

____ Anya rolled her eyes. "We're girls, I got your back on this. Don't worry."

____ I just laughed and jumped on top of her, hugging her tightly. "You'll see. Dre is going to be the best thing that's ever happened to me." And I truly did believe it. God, what an idiot I was. I had no idea what was in store for me.

____ But first, the vacation. Jamaica was the shit! Oh my god. Let me stop to say that if you are not a skeleton thin woman, your ass needs to go to Jamaica. Even if you're not into men, you'll appreciate how much they appreciate a thick woman.

Anya and I couldn't go anywhere without being whistled or hollered at. And the clubs were off the hook! Our very first night in Kingston, we went to the Cactus Club, and danced until we were positively exhausted and drunk off our asses. Every night we partied in some form or fashion. And faithfully, every night, I'd call Dre to let her know I was okay. She always sounded extremely busy, but made time to speak to me, telling whomever she was with to come back later.

____ "I hope you're having a great time and not thinking about me." She said. It was my third night there, and I was alone in our hotel room.

____ "How can I not think about you? I can't wait to be in your arms again." I said honestly.

____ "Nah, live it up, alright? You'll never know when you'll have this chance again."

____ "Yes, ma'am." I said giggling. "Can you tell I'm high as a kite?"

____ "If you were in Jamaica and weren't, I'd be kicking your ass as soon as you got

home."

____ "Yeah, yeah, yeah." I yawned.

"Mmm, I think it's past my bedtime."

____ "Why aren't you out anyway? I'm surprised Anya's letting ya'll stay in."

____ "Anya has a date."

____ Dre chuckled. "Are you serious?"

____ "For real. We were at the beach this morning, and she met up with some guy."

____ "Your girl doesn't waste any time, does she?"

____ "Anya? Please. When it comes to dick, she's right on time."

____ And to prove my point, when Anya did finally walk into our hotel room at almost three in the morning, she had this glazed look in her eyes as she carefully walked to her bed.

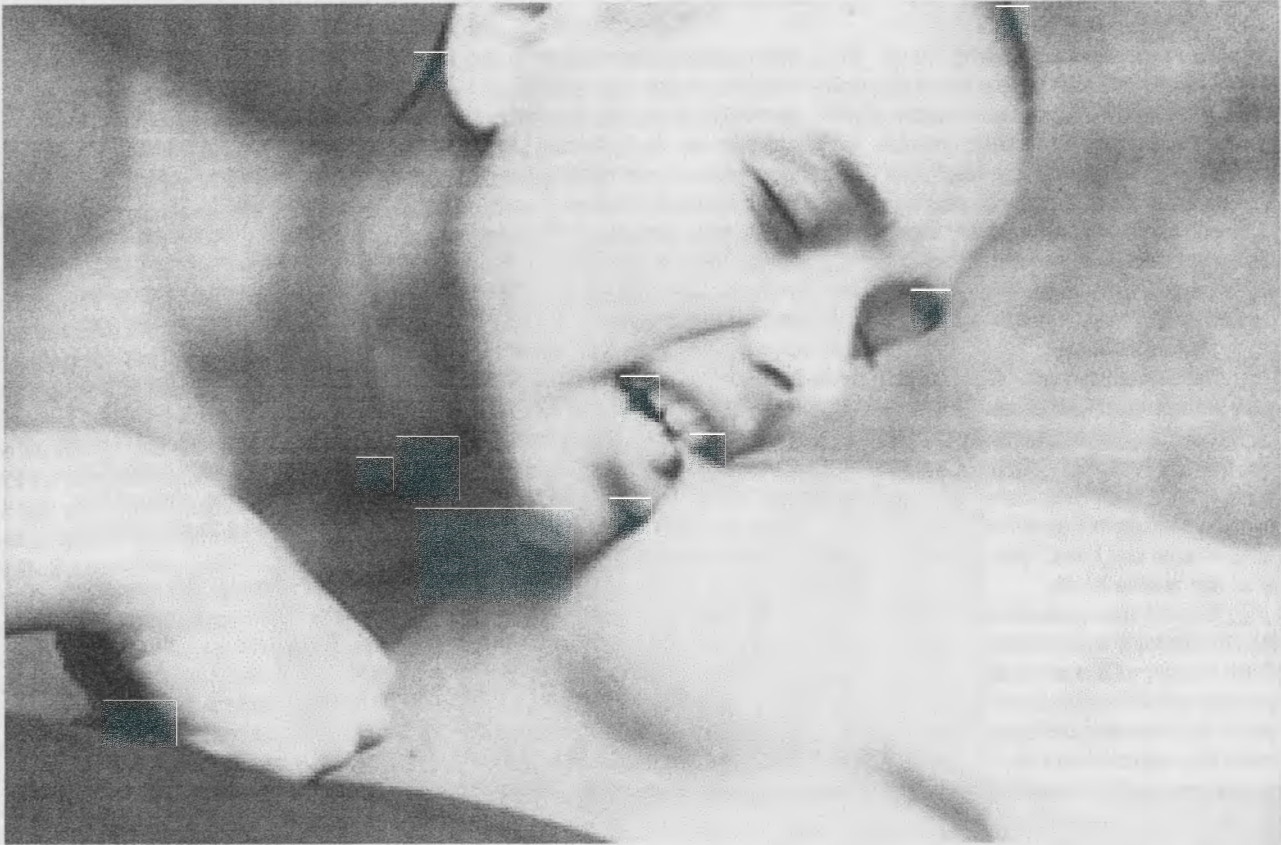
____ "You ok?" I asked. She was taking the most careful steps as if she was drunk, but I knew she wasn't.

____ "Girl, I don't even know." She flopped down on her bed. "I don't even know how I walked here."

(Blind Love Continued on page 22)



by Jeanine & Angel



(Blind Love Continued from page 21)

_____ I laughed. "Was it that good?"

_____ "Good?" She asked me. "Shit, why did I sit, I need to pee. Hell yeah, it was good. Oh my God, that boy had me screaming, do you hear me? SCREAMING." She got back to her feet and started for the bathroom. "Every woman should try Jamaican dick, that's all I gotta say. You'll never be the same afterwards. It should be mandatory for every fucking woman to fuck a Jamaican dick."

_____ I laughed.

_____ "Well, in your case it's different." She walked into the bathroom. "Maybe they make straps here or something. Goddamn, if it's Jamaican made, it's gotta be good. We'll find your ass a genuine Rastafarian-made dildo or something to take back to Dre. Goddamn, my legs are sore." Then she closed the door, leaving me laughing so hard I fell off the bed.

_____ By the time we got back to the states, I was refreshed and ready to take on the world. Anya and I settled into our new apartment, and I was ready to start my career.

_____ When I finally started my job, I was thrust into this fast-paced, competitive world that really took me for a loop. I had interned at the company during my senior year, but the four months of my internship

couldn't have prepared me for all the responsibilities I'd have. But I loved it. I was in my element, being creative, sharing my ideas and designs, and being mentored by some extremely talented people. Every time I rose for work in the morning, I literally jumped out of bed, not being able to wait to start my day.

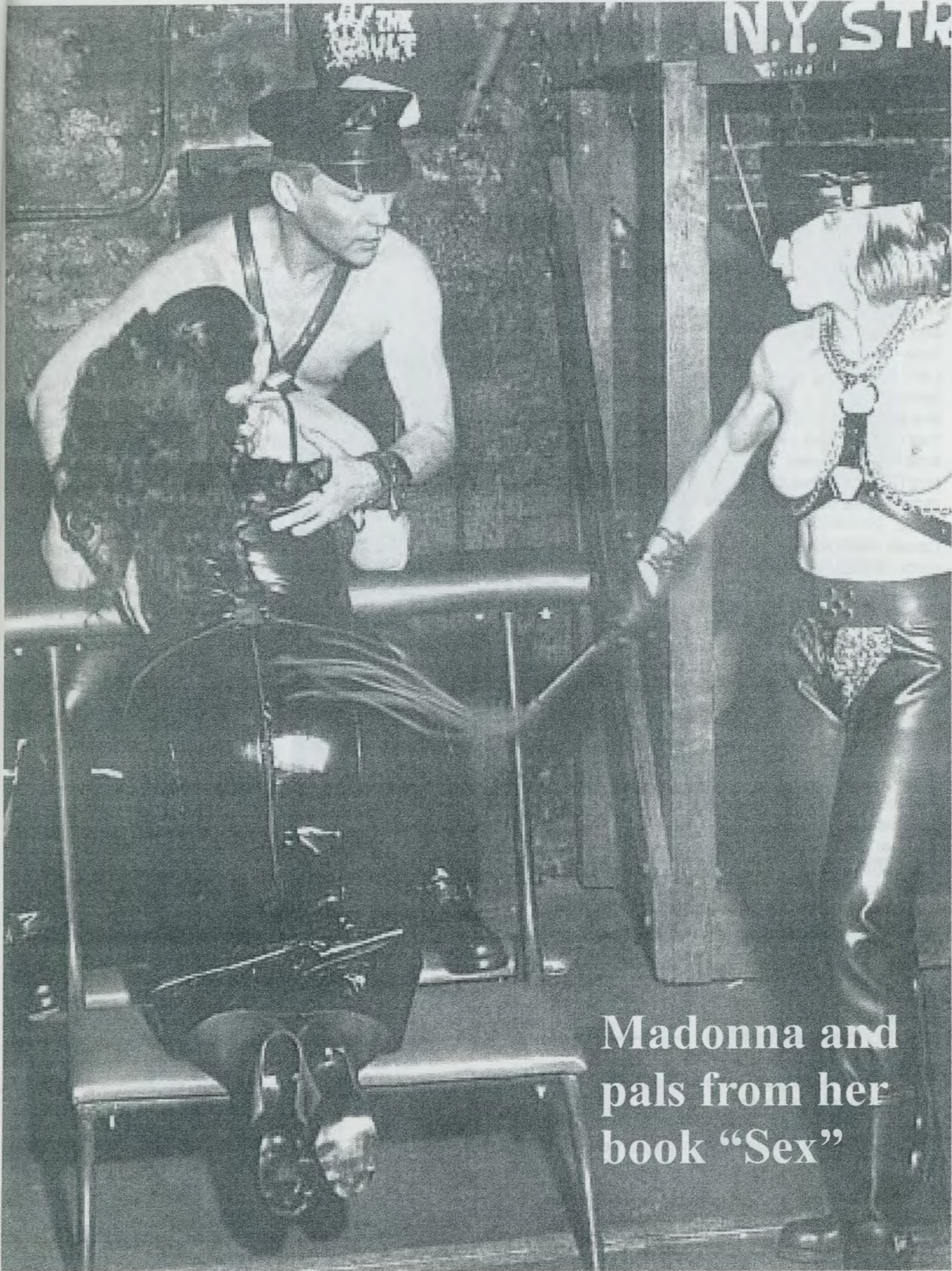
_____ Dre was a big driving force behind me. Many nights, I'd be at her place sketching while she handled her own business. She'd walk by me, look over my shoulder, and suggest a change here, a different cut there, or the use of a possible fabric. And I had to admit that she did have good taste and ideas. One day, I walked into her loft, and found about a dozen bolts of fabric and a sewing machine in the room she let me draw in when I needed quiet. She had just smiled and told me that I needed to start putting what was on paper, on actual people. It made me work even harder. I was producing sketches for my job, and also some that I kept for myself and actually making into garments. Pretty soon, what I was designing, I was wearing while I went out with Dre.

_____ She totally loved showing me off. I wasn't like the other girlfriends or wives of the friends she had or the people she did business with. As chicky as I could be, I could still watch the game with them, and

understand what was going on. I could actually participate in a lot of the conversations they had, while the other women would just sit and talk about the latest music video or their favorite celebrities. I could tell on instant, that I wasn't really accepted by these women. They made me feel like an outsider, and I had to admit that I was in a way. I didn't come from their neighborhood, I didn't know any of them, and I definitely wasn't used to this kind of life. I really wasn't like them, but I definitely wasn't losing sleep over it. But when those girls found out that I designed, all of a sudden I was their best friend. They saw the clothes I wore, and immediately wanted variations for themselves. And even though I was initially against it, out of spite for those two-faced vultures, Dre insisted that I do it for them. Not only would it help keep *The Bitches*—as she called them, not I—happy, but it gave me exposure on my own, since the designs I did for my job were under the name of the fashion house label. And, as usual, Dre was right, and I knew it. No matter where I turned, she always seemed to be looking out for me, and it was a comforting feeling.

_____ She was slowly starting to let me into her world. Little by little, she was hiding less and less from me. I learned to

(Blind Love Continued on page 25)



Madonna and
pals from her
book "Sex"

Too Strong to Be This Weak

See I'm too strong to be this weak
But you have this amazing power over me
I'm defeated before I even get the strength to fight
And I haven't been the same since the first time ever I
saw your face
And you held me tightly in your arms
I'm alarmed
At the fact that after your ex and my ex
and misplaced feelings and
hate

I am still feeling you
feeling me
But you can't fill that void
that was created the first
time we separated
and I hate the fact that my
mouth jump started my emo-
tions

Cause now I'm engulfed in
some tropical ocean
Drifting
Sifting through the ravished
ships of relations
Hesitation
Depreciation
Old sensations
Empty promises
Unfulfilled
I can't feel those actions
Thoughts of the a picture
perfect future can't bring me
satisfaction

So I harvest my tears, pain
and anger
Cause loving you is bitter
sweet
At times I HAVE to retreat
Cause I get so weak
But I'm too strong
Don't get me wrong... cause
it's not like I'm trying to purge
myself of these feelings

But I can't keep feeling like this
I keep singing "Maybe come one day"
Wanting to be your baby
Feeling like your lady

But our intentions are never on the same page, the
copy has faded and the storyline is shady
and a bit too small to read

But damn
It's for you I've breathed



Lovelybrown, aka A. Hamilton is a poet and writer born under the sign of Scorpio. She writes as a form of mental therapy. Currently residing in the Neo-Negro Metropolitan of Atlanta, GA/Self proclaimed gay capitol of the New South. She is 27, single and happy to be alive. She is currently working on a book of poetry entitled, Phases. Please feel free to contact her at lovelybrown_75@yahoo.com.

Even when I was with someone else
And you was with someone else
And we both placed our seeds of "what ifs" on the shelf
But loving you gave me so much wealth
Now I feel impoverished and torn down
Or rather broken down again
Remaining your friend
Remaining
Carrying that chain /chain/chain
It's true
I still do
What I gotta do
Planning a future for me
Moving past your wife and kids fantasy
But the way you talk to me about those things at times
makes me confused
I'm skipping down this rainbow
colored road
moving ahead trying to live in the
present
My friends say you and I have
this sick obsession
But in every emotion I learned a
lesson
And I do need you...
But I also need you to grow up
And you need me to trust
I need you to push aside your
pride and fears
And you need me to be satisfied
with what we have here
At this moment
But at times it feels like it's stolen
How deep is my love?
You have no comprehension
Not to mention
Your intervention is what I need
Before I go off and conquer the
world and become a "world re-
nowned, diva, poetic justice In-
dependent Lady"
But my house is not complete
without you
But damn I'm too strong to be this
weak
But the way that you love me
Makes me believe in
what under any other circum-
stance would be abnormal
and unhealthy
We never had the chance to be
And you're probably the one factor that can make my
equation complete
And speaking on love has no real validity
without the mention of your name
And I only have my heart to blame
Loving you is a gift and a curse that I can't explain
Damn...I'm too strong to be this weak. *****

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(Blind Love Continued from page 22)

never question anything that she did. Dre knew what was best for her, and I just tried to fit my time in with hers. When she had to go out of town for a few days, I just made sure that she ate before she left, and went shopping and stocked her fridge while she was gone. And through my busy schedule, I tried to be available whenever she needed me. I noticed that around the end of every month, Dre always took a three-day vacation. She always looked a little tense before she left, but would come back calm as ever. Those days before she left, I would try to be as upbeat as I could, making her laugh, trying to get her mind off of business. And every time she'd look at me and give me that smirk, I knew I was doing right.

There were days I wouldn't see Dre at all, and since I was so immersed in my job, I didn't really take that much notice. Not until she'd call me up out of the blue, and take me out for a romantic dinner at Nina's (which soon became my favourite place in the world), or to just spend a lazy evening in just talking or making love.

Day after day, I was getting used to my life with Dre and I think vice-versa. I soon realized that Dre wasn't really used to having a girlfriend. She never had to really share her life with anyone on a personal level outside of her family. I knew that the girls she dated before me didn't really take the time to know her and her family. And, of course, I had to be different. Around the time of our fifth month together, I finally asked Dre if I could meet her mother and brother. The look on her



by Jeanine & Angel

face totally threw me. What I saw was fear.

"You want to meet my family?" She asked.

I nodded. "Shouldn't I want to?"

She shrugged. "I'm just protective, that's all." And we left it at that.

I soon realized how protective over her family she truly was. Her mother and brother had absolutely no clue as to what she did. They lived a few cities away, and we took a day and drove up to see them. As soon as I met her mother, I realized why Dre felt the need to take care of her. Lorelei Walker was sick with breast cancer. Around the time she found out her diagnosis, was around the same time that

Dre had moved out. At first it sounded odd to me, but then I put two and two together, and realized that Dre truly did start dealing once she realized how sick her mother was. As soon as she could, Dre talked her mother out of working and concentrating on getting herself better, while Dre footed the bills for both her and her younger brother. Dre had bought the house they lived in, under the same pretense that it was rundown and she had fixed it up first before they moved in. She had even set up a bank account for Lorelei and Antoine, so they never had to worry about money. As long as Dre was careful and never got

(Blind Love Continued on page 26)

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON

I don't know what to do with that man anymore, I've tried everything, perfume, sexy lingerie, all that expensive make up, and nothing has happened



you would think he'd go nuts with you wearing all that sexy stuff

what are you talkin' about?



I wasn't the one wearing it!



OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 25)

caught, her family would be okay. I realized how much pressure Dre had on her shoulders, and that only made me love her more.

I was now becoming more and more involved in Dre's life. I had my own little routine. Usually I spent most nights working at home, but every Wednesday and Sunday, I'd spend the evening with Lorelei, helping her with this and that, but mostly to just keep her company. She was a wonderful woman, always positive, regardless of the diagnosis that her doctors gave her. She had been through treatments off and on, and had to have a double mastectomy. But she was the typical strong black mother. She kept after Antoine, making sure he was a good student, and, I suspected, worried about Dre more than she cared to admit. But she seemed to always have a smile on, despite whatever happened. And Antoine was adorable. At twelve, he thought he knew everything, but truly was a sweet boy. He and I got along well. We were both into video games, so Dre and Lorelei would often find us zoned out playing his Playstation. Every day I spent with him, I found myself becoming more and more attached to him. It got to a point that whenever I'd come around, he'd spend every possible moment with me.

"You love my sister?" He asked me out of the blue one day.

"Yes. I do." I said simply.

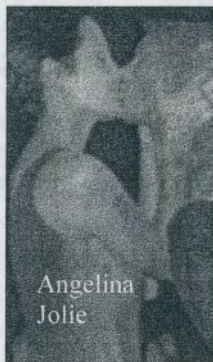
"And she loves you?"

"I believe so, yes." I didn't know where this was leading, so I wanted to be

careful with my answers.

He thought it over for a moment then said, "Good. Cuz I love you too. You're cool." Then he went back to his homework, leaving me in surprised shock at his frankness, but welcoming the kind of innocent honesty that only children can give.

If I ever had a son, I hoped he would be like Antoine. He was so inquisitive and sweet; I just generally enjoyed spending time with him. I could tell that Dre's idea of them moving out to the suburbs was a good one. Antoine was a happy, carefree, easygoing kid with hardly any worries. Not like a lot of the kids I knew that lived in our area, who looked like they lived their lives like they were ready for war.



Angelina Jolie

And I think that's when Dre realized I was here to stay. When our relationship first started getting serious, I had this feeling of being watched, as if I was being tested somehow. And slowly, the further our relationship went I noticed little things happening. The first thing to happen? Dre gave me a copy of the keys to the loft. Now, let me pause for a moment to explain something. Always be on the alert when your girl gives you the key to her place. It almost never means that she trusts you. It means that she is testing you. Now you have the freedom of being able to walk in and out of her domain without her help. Most women will be stupid and take it as an invitation to spend even more time at their place. Never, never start just showing up out of the blue.

www.QueerRamblings.com

One, it means that you're overstepping your boundaries, and two, your girl will think you don't trust her.

So when Dre gave me the keys to her place, I just graciously took them, added them onto my key ring, and promptly forgot about them. Half the time, Dre had to remind me that I had the keys and I could just let myself in if I wanted to come by, which I would do—but after clearing it with her first. And I still never came over without her knowing about it ahead of time. If I knew she wasn't going to be there, my ass would be tracking her down first to call and let her know I wanted to come by her place. And I always made sure to never touch her things. I had my own business to worry about. When I was there, it was either to sew or to meet her. No reason for me to start snooping just because she wasn't there—another mistake a lot of women make once they get that key. Eventually, about two months after she gave me the keys, Dre had to sit me down and let me know that it was okay for me to come and go as I pleased. That she trusted me, and it was fine.

I passed.

Next thing to happen? She left a roll of money on kitchen counter. I'm not stupid, I know my baby. She does not accidentally forget a roll of bills. And even if she did, I'm not stupid. I promptly called her on her cell and just let her know. She did it twice actually. The second time, it was a few hundred-dollar bills on the coffee table. I decided not to even call her. I just sat in the living room and just watched television. When she came home, she gave me a kiss, then saw the money on

(Blind Love Continued on page 27)

QueerRamblings issue 30, p. 26

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON

in a moment we'll be on that plane to f.l.a. isn't this exciting!

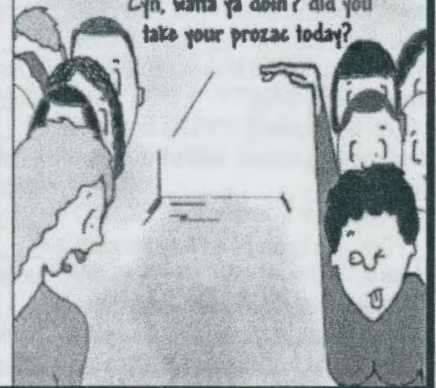
and cindy isn't even nervous she's good to go!



o.k. just a little tip, once on the plane when you're all situated and seated remember to help balance the plane by sticking one arm in the air with your left eye shut and your tongue sticking out, this will assure a smooth ride!



Cyn, watta ya doin'? did you take your prozac today?



(Blind Love Continued from page 26)
the table.

____ "Why didn't you take it, baby? I left it for you."

____ I just shrugged. "It's not mine, I'm not gonna touch it. Next time, leave me a note or message." You go, girl.

____ Passed again.

____ Next. She went for the big guns.

She left weed in the bedroom. Just laying out on the nightstand. I wasn't the most educated when it came to weighing weed, but I could pretty much tell by sight that she had left behind about an ounce. Now, the reason a lot of people get caught in this test, is that they will take out "just a pinch", thinking that whoever left it, won't notice. Hell no. That's what scales are for. Never, never, never touch the weed. She left it on the nightstand, and when she

came back, she found it on the nightstand.

____ "You didn't want to smoke?"

____ I shrugged. "Wasn't sure if you had plans for it. But if you want to smoke, I'll roll." I smiled. A definite way to your girl's heart, even if you don't smoke yourself: know how to roll.

____ Passed again. And this time, I was in.

____ It was about October. I had let myself in with my keys, and practically collapsed on the sofa. I was beat. My eyes hurt, my hands hurt, my feet hurt, my brain hurt damn, even my ass hurt for sitting so long on the damn chair while I was sketching.

____ "What happened to you?" Dre appeared out of nowhere and planted a kiss on my forehead.

____ "Stupid people who want stupid

miracles." I answered.

____ She chuckled as she passed me a blunt. "Here, smoke this. You know you're the bomb, baby. They're working you hard now, because they know that you're gonna make it big. You just gotta pay your dues, that's all."

____ "I know, I know, I know." I took a hit. "I'm just a little overworked, that's all."

____ She sat beside my head. "We gotta talk."

____ Oh yeah, that got my attention. I took another hit and passed it back to her, sitting up. "What's wrong?"

____ She shook her head. "Nothing, baby. But I figured it was time that we had this talk, that's all."

____ "What talk."

____ She smiled. "The what if talk."

(Blind Love Continued on page 28)

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON

I'll just open the terrace door and enjoy some of that Florida sunshine!



Hey, let's have our breakfast on the terrace, watta ya say?



salaaaap

I didn't know!



You weren't supposed to close the door were you?



(Blind Love Continued from page 27)

____ No. I didn't like the sound of this at all. "What do you mean?"

____ She took her time to answer. "I love you. You know that. And I promised to do whatever I could to protect you. And I will. But you know what I'm into, and you know it ain't safe. And I want to make sure that you're safe at all times."

____ "I'm not touching it." I said as I got to my feet knowing exactly where this was leading.

____ "Astoria"

____ "Dre, you know how I feel. I'm not touching it."

____ She sighed. "You don't understand"

____ "I understand completely. You want me to be able to protect myself. But I'm not going there."

____ "Astoria"

____ "Dre"

____ "ASTORIA!"

____ Silence. I just stared at her in shock. She had never raised her voice to me before.

____ "Damn, woman.

You act like I want you to go out there shootin' people and shit. All I want is for you to be able to know how to use one, just in case something happens."

____ "What's gonna happen?" I asked.

____ She shook her head. "I don't know. And I don't know when. Any day I can get caught, baby. Either by the police or by some

ambitious asshole. That's the game I live. And if you're gonna be with me, you gotta be prepared."

____ I walked to the window and stared out at the street. Dre walked up behind me, wrapping her arms around my waist. "I know you're scared, boo. But believe me, you won't be if you know how to use one. Okay?"

____ I just nodded, not saying anything.

____ "I never wanted to live like this, you know. Shit, I always thought I'd have a regular job, married to a fine-ass woman like yourself, have a couple of kids and shit. I never pictured my life like this."

____ "Then why did you do it?" I asked.

____ "It's not like you didn't have options."

____ She shook her head. "When my

moms got sick, I needed money for her and fast. She didn't have insurance and she needed chemo. Doctors want to save your life, but they want their money too. This is the only way I knew to get the money quick."

____ I turned in her arms, facing her.

"Once you were set, why didn't you just stop?"

____ She smiled. "You can't just stop when you make it to where I'm at. Shit, the dude I took over for didn't just stop."

____ "What happened to him?" I asked.

____ She stared at me in silence. And I understood.

____ "I got lucky, baby. Most niggas gotta work their way up and shit. They gotta earn a lot of people's trust. Me? I just met the right guy at the right time. He realized I was serious and decided to take me under

stay safe. I want you to be able to protect yourself." Her eyes narrowed and I knew it meant she meant business. "Understood?"

____ I nodded and let her kiss me, even though my heart was banging in my chest.

____ I think this is when I had my first doubt. The first time I actually had second thoughts in the six months Dre and I had been together. I had thought Dre's other life wouldn't really touch our life together. So, it felt safe. I mean seeing a deal here and there, meeting with some of her contacts, stuff like that was okay. I could deal with that. But now the stakes were getting higher and I wasn't sure if I could cut it.

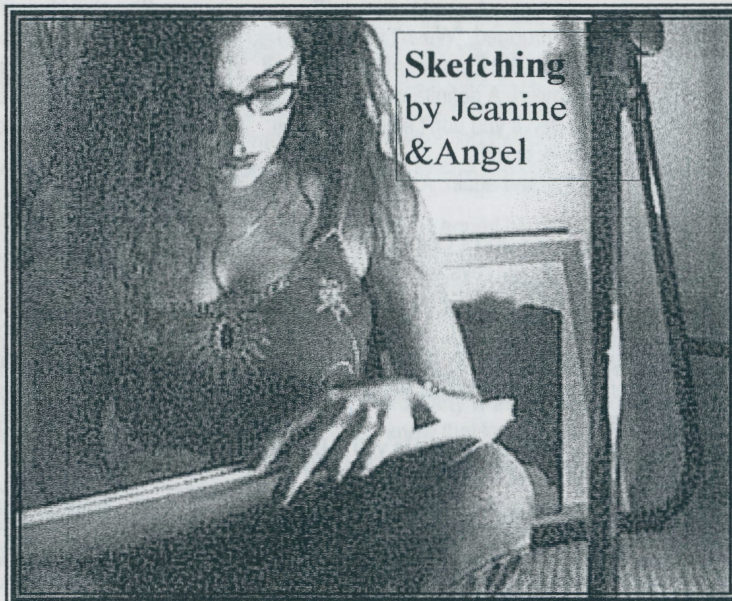
____ Dre must have had some faith in me, because on Saturday, she drove us out to a friend's house in the country where we had target practice for two hours. She had presented me with my own piece. We decided to keep it in the loft, nearby so I could get to it in a hurry if I needed too. She had raised the point of my needing protection if I was out by myself, but one look from me and she knew that this was as far as I would go. At least for now. By the time we left the practice range, I knew all the basics to protecting myself, and another part of my innocence had died.

____ It was as if I had just unlocked the door to some tidal wave, because all of a sudden there was no more hiding. Dre would conduct business in front of me as if I wasn't even there. I'd be

walking around the loft and see bricks upon bricks of weed on tables, waiting to be distributed. Money was flying, people were talking, and I was the silent one, sketching or reading, usually minding my own business unless Dre needed me to figure something out with her. She knew I had her back, and she felt comfortable with that. I was now a part of them.

____ I was living the lifestyle and I was getting so accustomed to it. I never questioned a damn thing. When December hit and my birthday came around, Dre surprised me with a new Volkswagen Jetta. For Christmas, I got a platinum diamond solitaire ring. For New Years Eve, Dre took me to New York City, and we lived it up in

(Blind Love Continued on page 33)



Sketching
by Jeanine
& Angel

his wing and shit." She smiled. "I think he wanted to make some kind of an example out of me since I was a chick. But I did right and I earned his respect. And soon, everyone else's."

____ "People are afraid of you." I said softly.

____ She nodded. "I ain't never asked for that, believe me. But business is business. If you show one moment of weakness, these niggas will run you down in a heartbeat. No joke. If someone fucks with me or my shit, they gotta pay the consequences."

____ It sent chills down my spine to hear her say these words, even though I understood.

____ "And you, Miss Thang. You gotta

The Librarian

by Heather Rose

Heather Rose, subversive feminist cheerleader, is the editor and creator of the former grrrry zine *Riot Gone Rose*. When not obsessing over ex-girlfriends, she is currently working on her first novel, entitled *Auspen*. She can be reached at:

hottieheatherriot@hotmail.com.

Something about that bruise is turning me on. Wedged symmetrically on a pale plump thigh between white knee socks and a loose green jersey dress, it resembles one of those butterfly inkblots except that it's small and kind of brown.

She probably got it from working here.

The tables in this library are so packed and close together that it's hard to move without banging into something. Or someone.

I've never seen this librarian before. I've been coming to this library to study with my dorm mate Kelly for almost a year now. I'm quite sure that I would have noticed her – she looks about 20,

the same age as me, and with her long bright red hair, big green eyes and her soft, curvy figure, she stands out among all the drab, colourless people working here.

"What the hell! I just don't get this!" Kelly's copy of *Mrs. Dalloway* goes flying past me, barely missing my ear.

I chuckle, "You don't get much lately, do you?"

"Ha ha, like your one to talk." Kelly sits back, smoothing her dark brown ponytail to the side and grins at me wickedly.

Sometimes I wonder why we never got together, we have been dorm mates for nine months and we get along great- there's no one that I feel more comfortable with than Kelly. Unfortunately, though, we're both too romantic, too into the mystery of it all to ever consider hooking up with a known friend. That would be much too easy.

"Hey, show Virginia a little respect."

I look up, the red haired librarian is holding Kelly's book. She places it back down on our table and gives me a crooked smile before going back to her bookshelves.

Kelly snorts and mumbles something that I can't hear because I'm too busy thinking of the librarian's plump red lips and of

the freckles dotting her nose and cheeks- *hmmm*, I wonder where *else* she has freckles.

She is bent over now, arranging the books on the lower shelf, her beautiful heart shaped ass not very well concealed under the thin material of her dress. I feel a tingling in my pussy and my palms start to sweat as I imagine cupping that round, juicy ass in my hands.

"OOOH, somebody wants the 'fire down below'!"

"What?" Kelly's laughter has snapped me out of my daydream.

"Fire down below. As in red-heads. They're usually red down there too, you know. Well, that is if they're *real* redheads- do you think she is?"

"Shut up." For some reason I really don't want Kelly talking about this woman's crotch.

"Come on, Elizabeth, why don't you go talk to her? She's pretty cute."

Pretty cute? More like freakin' gorgeous. But Kelly's crazy-go talk to her? Like it could be that simple.

"Whatever. Anyway, how was your date last night?" I'm a champ at changing the subject.

"Oh, that" Kelly sighs, "Um, she was nice ..."

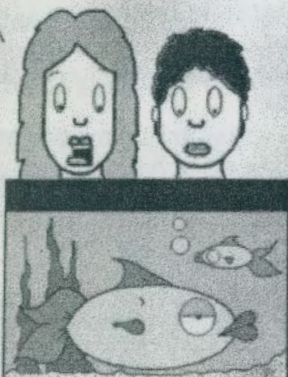
"But?"

(Continued on page 30)

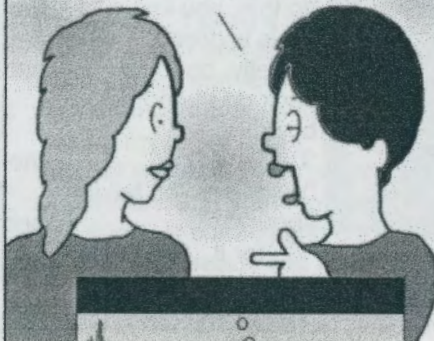
OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON

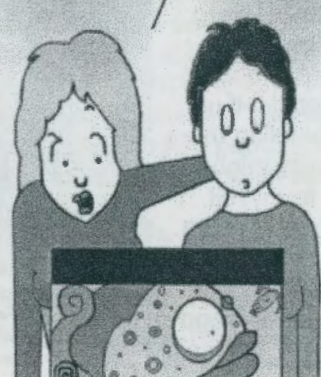
Gee Cindy that fish is awfully big, you think there's something wrong with it?



you know jus' cause somethin's big doesn't mean there's something wrong with it, you my dear have size issues! My fish is just fine.



nuh uh girl, something is wrong with that fish!



OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Continued from page 29)

"Well, she was nice but she just wasn't Christine."

"Oh, you mean she wasn't a conceited jerk who treats you like shit?" Kelly smiles sadly and looks down at her hands. "I know...but I still can't stop thinking about her."

I reach over and take one of Kelly's hands in mine. "It's ok. I called Donna's cell phone this morning just to hear the sound of her voice."

"Oh no! Did she pick up?"

"Yep, I hung up when she said 'hello.'" "I hope you dialled *67." "Of course."

Kelly laughs and rolls her eyes, "Listen to us! We're so pathetic! I mean, it's been a year since Christine dumped me and at least eight months since you and Donna broke up. Do you think we'll ever get over them?"

My eyes have moved back to the librarian's supple ass, her red hair is falling down her back now and her dress has absently hiked itself up higher- revealing more of those juicy thighs.

I think to myself, "I wouldn't mind getting over Donna with *her*".

The librarian has stopped shelving and is standing at the main

desk, flicking the lights off and on. "Ten minutes until closing, everyone!"

"Good!" Kelly exclaims, packing up her books, "I can't wait to get out of here. Want to go get a drink or something Liz?"

"I can't. This essay is due Monday and I still have so much research to do!" I can't believe that I've spent all this time checking out the librarian's ass when I should have been studying. I can't afford to fail this class. I'm doomed.

"Excuse me," I look up- it's the red-haired librarian looking down at me with concern in her dark green eyes, "I'm sorry, but I couldn't help overhearing you. I have a lot of work to finish up here and if you wouldn't mind helping me lock up afterwards, I'll let you stay and study for another hour."

"Really? Wow, thanks!"

She smiles before walking back to her desk, "I don't usually do this, you know."

"This is great!" I say to Kelly, opening back up my notebook.

"Go for it." "What are you talking about?"

"Go for it. She fuck-ing wants you."

"Whatever, Kelly,

she's just being nice."

"Yeah right- 'I don't usually do this, you know'- she wants you."

I shoo her away with my hands, "Leave me alone, go home and call that girl from last night."

"Ok, but I want details." Kelly winks at me before getting up to leave.

"Crazy," I mumble to myself, "She doesn't want me. She's probably straight. She's just being nice."

An hour later, after putting all thoughts of the luscious redhead out of my mind, I've managed to finish most of my research and even have an outline done for my essay.

Suddenly, I sense someone standing behind me and my nostrils are filled with the scent of vanilla.

"Time for a little break?"

I stand up, knocking over my chair, and turn around to face the librarian. Her full red lips are parted and look slightly wet as though she's just been licking them. Her eyes are hazy and there's a blush colouring her freckled cheeks.

"I saw you watching me earlier." *What does she have eyes in the back of her head?*

My heart starts beating faster and I begin to stammer, "I-I wasn't...I mean, I..."

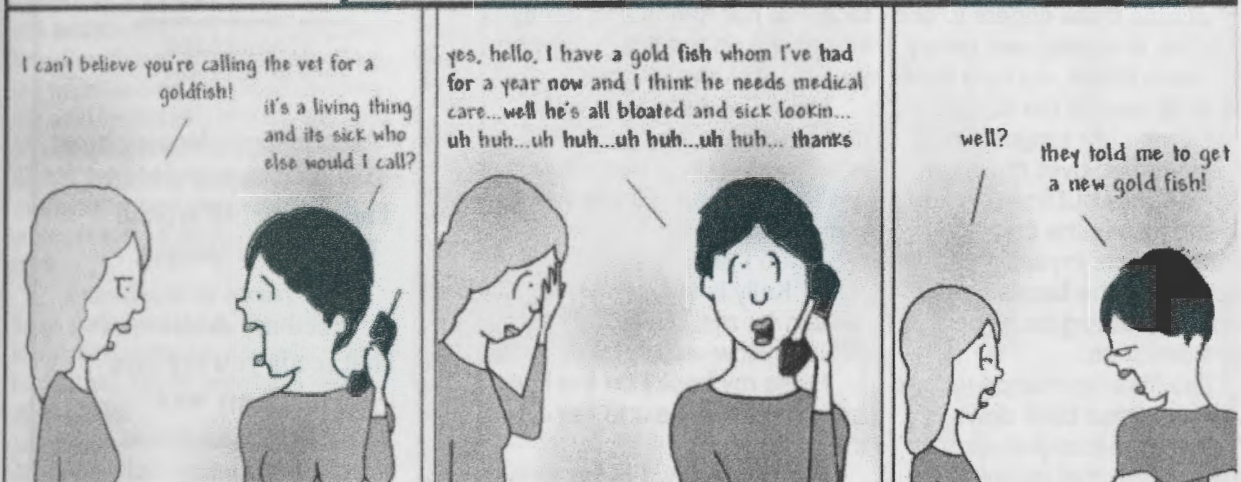
"It's ok, I've been watching you, too. You're very pretty. Where are



Roberta Stokes-Jaqué Duprée
Family,
(www.lovemakesafamily.org/lovemakesafamily/stokes.html)

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



you from?"

Oh God, I hate when people ask me that question, as if I just got off a boat yesterday or something when really, I've lived here my whole life.

"I was born here. My parents are Canadians too, but *their* parents are from Japan."

"Mmmm...you have such a beautiful mouth..." She leans in and runs her tongue lightly over my lips. I pull her to me, my nervousness now evaporated, and cover her plump red lips with my own. Her tongue pushes itself hungrily against mine and I feel her body quiver with desire. My hands travel from her small waist, over her blossoming hips to that gorgeous round ass. I knead the fleshy mounds with my hands as she gyrates her hips gently against me. She's so soft and yummy; essay or no essay, I *have* to have her!



With her still in my arms, I push her gently to the front of the library.

"Sit on top of your desk," I whisper.

She obeys and climbs a top her workstation, ignoring the piles of paper and books.

"Hike up your dress", I demand and she does; revealing virginal white panties soaked at the crotch. My breathing quickens and I think about what Kelly said earlier about

redheads. "Take off your panties." She leans over and slowly removes them, tossing them onto the floor. I gasp- I don't think that I've ever seen such beauty. Her pussy lips are pink and puffy, surrounded by trim red hair that's just a tad darker than the hair on her head. "Now spread your legs wide open for me." Her white knee socks fall down to her ankles as I grab hold of her hips and dive down into her lush pink pussy. I cover her lips with my tongue and take in her juices- she tastes sweet and her natural scent mingled with her vanilla perfume is making me horny beyond belief. With my tongue still on her throbbing clit, I take two fingers and insert them into her tight hole- Damn! That's a wet pussy!

The librarian is moaning loudly with abandonment, pulling onto my hair and shoving her sweetness deeper into my face. I grab onto her ass and pull her up so that I can fuck her with my tongue. I push it in to her- harder, faster and deeper, with each thrust I can feel her soft thighs quivering against my face. Taking my index finger, I insert it into her ass and she lets out a yelp of pleasure and starts to come. Her pussy is coming and coming all over my already wet face. I climb on top of her, two fingers still inside of her, and kiss her passion-

ately on the mouth. Her body feels so warm and moist; I want to take all of her into me.

She lies back and lets out a contented sigh. "Oh, thank you, you don't know how much I needed that."

"Mmmm," I whisper, still leaning over her, rubbing my finger over her wet lips, "thank you." She smiles and lifts up my t-shirt.

"What beautiful perky breasts you have." My nipples are now as hard as little brown nuts, she flicks at them with her tongue and starts unzipping the fly of my jeans.

"Oh God," I moan. I can't believe that this is happening- I haven't been with another woman since Donna... Donna... a million miles away...

The librarian pulls my jeans and my panties down over my hips and pulls me up higher on the desk so that my pussy is above her face. My whole body is shaking as I struggle to keep above on my hands. Her cool wet tongue laps against my lips and two of her fingers fuck me- at first gently, than faster and more furiously. I hump my pussy against her beautiful face as her fingers pump away inside me and her mouth hungrily eats my clit.

She grabs hold of my waist with her hands and buries her tongue deeper into me. I feel dizzy and weak. My body has broken out in

(Continued on page 32)

(Continued from page 31)

a sweat and I'm about to come. She pumps three fingers in and out of my throbbing wet pussy. With each thrust, my cunt tightens itself around her digits.

Running her tongue along my thighs and over my stomach, she rolls out from under me and kisses me on the mouth. I taste myself on her tongue and she tastes herself on mine- nothing could be more delicious.

The librarian stands up and pulls her dress back down. "Well, I hope that you were able to finish that essay of yours." I'm a little shaken; her voice has suddenly turned all business like. She gathers up the books that have fallen on the floor and starts arranging them on the trolley. "We're closed tomorrow but we're open late Tuesday if you still have some studying to do."

Speechless, I zip up my jeans and stand up. "Uh...thanks..."

"I still have some work to finish here but please make sure to close the door tightly on your way out."

I put on my jacket and gather up my books. Numbly, I cross the library to the exit.

"Hey, wait a minute!" I turn around; the librarian takes my face into her hands and gently kisses me on the lips. "Thank you, again," she whispers.

I smile and push open the door. The night air feels cool against my skin. I touch my lips lightly- I can still feel her kiss.

When I get back to my dorm room, Kelly is sitting up in bed waiting for me. "Well?" she smiles, "How was it?"

I toss my books on the floor and plop down next to her on the bed.

"Let's just say, I never knew studying could be so much fun!"



Moonreapr (see poem)

Moonreapr: Artist Bio: 41, Louisiana, intuitive artist. My art is mostly created in sync with the timing of crop circle activity. This was discovered by accident when a friend of mine suggested that I compare dates of my drawings to crop circle formation dates. I also do oil and acrylic painting. My b/w photography is based upon personal attachments to certain objects. <moonreapr@cox-internet.com>

Editor's Note: Moonreapr's artwork was also featured in Issue #31, May 2003

Cocoon

© Moonreapr

see bio and picture below

You awakened my sleeping heart
From its slumber within
Turned my life around
Put me in a tailspin.

Feed my desire
That feeds you my love
You fit my soul
Just like a tight glove.

If you love me
You won't set me free
Look into my heart
And tell me what you see.

I foresee
The consuming desire
The love we make,
The passion and fire.

Hold me
Let me into the cocoon
that hides your heart
Let us be one
To never part.

OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



(Blind Love Continued from page 28)

a posh hotel like we were born rich. Money was available to me like you wouldn't believe. Even though I made my own money, Dre would hand me a few hundred dollars and send me shopping for a day with Anya or sometimes, to make nice with The Bitches. And I think Anya got caught up as well, because there was never a hint of argument from her anymore. We had it made.

_____ It wasn't until late January that things started getting hot. The avalanche always sends some small snowflakes first before it hits. And the snowflakes were starting to fall.

_____ It was an exceptionally bright day for January, so I had decided to sketch by the large picture window in the main part of the loft, under natural light. I must have been sketching for about twenty minutes, when my eyes shifted downward and I saw a dark red car parked across the street from the building. I didn't think anything of it at first, but as I sketched, I realized that I had seen the same car sitting in the same spot the day before. I remembered vividly, because one, I had never seen the car in the neighbourhood before, and two, Dre wanted to change the colour of her SUV, and I thought the red would be nice. I made a mental note to tell her, and then I forgot about it.

_____ Two days later, I'm dragging a bolt of fabric into the building. I got a little tired, so I stopped on the top step to take a breath. I must have looked up for some reason, when I noticed a glint in one of the windows in the building across the street. When my eyes focused, I noticed a person just standing in the window. I had my wool cap on, so whoever couldn't see me looking up, but I could tell they were looking down at me. It gave me an odd feeling, so I forced myself to continue dragging the fabric inside. And as I closed the building door, my eyes, for some reason settled on the dark red car, which, of course, was in the same spot.

_____ About a week after that, after making love to Dre, she went to take a shower, while I went to the kitchen to fix us some lunch. I'm naked (like I usually am at her place), and as I'm walking, I realize that the drapes to the big picture window were still wide open. So, I walk over to draw them shut, and as I close them, that same kind of glint caught my eye. Keeping the drapes closed, I peek out through a small opening, and focused on the window



Romancing by "Jeanine & Angel"

across the street from us. Another person is standing in the same window staring right at our window, with binoculars.

_____ Oh God, no. It felt like my heart had just stopped beating in my chest. No, no, no, no, no. This wasn't happening. Not now, not like this.

_____ My first instincts were to run to Dre, but I stopped myself. What if I was wrong?

What if I panicked her for no reason? Oh God, what to do, what to do? So I sat and thought. It was Saturday. Dre had just come back from one of her travels the night before. The boys were going to come by later that evening to take what was theirs. If something was going to happen, it was definitely going to happen tonight.

(Blind Love Continued on page 34)

(Blind Love Continued from page 33)

Every instinct in my body told me something was going to happen.

____ Shit, shit, shit! If she got busted, her mother would be totally heartbroken. And what about Antoine? The last time we had visited with her mother, on the way back, Dre had mentioned the possibility having to raise Antoine. The cancer had returned and her mother was getting sick again. And this time the doctors' didn't seem hopeful. She had actually talked about getting out of the game so she could raise her little brother. She had well enough money saved. And her mother had already talked to her about it. If Dre got busted, who would take care of Antoine once Lorelei was gone?

____ And at that moment, I made the biggest decision of my life.

____ "I thought you were going to cook?" Dre's voice broke my thoughts.

____ "Huh?" I asked, getting to my feet. She was fully dressed.

____ Her eyebrow rose in amusement. "Look at you, all naked. You're making me want to tap that ass again."

____ I forced myself to smile. "Yeah, whatever."

____ She just kissed my lips gently. "Don't bother with lunch. I gotta run out for a little bit, you'll be alright while I'm gone?"

____ I just nodded. "I may leave for a little bit. I have to pick up some things for dinner tonight. Everyone's coming by, right?"

____ "Yeah, but you don't gotta cook for them niggas."

____ "Well, it'll be nice to have something anyway." I insisted.

____ She pulled a couple of bills out of her pocket and handed them to me. "Cook til your heart's content. You won't get any

argument from me."

____ I just laughed.

____ After she left, I quickly got dressed, throwing on some sweats and sneakers. I walked into my art room and pulled out a few bolts of fabric and unrolled each. I took a deep breath, and went to the hall closet. I felt along the inside wall carefully until I felt the little hidden trap door. I pushed it open and there it was. Dre's monthly usual: one hundred pounds of marijuana, already in bricks, just waiting. And for the first time, in a long time I prayed.

____ It took me about an hour, and about six bolts of fabric, to move all the bricks from Dre's loft to my car. When I had the weed in the car, I made one final sweep of the apartment to make sure that absolutely nothing was left behind. I packed all of Dre's scales and guns in my totes. I went through all her drawers and any phone numbers I found, I tore up and packed in my totes as well—you NEVER throw anything away in the trash. It can always be pieced together and pushed in your face later on.

____ When I was sure that the place was completely clean, I left, driving over to my place, where I unloaded everything and stashed them in my room. I had to move quickly, unrolling all the bolts, hiding the bricks in my closet and the trunks filled with fabric I kept in my room. Then I had to move the bolts back to Dre's so she would-

Drown Me

© moonreapr

I am that sky in your heart
vast and wide

I am that ocean in your soul
a passionate noontide

You opened a river in me
Where once sat a dam
Comes the floods of my being
This is who I am:

Waves washing over me
Wash over me to drown
The High of You in me
In you I will never come down.

Yes my passion drowns me
And I hope to never swim
My desire stays constant
Never to fade nor dim.



Jeanine & Angel

n't notice anything, but first making a stop at the bridge, to get rid of all the guns. I raced back to Dre's as quickly as I could to set everything back up. When I was finished, the first thing I did was take a peek out the window and that person was still in the window. I breathed a sigh of relief. At least I hadn't tipped them off.

____ By the time Dre walked in, it was four hours later and I was in the middle of frying chicken.

____ "Mmm" She kissed my cheek. "That smells good, boo. Those idiots are gonna be here in about an hour."

____ I just nodded. Keep turning the chicken. Make sure it's even.

____ She stopped and stared at me. "You ok?"

____ "Yeah, why?" Keep your eyes on the chicken.

____ "You seem a little shaky."

____ I shrugged. "I'm not feeling well."

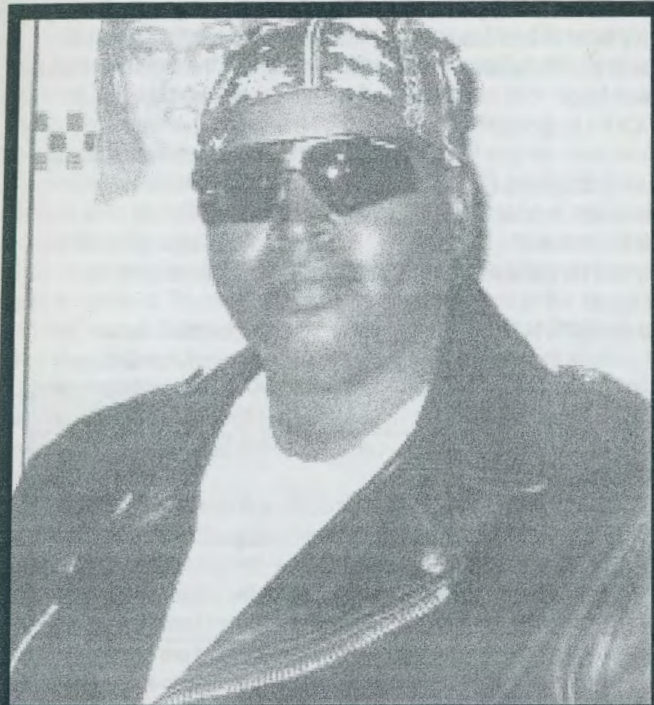
____ "What's wrong?"

____ "I think I'm getting sick."

____ She placed her hand over my forehead. "Damn, you do feel warm. Why don't

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Artwork by KD

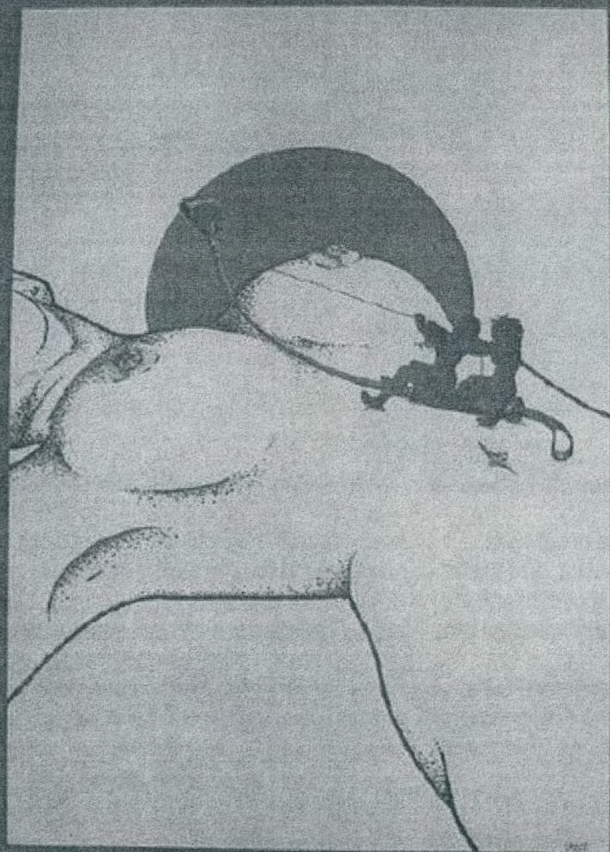


KD, Artist Bio

<KD's work was also featured in the April 2003 issue of QueerRamblings and will be featured in future issues.>

By Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one. Well, I was born in Houston Texas and raised in shake and bake country....that would be Los Angeles, California. Growing up, I knew I wasn't like the other little girls, no matter how much my mother tried to fit me into that cookie cutter mold. I never fit in anywhere and I realized later in life why. I was raised with 3 brothers and when they got cap guns and holsters for Christmas, I cried cause I got girly toys, until my dad finally surrendered and got me the road race set I'd always wanted. I've been into art my whole and can't remember a time when it wasn't. I majored in art in high school, then went to college, but flunked out cause I was told, way back then, that I could not take any of my major courses for 2 years. This was back in 1971. I hope things have changed by now. I then got the bright idea to go to trade school and major in Architectural Drafting. I thought I become an Architect, so I then enrolled at Cal Poly, Pomona. Their program was totally full so I went by to art. Poly is not known for it's art dept., but I was creating stuff and I was happy. I prefer sculpting and I've been told that I draw like a sculptor. At the time I didn't realize what that meant, but I do now. When people see my work, they tell me how much money I SHOULD be making from it, but I can't do the starving artist thing. I work a regular job that pays the mortgage and lets me have a few toys. *****

<http://hometown.aol.com/butchlife/index.html>



Cropped by Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one

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you just let me finish up here and go lay down?"

_____"No, no, I'll be fine. And besides, you know they like my chicken better than yours."

_____"You little bitch." She joked, and playfully smacked my ass before lighting a cigarette. "I don't know what I'd do without you though."

_____"You'll think of something." I winked at her. Was I really okay? I felt like my heart was pounding so loud that she had to have been able to hear it.

_____"She bit her bottom lip, lust suddenly

the kitchen. I soon heard the normal sounds of Dre greeting the guys. In about a half hour, everyone had arrived and I just stayed in the kitchen, my heart in total fear of when Dre would realize what happened.

_____"I didn't have to wait long.

_____"WHAT THE FUCK!" I heard her scream.

_____"I could feel myself getting faint. I had to force myself to sit down at the table.

_____"What the fuck is this bullshit!" I heard something crash and I knew she was tearing the closet apart.

_____"Yo, Dre, what's wrong?" I heard someone ask.

today. Where's my shit?"

_____"I don't know."

_____"What do you mean you don't know?" She slammed her fist against the wall, making me jump. "I checked on that shit before I left the house. You were the only person here."

_____"Baby, I don't know. I was only gone for a couple of hours "

_____"Where did you go?"

_____"To the supermarket to get food. And I stopped by my place to pick up some things to sketch "

_____"This time she punched the wall. I could feel the tears already streaming



The Climbers by Karen David (KD to my friends), destined to live a butch life from day one

in her eyes. "You ever fucked while you were sick?"

_____"You are positively disgusting, Dre."

_____"She laughed. "You love me though."

_____"And it'll distract her for a while, I thought. I lowered the heat on the chicken and let her lead me to the sofa in the living room area. Every time her lips touched my skin, I just wanted to cry. In my heart I knew that this may be the last time I was able to have her touch me like this.

_____"But we weren't able to finish. We had only cum our first time, when the doorbell rang. Dre cursed then got to her feet while I rushed to get dressed and back into

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_____"My fucking shit is gone! I just brought that shit in last night, how the fu ASTORIA!" I heard her thunderous footsteps on the floor before she walked into the kitchen.

_____"What the fuck happened?" She asked me. Her eyes were clouded over with anger and mistrust, and I had never been so scared of her.

_____"What are you talking about?" I asked. My voice was sounding hoarse. Shit, don't tell me I was seriously worrying myself sick.

_____"My fucking shit is gone. You and I were the only people in this fucking house

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down my face. I was so frightened I didn't know what to do. I couldn't tell her. I just couldn't. Not yet.

_____"Tell me you didn't fuck with my shit. Just tell me, and I'll believe you." She said.

_____"The last thing I wanted to do was blatantly lie to her, even if it was for her own good. But I had no choice. "I didn't "

_____"Before I got to finish, we heard a crash and then, "This is the police, everyone put your hands up!"

_____"Dre's eyes widened as she reached for me, and I just broke down and cried as I lay my head on her shoulder.

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The game was over.

Under the advisement of my parents' lawyer, I wasn't to have any contact with Dre at all. I may have been the one that had the marijuana in possession, but she was the one that they really wanted. And any contact between us could jeopardize my case even worse. Not that it could get any worse. I plead guilty. Like I could really plead not guilty when the police found the weed in my room. To me, it was an open and shut case, but they didn't want me. They wanted Dre. It turned out that they had been watching her for a few months. And I wanted to kick myself for not noticing sooner. But at least I had noticed in time before the raid.

The looks on the police officers' faces were priceless. They had turned the loft upside down, tearing into walls, tearing up pillows, chairs, beds, sofas—anything they thought Dre would stash the weed in. They even found the hidden door in the hall closet, but of course, it was empty. They were heated. Eventually, they started getting rough with all the guys, and then one of the cops had mentioned getting warrants for everyone's houses. And in about an hour, we were on our way to my

house. I dreaded every step up those stairs. I dreaded the look of fear on Anya's face as two officers and I walked into the apartment. And I dreaded opening my bedroom door for them, knowing they would find it all.

I vaguely remember being read my rights. I just stayed silent. They asked questions, Anya asked questions, but I wouldn't say a word. I just stared blankly forward as they cuffed me and lead me downstairs to the squad car.

I had to finally speak, because the detectives were starting to get on my nerves.

"What about Anya Townsend?"

"She's not involved."

"How do we know you're not lying?"

I just shrugged. "You'll have to believe me. Anya didn't know what I was doing in the apartment."

One of the detectives, Drake, sat opposite me. He lit a cigarette and handed it to me.

"Astoria, why are you doing this to yourself? We all know that you are not capable of this."

"What makes you so sure?" I asked as I puffed.

"You have no priors. Honour stu-

dent, good career...let's face it. You got involved with the wrong person. There's no point in you taking the fall for this."

Silence.

"Did Andrea plant the weed in your apartment?" The other detective, Anderson asked. "Are you afraid to talk? Astoria, we can get protection for you."

That made me want to laugh. I was safer out there than in here. "I told you already. Andrea has nothing to do with this."

"So what did we walk in on tonight?" Drake asked. "We heard a lot of yelling and screaming before we got to the front door."

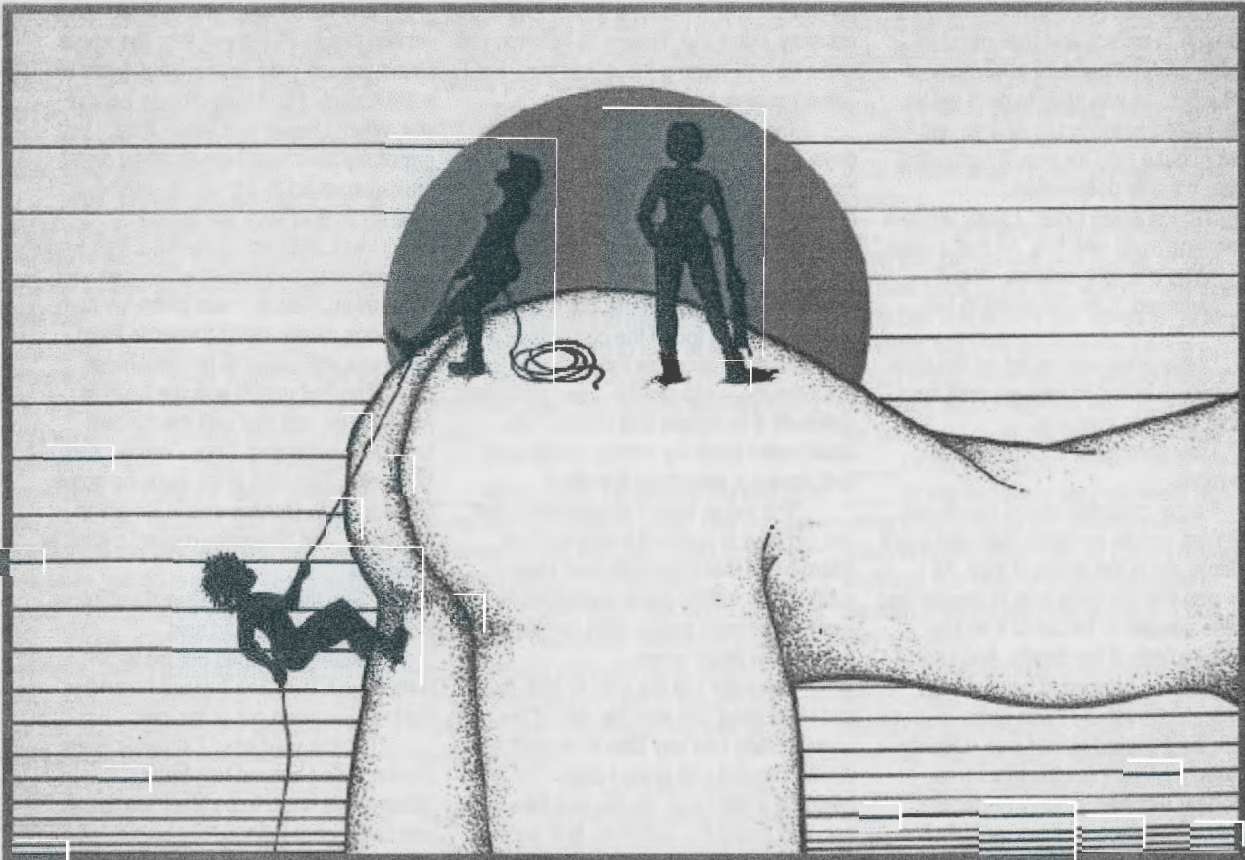
"Have you ever had hungry men over your house before? Wasn't I cooking when you busted in the loft?" I asked. "They get loud often, even in public. You can dress them up, but you can't take them anywhere."

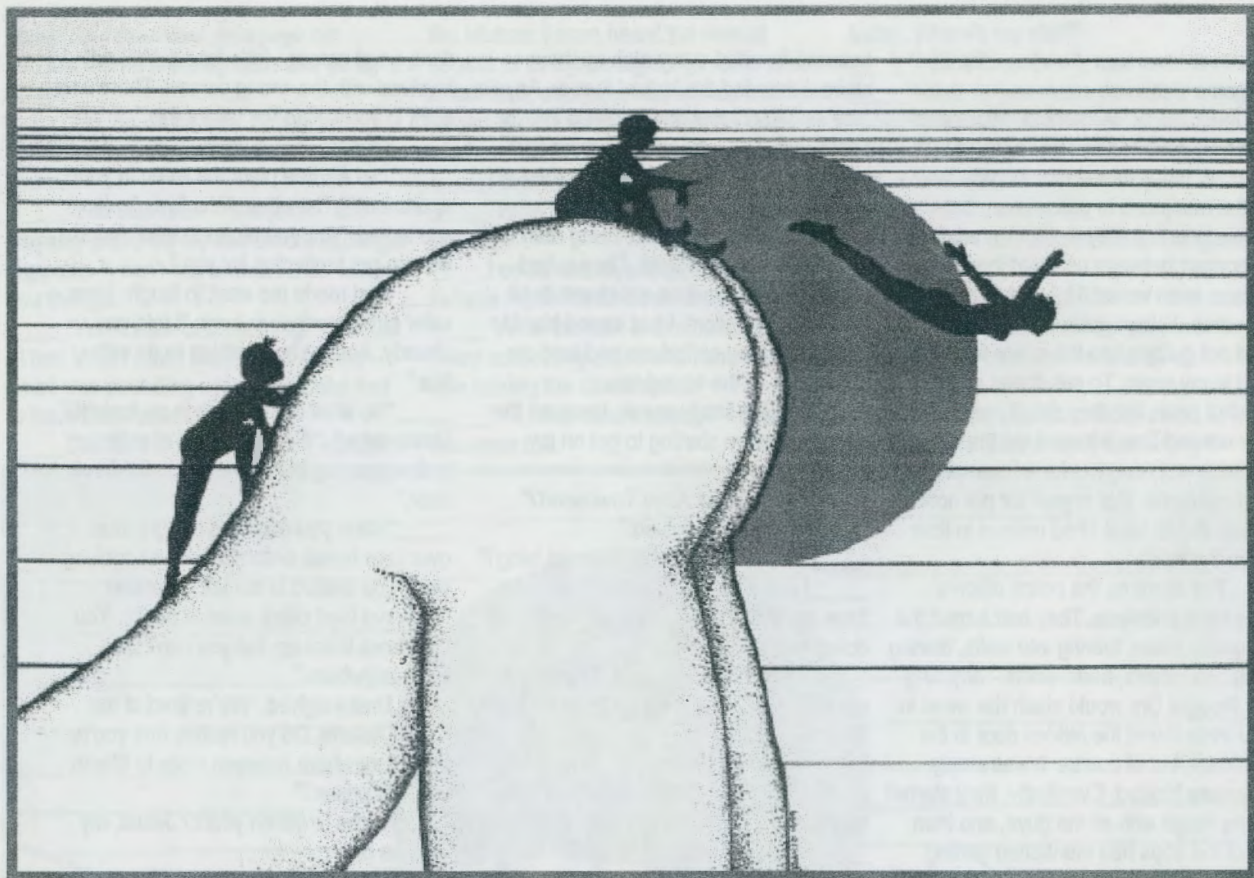
Drake sighed. "We're tired of this game, Astoria. Do you realize that you're facing anywhere between three to fifteen years in prison?"

Three to fifteen years? Jesus, my life was over.

He must have noticed the look on

(Blind Love Continued on page 38)





(Blind Love Continued from page 37)

my face, because Anderson suddenly sat beside me. "I understand that you're in love. But don't let her take advantage of you like this. All you have to do is tell us that the weed belonged to Andrea and we can work out a deal for you. It's your first offense, it's only possession..."

____ "I'm not going to lie." I said. "Andrea had nothing to do with this. All that's mine."

____ "Who are your contacts then?"

____ I smirked. "Like I'm going to tell you."

____ Drake slammed his fist on the desk. "If you're not willing to help yourself here, Astoria, we can't help you."

____ I just shrugged, infuriating them even more.

____ You're probably calling me stupid, huh? Well, you're probably right. But you'll do stupid shit in the name of love. All I knew was that my baby was in danger and that she needed to be out of it so she could take care of her family. And I couldn't let anything happen to her. I wasn't entirely stupid. I knew I was going to go to prison, but I figured since I was a first-time offender, I couldn't get the maximum. Somehow, this had to work out for me.

____ I had stopped talking, and when my parents arrived with their lawyer, I felt like
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my world had totally crumbled. The look on my mother's face shut me down. And it's not easy, mind you. Having to lie when you know it's only hurting those you love. But I had no choice.

____ The trial went rather quickly. Two days. I must have been the very first person in history to plead guilty to drug charges. The only thing that hitched us was that the prosecution kept trying to go after Dre. Trying to get me to admit that Dre was in on this with me. But I wouldn't. I said that I had found the contacts at a rave and had somehow found a way to raise the money to get the weed so I could distribute it to people that I knew, who could make back my money. I had even lied, saying it wasn't my first time.

____ The judge wasn't sympathetic. But she did take in account it was my first offense and that I had admitted I was guilty. I was indicted and sentenced to five years, maximum prison, with possibility of parole after three years.

____ Dre wasn't at the trial. In fact, that last I had seen Dre was the day of the raid. I never really had any time to myself, and I wasn't allowed bail since I dated Dre and could be a flight risk. So the last time I saw her, was really the last time. And my one regret was that I didn't tell her I loved her
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before I left.

____ And here I was now, chained, walking into prison. I'll tell you this: the worse sound you will ever hear in your entire life is the sound of that gate closing behind you. When I heard that heavy thud, I just gritted my teeth and kept shuffling along, making sure not to trip on the chains, and tried my best to keep the tears in.

____ I was stripped. Examined. And whatever modesty and individuality I had was taken away. Naked, I was given my number, since names didn't matter to them, and I was welcomed to my new home.

____ The first month was the hardest. Actually, the first day was the hardest. I had three cellmates, Tina, Corrine, and Shameka. Tina was in for stabbing some girl at a party, Corrine was in for grand theft auto, and Shameka robbed a bank at gunpoint.

____ "She thinks she's Queen Latifah or some shit." Corrine had said.

____ Shameka flipped her the finger.

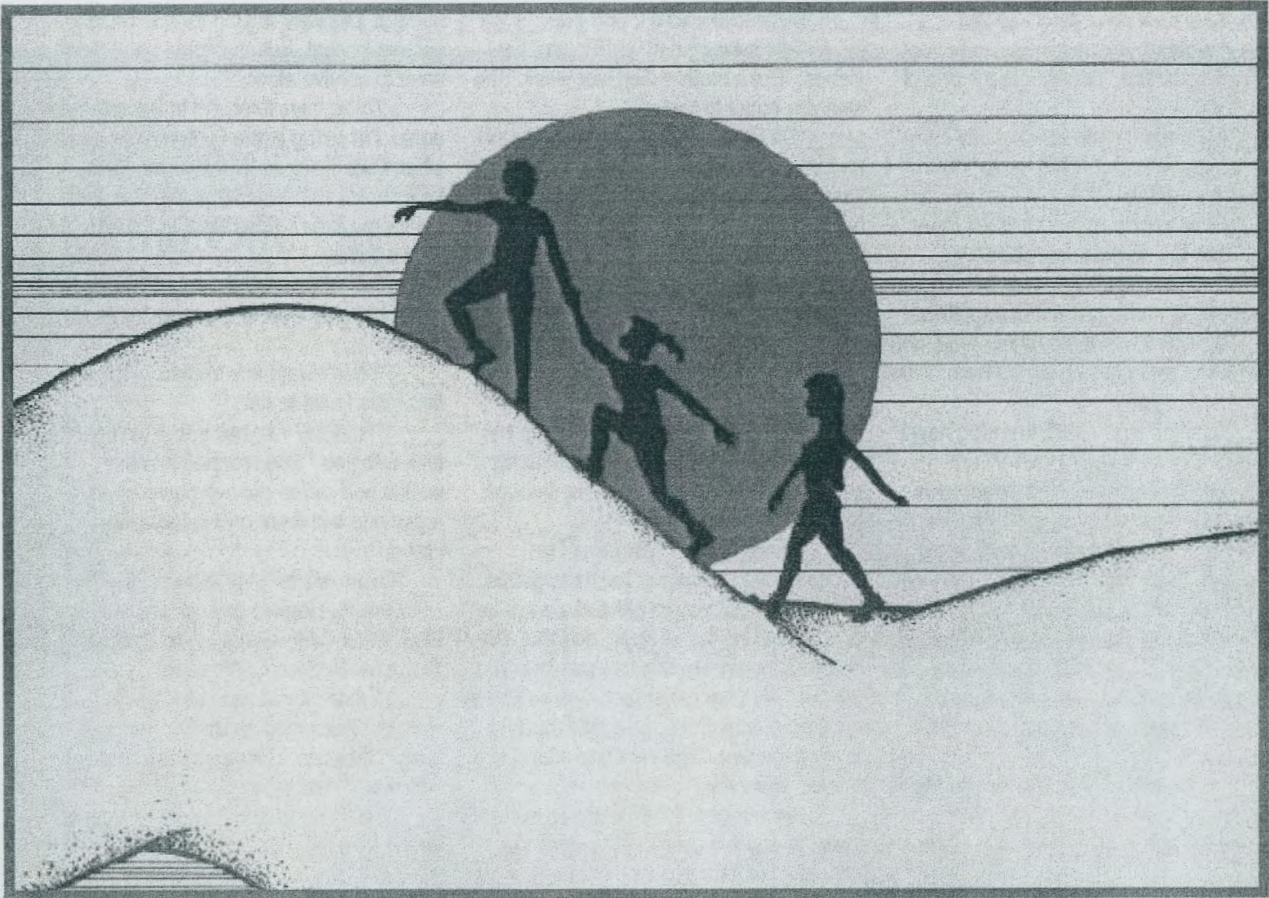
____ "Whateva." Then she hopped up on her top bunk, walking out of the cell.

____ "Watch your ass." Corrine told me as she pulled her red hair back.

____ "Shameka's down to be like Cleo too, if you know what I mean."

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_____ I knew what she meant. I could spot a stud anywhere. But I just waved her off and lay on my bottom bunk, underneath Tina, and just closed my eyes and prayed I could sleep the next five years.

_____ After a while, you get into a routine. If you want to survive, you keep to yourself, don't talk back to the guards, know who not to fuck with, and basically watch your ass.

_____ Now, femmes, like me, can be a prime subject for some major bullshit when you first get in. Not saying all femmes—but femmes like me. Dre was proud of the fact that I was a "lady". I could get rowdy sometimes, but when it came down to it, I was extremely feminine and ladylike. Sometimes too girly. And you can't be like that when you go to prison. That's asking for people to jump on your ass.

_____ It took about three days. I was in the cafeteria, eating some lunch, when this chick suddenly bumps into me. My first instinct was to jump to my feet and kick her ass, but I had to remember where I was. So I just sat there and didn't move.

_____ "So you're a new fish, eh?" She sat beside me. Goddamn, she was a burly

woman. At least six-foot-one and three hundred and fifty or some odd pounds. "What's your name?"

_____ "Tori." I answered, taking Corrine's advice. Pretty names get bullshit responses.

_____ "Tori, huh?" I could feel her sizing me up and I wanted to cry right there. Could I really take years of this? "My name's Rock. If you want to make it up in here, you'll be nice to me, hear me?"

_____ I finally turned to look at her. "Why?"

_____ "Because if you're not, I can get nasty with you." Her nostrils actually flared. Jesus.

_____ My answer? I picked up my tray, got to my feet, and walked away. Hell no. Get as nasty as you want, but I ain't gonna be anyone's bitch. I'll be damned.

_____ Obviously, Rock was not gonna take that lightly. Next thing I knew, my head was suddenly snapped back, and I dropped my tray as I fell to the ground. The bitch had a hold onto my hair, and held me down.

_____ "Listen, fish. Don't fuck with me, hear me?" Then her fists came at me so fast, I didn't have time to even try to duck. I

felt her move away from me, then a sharp pain struck my stomach, then again, and again. The woman was literally kicking me in the middle of the cafeteria, and no one was stopping her. I eventually just curled up to protect what I could, praying for her to stop.

_____ Then she was gone. I felt myself being lifted to my feet and guards helped me walk back to my cell, where I curled up in my bed and cried. I had asked to go to the clinic, but they ignored me, saying I wasn't in that much danger and to sleep it off. That's when I realized what I was in for, and that I really had to face it all alone.

_____ Or so, I thought.

_____ At the end of my second week, was visitor's day. I knew my parents weren't going to come to see me, so I didn't expect anything. But when a guard had come to the lounge to tell me I had a visitor, I was truly surprised.

_____ I walked outside to where the visiting area was, and in the far corner, a woman in all pink waved at me. I had no clue who she was, but I was curious.

_____ "Astoria?" She asked softly as I sat down.

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_____I nodded.

_____She smiled. "I'm Ivy. I'm a friend of Dre."

_____My heart literally jumped. My baby didn't forget me. But I held back. "How do I know Dre sent you?"

_____ "She said to tell you that you're an idiot...but the chicken was good."

_____I smiled, wanting to hug this woman I didn't even know, just out of happiness.

_____Concern washed over her face, and I knew she was noticing my bruises. "What happened to you?"

_____ "It's nothing." I said, knowing how I looked. "Dre sent you? How? Why?"

_____Her eyes darted from side to side to make sure no one was close by to hear.

"She can't come see you herself. They have her under surveillance and just waiting for her to fuck up. And she's afraid that if she comes to you that it'll only make things worse for the both of you. They are begging for her to make a wrong move."

_____ "But she's not going to." I simply said.

_____Ivy nodded. "She's doing good actually. Everything's all over. She's living a normal life again. Construction really is her first love."

_____I smiled knowing it was true.

_____ "I do have bad news though." Ivy sighed. "Dre's mother died last week. She said you ought to know."

_____ "Oh God." I just closed my eyes. If I had any doubt at all, they were all gone. I knew I had made the right decision. "And her little brother's with her?"

_____Ivy nodded again. "I guess she and her mother had some agreement that she would take him."

_____ "Yeah." I could feel the tears starting to roll down my cheek. I wanted to be there for Dre so bad. She needed me.

Right now, she needed me to curl up beside her and just talk to her. I could only imagine what she must be going through, having to mourn alone.

_____ "I can't stay too long. But Dre wanted you to know she hasn't forgotten about you. That you're still and always will be number one in her heart, and that she and Antoine are waiting for you when you get out." Ivy rose to her feet. She smiled at me then reached out and lightly touched my bruised eye. "And we'll see what Dre can do about this."

_____We hugged, then I watched her walk away. It was a meeting of less than five minutes, but it gave me the strength I

needed. Dre was waiting for me. I had to survive for that. But as it turns out, I didn't have to survive alone.

_____Three days later, I'm in the cafeteria again. I'm sitting in the far corner as usual, when I see Rock enter the room. Fuck, fuck, fuck. I had heard that she was looking for me, and I didn't want to have to deal with her.

_____But, of course, she found me and made her way over to the table I was sitting at.

_____ "I don't want any trouble." Was the first thing I said to her.

_____ "Trouble? Oh, hell nah, I ain't gonna fuck with you." She reached into her pocket and pulled out two packs of cigarettes and laid them on the table. My brand.

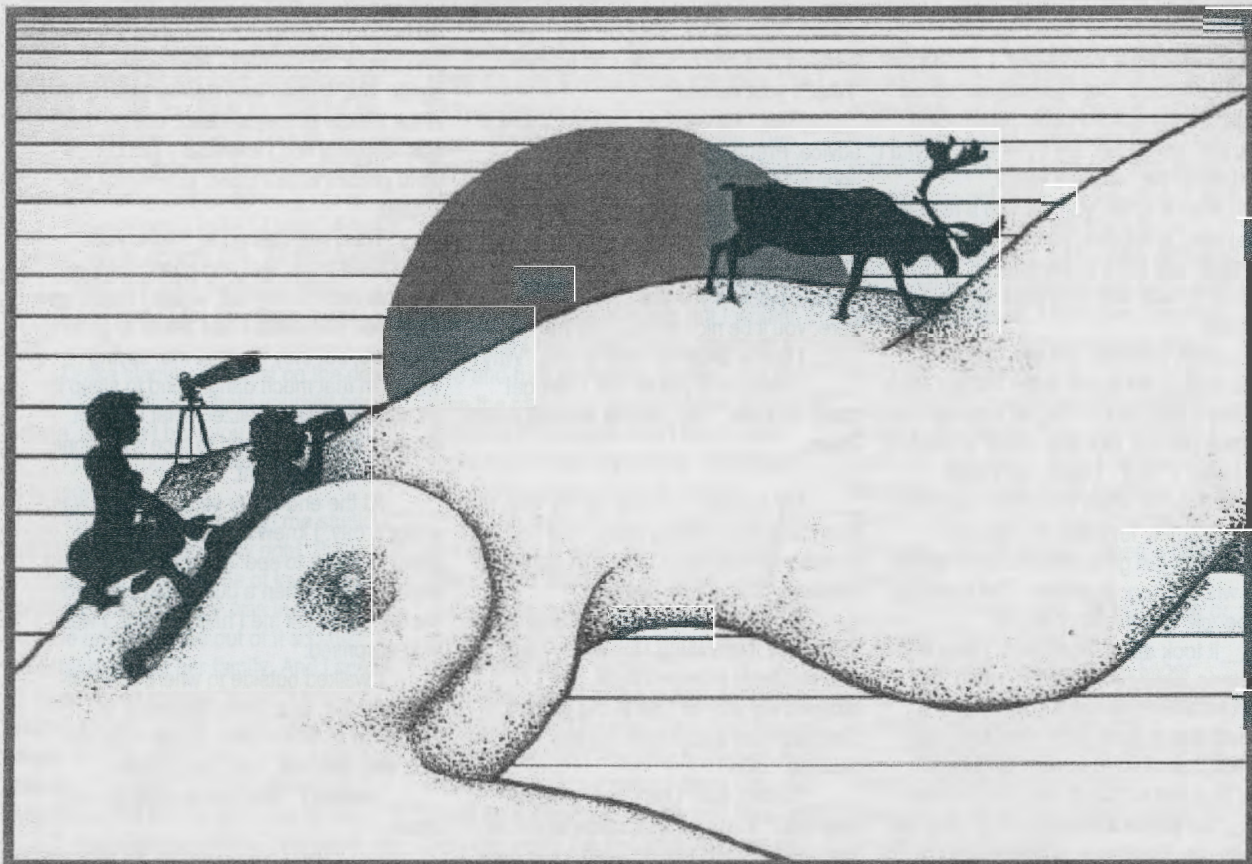
"These are for you." She said.

I swear, I looked around, waiting for the Candid Camera sign or something. Yes, even in prison. "What for?"

_____ "I didn't know you were Dre's woman." Rock said. Were her hands trembling? "If I knew, I wouldn't have fucked with you. I'm sorry, ok?"

_____I just stared at her wide-eyed, wondering how the fuck Dre managed to pull

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Photography by Vic Cozy

Picking One Up

by Vic Cozy



Surf Rocks

by Vic Cozy



(Continued from page 40)

this one off? Damn, she's good.

____ "If you need me for anything, just let me know. I got your back up in here, ok?"

____ I just nodded, still not able to speak.

____ She nodded herself, then walked away.

____ I made a mental note to not only give Dre the biggest kiss in the world, when I got out, but to also kiss Ivy whenever I saw her next.

____ I won't say that my time in prison was easy. It most definitely wasn't. But having Rock on your side can make it somewhat bearable. I did my time like I was supposed to; I did all my duties, I took a trade class in auto mechanics, and I read like a mad-woman, spending as much free time as I could in their limited library. The only thing I didn't have to worry about was my protection, because Rock made it known that if anyone fucked with me, they were fucking with her. And no one wanted to fuck with Rock, cuz she was a lifer and had absolutely nothing to lose.

____ Ivy paid a visit once every month, keeping me up on what was going on outside and how Dre was doing. She was our only contact with each other. The police had finally taken the heat off her once they realized she had definitely gone straight. But we still didn't want to take any chances, so we didn't write any letters and didn't call each other. But Ivy was good for keeping me informed. Dre had managed to set up a legit construction business of her own, and was making quiet a name for herself. It seemed that Ivy was closer to Dre than I had realized from the conversations she had, and things she told me.

When Antoine had first entered high school, I knew that Dre was going to be beside herself with worry. Ivy regaled me with stories on how Dre would call her for advice on how to raise a teenager.

____ "How do you know Dre anyway?" I asked. It was strange, but I was so used to not asking questions, that it never really popped into my head before now. But after two years and five months of being here, I figured I could ask.

____ "Let's just say that she met me when

I was at my lowest, and helped me better myself." Ivy replied. "I owe her my life."

____ "You have kids?" I asked.

____ She nodded. "Two. Seventeen and fifteen. Both boys."

____ "Can I ask you something?"

____ "Sure?"

____ I lit a cigarette and sighed. This question had been on my mind for the longest time. "Does Dre ever date?"

____ Ivy didn't say anything at first.

"Um...I'm not sure if I'm in the position to say either way."

____ "I'm not trying to check up on her or

____ I closed my eyes in a silent prayer of thanks.

____ And my time went on. More visits from Ivy, a couple of letters from my parents. I had started sketching again, which, at the time seemed a little hopeless, but the girls on my cell block got a kick out of seeing my designs.

"When I get out, I'm definitely looking you up." One girl, Vera had said. "You're shit is off the hook."

"You think so?" I asked. It had been well over two years since I had picked up a pencil.

Corrine looked over my shoulder. "Damn, girl. Hell yeah. Hey, put me on the list too. My ass won't be in here for too long." Then she winked before leaving.

Another ray of hope. It got me to thinking that possibly I could start up on my own once I got out. As much as I made a name for myself in the company I worked for, the designs I created for myself and The Bitches, put my names on a lot of women's lips in Dre's business. So at least, on the outside, I could still have a chance. I made a mental note to talk to Dre about it as soon as I could.

Another year had passed, and before I knew it, I was up for parole.

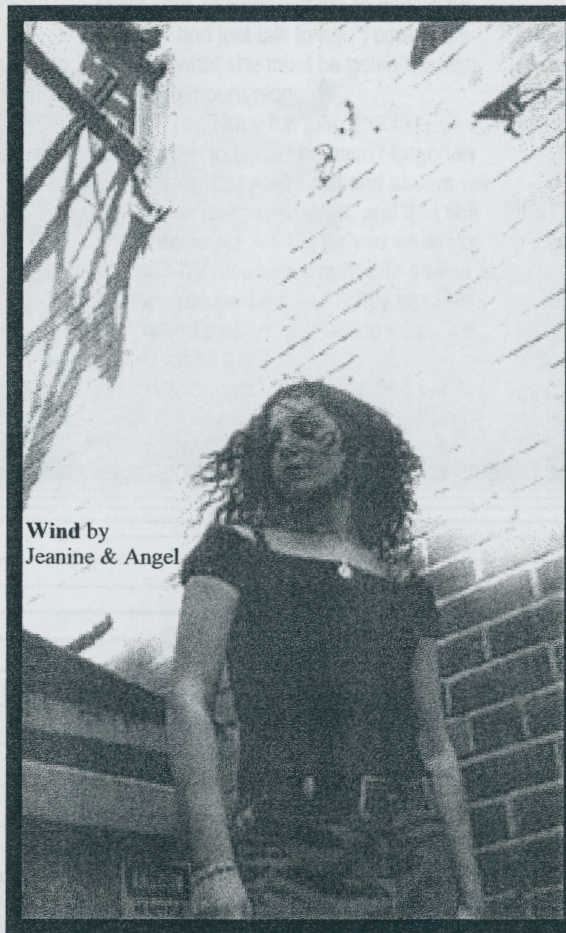
And I got scared.

____ Don't get me wrong. I did want to get out. I did want to be free. But I also think a part of me was afraid to be out. I had changed. Every day I spent there chipped a little bit away from me. I wasn't the same woman who had first walked in here with tears in her eyes. Hell, I couldn't remember the last time I had even shed a tear. I would never say I was naïve beforehand. Hell no, we all know

that. But prison changes you, whether you want it or not. If you managed to survive one day in prison, you're never the same again. How would I be after three and a half years of lock-up? What would be out there for me? I knew my job was gone. During the trial, I had received a letter that my services were no longer needed, and they had shipped my materials home. Home. Funny.

I no longer had an apartment, since Anya

(Continued on page 43)



Wind by
Jeanine & Angel

anything." I explained. "It's just that...I know she has a life out there. And if she met someone...I'd understand, that's all. I can't expect her to wait for me." It's funny, that I said it aloud, but in my heart if I knew that Dre was seeing someone else, it would probably kill me.

____ Ivy reached over and took my hand in hers. "Believe me when I tell you that you are the only person on her mind right now. She doesn't have room for anyone else."

(Blind Love continued from page 42)

had x-ed me out of her life. I couldn't blame her really. Since she was in the apartment at the time of the search, she had been arrested as well, although eventually let go. But the experience itself had pissed her off, and she let me go. From Ivy, I found out that she moved out of state, and no one, not even Danny, knew where she went.

My parents had visited me only twice during my time in prison. I could see that they were embarrassed each time, so I never asked for them to come back. My father wouldn't speak to me, and all my mother could do was cry as soon as she saw me or heard my voice. Eventually, they stopped pressuring me to tell them the truth, and slowly, they stopped calling as often, even though the letters stopped. And during the last six months, I didn't hear from them at all. Ivy told me that they were still around, so I knew that they just

didn't want to deal with me anymore. And it surprised me that I never cried over it. Not one single tear. I had just taken the knowledge, locked it in my heart, and went on.

I did get paroled. Oh, please, you thought I wouldn't? I was a model prisoner. Half of the guards couldn't understand why I was in prison in the first place, and in my last months, they were looking out for me as well.

But even if I was a model prisoner, and everyone and their grandma said that I was a good person, I still had to keep claim that I was guilty, and had reformed during my imprisonment. I had just told a partial truth when I faced the parole board.

"I realize what I've done, and I realize it was wrong. I honestly just got caught in a bad situation. It was stupid. And I ruined my life for it. But I need to get back on track. I have a degree that I worked hard for, and I have a lot of people to make

proud again. The three years I spent in prison has taught me a lesson: to think for myself and do what's right for me." I had rehearsed it well. Little lie here and there, but hell... it got me out.

By the time my release happened, I was in an emotional conflict. I had absolutely no idea what to expect. All I knew was that the bus was going to drive us back to the city, and from then, I was basically on my own. There was a halfway house with a room available to me. I had my parole officer that I had to check in with the next morning, and once a week for the next six months. Almost everything was planned except whatever life held for me.

The night before my release day, I had walked around the building, saying goodbye to the women and girls I had become friendly with. Rock was the hardest to say goodbye to. She admitted that at first, she had only looked out for me because I was Dre's girl. But after awhile, she realized what kind of person I was.

"You're a good person. Make it out there, ok? Don't end up

back in here."

"There's no reason for me to." I answered her as I hugged her tightly.

She just nodded at me, then walked away, head down. She was genuinely a nice person, but like the rest of us, had gotten stupid at one point in her life. And sadly she had to spend the rest of her life in here. It's too bad that there wasn't someone who had looked out for her when she first came in. Maybe she wouldn't be so untouchable. But I guess when you know that there's no chance to leave, you just have to survive the way that you know how. That's all you can do. Survive. With that in mind, I walked back to my cell to spend my last night in my barred home.

The bus ride back wasn't much different than when I arrived. I still had no idea what to expect when I arrived to my destination. My last visit with Ivy didn't clue me in on anything. I had asked about Dre, and she had said that she hadn't been able to get in touch with Dre for a few weeks, so

Memory in Flight

By Vinnie Valero

How I hoped to be here before
With this memory of you in my arms
Blinded by illusion in its place
Confused and intertwined within my mind

Yearning to feel the comfort of your strength
As I craved this need of your lips upon mine

Absorbed instead in the dark
Thinking never to be found
All the while longing for this very spark.

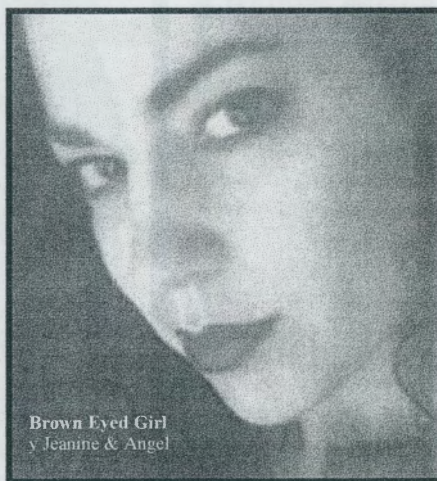
Knowing all too well lunacy was not mine
Even if surrounded by its consequence

How I hoped you would come along
With this mirror to discount
All the lies of insanity in my design

Oh! Look at me now...

Celebrating this love and our might
And the sky on which we fly
Envisioning how our wings will caress
By being ever so close whilst in flight

.... Unbound and ever so passionately
ALIVE.



Brown Eyed Girl
by Jeanine & Angel

she couldn't even tell her that I had been granted parole. Chills ran down my spine at her words. What if Dre was gone? What if Dre got tired of waiting? What if she met someone new? Three and a half years may not be a long time in general, but it really can be, especially if you have no contact with the person. I hadn't even heard Dre's voice in all that time. I didn't doubt that she'd try to hold out, but there were so many opportunities for her to be with someone else, especially if I wasn't there.

Then, all the doubt started. What if I did all of this for no reason? What if the detectives were right, and I was just some

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chick to her. True, she had let me in and trusted me, but you see all those movies where gangsters and dealers have these women that are basically playthings. These women are temporary and don't really mean much. What if Dre thought of me that way? No, no, no. She had sent Ivy to me. For three and a half solid years, she had sent Ivy so that I had some kind of contact with her. Why would she go through all that just to abandon me? Maybe she wanted to keep my mouth shut. Maybe if she thought that if I knew early on, then I would confess everything. She could be long gone now, and there would be no reason for me to talk, since I had already served my time.

I closed my eyes, pressing my forehead against the window. My stomach was churning. I was making myself sick with worrying about all this shit. I had completely punked out, hadn't I? What woman in her right mind gives up all that she has worked for, for a person she knew for less than a year? My life was basically ruined. For the rest of my life, I'd be known as an ex-convict. I couldn't get a job or an apartment without mentioning it. I was marked for life.

"Idiot." I cursed myself. "Stupid, naïve idiot." Everyone was right, weren't they? Anya, my parents, the detectives, my lawyer; all of them were right. I wanted to cry so badly. And the closer we got to the city, the more I wanted to just disappear. I had done all this for nothing. Granted, Antoine wasn't a ward of the state, but in exchange, I ended up a ward of the state myself.

"You're in over your head here," Anya's words danced in my head. "You may be tough, but deep down you're as inno-

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Shiny by
"Jeanine
& Angel"

www.QueerRamblings.com

cent as they come. It's too dangerous." I just totally let love blind me. What the hell was I thinking?

Then I got mad. Mad that I was such an idiot. Mad that I had absolutely nothing out there. And for what? Love? What did love get me? Three and a half years of my life taken away. Then my anger turned to sadness. Complete, total sadness. I felt so defeated. I had taken the risk for love and had ultimately lost.

_____ I didn't even realize the bus had stopped until one of the guards had screamed my name. I got to my feet and slowly stepped off the bus, carrying my clear plastic bag full of idle belongings I had collected over time. I recognized the area quickly. I was about fifteen minutes away from where I shared the apartment with Anya. That, of course, was now gone.

_____ I reached into the pocket of my jeans and pulled out the address for the halfway house that I could stay at. Walking-wise, it would take me about a half-hour, which was fine. That would give me enough time to beat some more sense into my head.

_____ The bus pulled off, and I turned around to start my walk, when I saw it. A black SUV. Cadillac Escalade. And leaning against it, arms crossed under her

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(Blind Love continued from page 44)

breasts, smoking a cigarette was Dre. Dressed in all black, her hair in loose braids, with that smirk on her face when she realized I had noticed her. She hadn't changed a bit.

_____ I didn't know what to do. I just stood there, feeling the tears start rolling down my cheek.

_____ She casually walked over to me, then just pulled me into this huge bear hug, lifting me off my feet. Instinctively, I just wrapped my legs around her waist, just as our lips met for the kiss I had been waiting, for what felt like a lifetime to feel.

_____ "I've missed you so much." She said. "You have no idea."

_____ "Oh, I don't?" I asked, sliding back down to my feet. I stared into her eyes, and felt my heart do that pitter-patter thing. God, I'd always love those eyes.

_____ She shook her head. "It took me a while to understand why you did it. Then when my moms died, it all clicked. Baby, I owe everything to you..."

_____ "Dre..."

_____ "And don't you ever, EVER do any shit like that again, you hear me?" She continued. Tears were streaming down her face. "You gave up too much for me, Astoria. Way too much."

_____ I couldn't stop touching her. I was gripping her hands as if she would disappear if I let go, leaving me all alone again. But I reached up and brushed some of

her tears away.

_____ "You're worth it." I simply said. "I kept you and Antoine together, just like Lorelei would have wanted it."

_____ "It was my mistake. I should have paid for it." She kissed my hands. "Baby, I can't give any of it back to you. Do you realize that? I've spent the last three years, six months, and twelve days realizing that there's nothing I can do to give it back to you. What you gave up..." She stopped suddenly, squeezing her eyes shut.

_____ "You know, you pray for someone who will love you unconditionally. Who will do just about anything for you? But baby, I

never wanted you to..."

I placed my finger on her lips. "I love you." That's all that needed to be said.

She just nodded. "I'll never forgive myself for letting you do this. I'm gonna spend the rest of my life trying to make it back up to you. You have my heart, girl. And anything else that you want or need... it's yours."

_____ "You can start with dinner." I said, suddenly famished. "Is Nina's still around? I haven't had anything decent to eat for a while."

_____ She laughed. "Definitely. Besides, you got some surprises waiting for you at home."

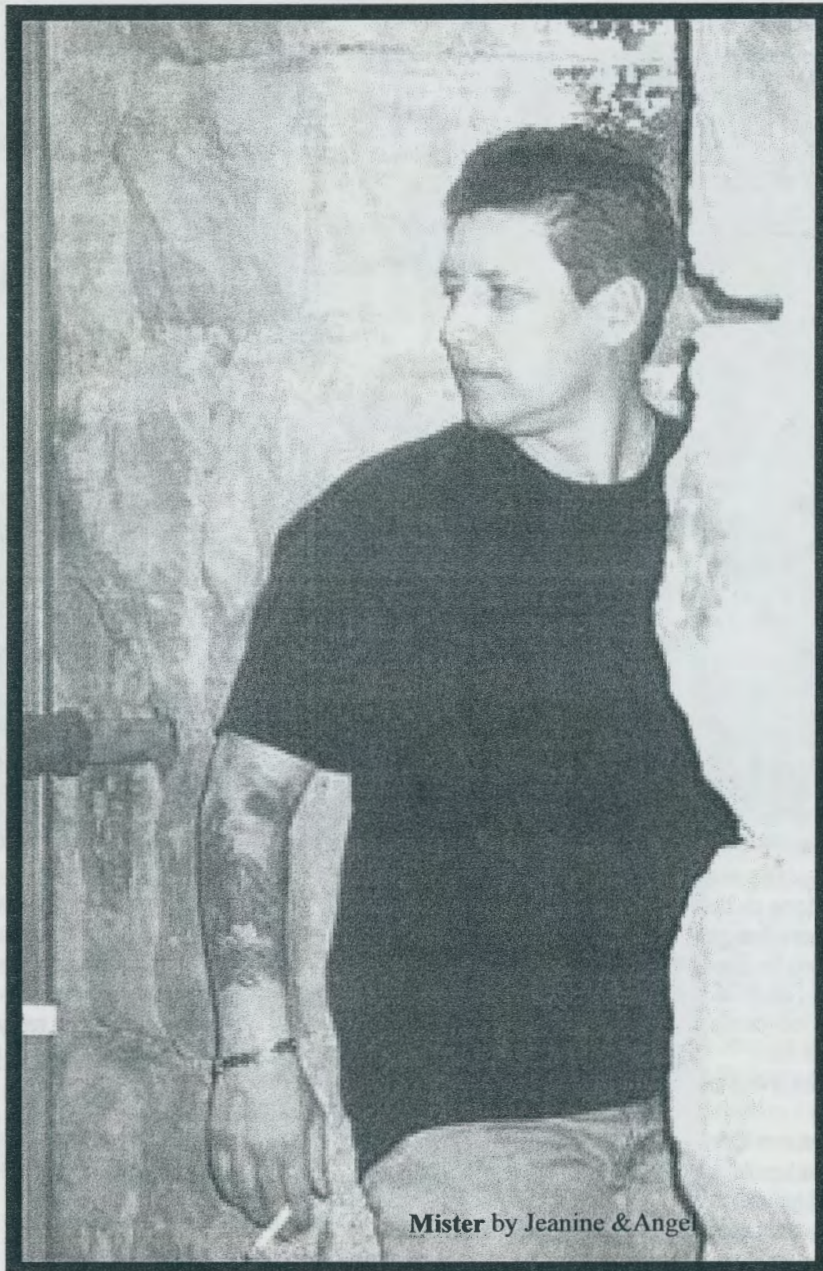
_____ "Surprises?"

_____ She nodded.

"Madd surprises. I sold the loft, by the way. I decided to keep my mom's house. No point in making Antoine suffer any more than he has to, and move him from his school, his friends, and shit. And the house is ready for your creative touch. All of your things are still in storage, I saved everything that was at my place, and I hooked up the den so that it can be your sewing room."

_____ She opened the passenger door, helping me inside, and in the backseat, was Antoine, listening to music through his headphones and playing a Gameboy. When he felt the car move, he looked up, and a smile brightened his face when he saw me. Oh my god, my little boy was almost grown.

_____ "Astoria. I missed you!" Did that voice come from him? He pulled the headphones off his head and hugged me the best he could in our position. He glanced at Dre when she got in



Mister by Jeanine & Angel

(Blind Love continued from page 45)

herself. "Can I stop 'minding my own business' now that she's in the car?"

_____ Dre chuckled. "Yeah, you can."

_____ "My mom wanted me to give this to you." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small box. "She gave it to me on her...you know...the last day. She said I wasn't to open it and that it was meant for you."

_____ With trembling hands, and Antoine and Dre watching me closely, I opened the small box, and found piece of paper and an antique gold locket. When I flipped the

neck. "Looks good on you."

_____ I just smiled. The emotions were getting too heavy, so I playfully punched her in the arm to lighten the mood. "Are we going to Nina's or what? Don't you know you're supposed to feed someone once they get out?"

_____ She chuckled. "Here you go, acting like you're all big and tough now that you were in the pen. You gonna be like this forever?"

_____ I smiled. "I think so."

_____ She returned my smile, and planted a kiss on my cheek before she started the

day, please?"

_____ "I'm not gonna have you talkin' like some idiot, ok?" She said. "And what are you doing with that Gameboy anyway? I thought you had a book you were supposed to be reading for your English class."

_____ "Dre..." He groaned.

_____ "Don't 'Dre' me. We already went through this, Antoine."

_____ I couldn't help but smile at their light arguing, as we sped down the street. These were wonderful sounds. Family. That was the reason I had done all this.



Whisper

by Jeanine & Angel

top open, there was a picture of Dre when she was younger, holding Antoine on her lap. He couldn't have been more than nine years old at the time. I unfolded the paper and immediately started crying again at the words. "My family is now your family. I know what you did. You're the right woman for them. Thank you for giving me peace."

_____ "That's where her locket was?" Dre asked. She read the note, and I could see the pain on her face. She just handed it back to me, taking the locket, and I bent my head as she fastened it around my

SUV. "Yo, Antoine, when was the last time you had good lobster?"

_____ "Lobster? That's nasty." He said. He had his arms around my seat, hands clasped in front of me. I reached up and covered his hands with my own.

_____ "Oh, baby brother, you have no clue. Wait till you try this place. It'll make you cry it's so good." She pulled away from the curb and into traffic.

_____ "I ain't eating lobster."

_____ "What did you say?" She asked.

_____ He sighed. "I AM NOT eating lobster. Damn, Dre, can I leave school for a

And I knew I had made the right decision. Now, I'm not saying that what I did was right for everyone. But for me, it was. That's just how it goes. You do what you have to. You do what feels right. And the consequences never really matter. Especially when you're blinded by love.

THE END

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EXPRESSLY FOR RADICAL INTELLECTUALS
WHO SEEK KNOWLEDGE
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NEOCON DELUSION****)

COSMETIC EMANCIPATION

2-21-98

by Alicia Banks

I am 34 years old. Since I was a young girl, until today, I have worn Eurocentric hairstyles. From hot combs to chemical perms to wigs, I have always oppressed my hair. Today, I liberated my hair from a lifetime of cosmetic bondage via internalized white supremacy. I paid a gifted sister to lock my hair.

It has been one of the most daring and exhilarating experiences of my life. It is invigorating to feel the sun and wind on my scalp. It is empowering to look as my African soul has always felt. It is thrilling to wear my ancient revolutionary politics in my new rebel hair.

I prefer to wear my hair long; so I am struggling to

be patient with my tiny short locks as they slowly become my new lioness mane. I have begun compiling a photo scrapbook as my hair blooms into the look I desire. I will photograph that moment and post it to this site. I will rejoice when I look like rebel sheroe Assata Shakur.

I have longed to wear locks for years. I was urged to move beyond sincere desire to drastic change by several recent incidents in my life: I have survived a betrayal that has left me feeling invincible. I have mended a broken heart that has made me feel brand new. I have fallen in love with an independent film on locks that moves me deeply. It is entitled "Lockin Up" and it is directed by T. Nicole Atkinson. (For more info, see

www.dreadlocksvideo.com). I have a dear new friend named Kim Dixon, who dons perfect locks, which make me proud to share her "do". And, I have a new lover who is an African queen and I want to be equally regal in her queendom. Collectively, these incidents make me feel strong enough to endure the stares, the ignorance, the rejection, the discrimination, the curiosity, the drama and everything else that comes with wearing locks. Legendary reggae dub poet, gifted actor, and star of the classic rebel slave film "Sankofa", Mutaburuka, said it best, in his classic rebel song "Witeman country": "It no good to stay in a witeman country

(cosmetic emancipation continued on page 48)

BRIEF BIO: Alicia Banks

My name is Alicia Banks. I am a native of Chicago, Illinois via somewhere in Africa. I am an afrocentric activist, a scholar, a corporate trainer, an instructor, a kindergarten teacher, an actress, a singer, a DJ, an author, a radio producer, a film producer, a talk show host, a sister, a daughter, an aunt, a columnist, a lesbian, a Leo, a warrior, a lover, and much more...

I am a verbal vessel for legions of ancient, African, sister warrior spirits, across oceans of time.

"Les Chanteuses Africaines", my unique radio experience, has been a legendary hit since 1989. It features the musical and literary voices of Black

women with creative, political, and sexual diversity. I am the only out lesbian in America to host a prime-

time, daily, commercial AM radio talk show.

"Outlook" features radical talk for revolutionary intellectuals.

I recently earned a Master of Arts in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication (Summa Cum Laude 4.0). I have also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I view academia as the last bastion of truth and the only real haven for afrocentric intellectual rebels like myself. Someday, I may earn a PHD in African Studies/Gender Studies and publish an anthology of my columns. Currently, I am employed as an instructor and I am seeking a soulmate...

Very soon, I will reclaim my radio thrones...Stay tuned.



(cosmetic emancipation continued from page 47)

too long"... It is common to be infected with the poison of white supremacy in a racist country like America. From cosmetic commercials to supermodels, from billboards to magazines, from TV screens to movie screens, and from center stages to centerfolds, straight hair rules. It is typical to emulate such bombardment with the epitome of eurocentric "womanhood" that haunts us everywhere, even on the arms of many of our "brothers".

Renown author and sage Alice Walker is beautiful. And so are her locks. In "Oppressed Hair Puts A Ceiling on the Brain", an essay in her classic collection of non-fiction titled Living by The Word, Alice states:

"...It occurred to me that in my physical self there remained one last barrier to my spiritual liberation...my hair...It was the way I related to it that was the problem...I suddenly understood why nuns and monks shaved their heads...I remembered years of enduring hairdressers, from my mother onward, doing missionary work on my hair. They dominated, suppressed, controlled. Now, more or less free, [my hair] stood this way and that...It never thought of laying down. Flatness, the missionary position did not interest it. It sought more and more space, more light, more of itself. It loved to be washed; but that was it.

Fourteenth Floor Sunset

by Tara Chen

The sky falls apart
Obvious radial fractures
Of pink
And blue
And gray
Consuming once supportive mountains
And coloring the ashen Sound

Straining
The now defunct water tower
I noticed only yesterday
Above the warehouse
Turned office building
Somehow survives
Keeping clouds at bay



Eventually, I knew precisely what hair wanted. It wanted to grow, to be itself, to attract lint, but to be left alone by anyone, including me, who did not love it as it was...(I was now able, as an added bonus, to comprehend Bob Marley as the mystic his music has always indicated he was.) The ceiling at the top of my brain lifted; once again my mind (and spirit) could get outside myself..This was the gift of my growth during my fortieth year. This - the realization that as long as there is joy in creation, there will always be new creations to discover, or rediscover, and that a prime place to look is within and about the self. That even death, being part of life, must offer at least one moment of delight."

My hair has become spiritual and political. I look at my hair and I feel like I have come home. I stayed away FAR too long... *****

The Dance of Love

By Vinnie Valero

Oh! This dance...

My tongue a useless appendage it has become
For me to bite upon
As my lips struggle to sing along
Before my ears can decipher the music
Yet love's melody hums on and on
Even if with a harmony of its own.

I look down to see the mangled mess my feet have become
While they trip upon themselves
As my toes try to keep up with the beat
Before they have even figured out the step
Still tap tap they carry on wanting to dance and keep time
Only to fall short or behind refusing to catch up.

My arms are a jumbled heap of vines now
As they reach out trying to sway in rhythm
Before they even know which direction to move
Even so, they climb and extend hoping for even a touch
Happy with the handful of air they do manage to clutch.

My pride? Well my pride was checked in at the door
That's the price of admission now days, I was told
For this love is a special dance
And with humbleness and joy
I dance out of step
While I whistle out of tune
Snapping my fingers to the wrong beat
With a smile upon my face
And my conceit at my feet.



my dear
friend and
long-time
contributor
to Queer-
Ramblings:
Vinnie
Valero

QueerRamblings issue 30, p. 49

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Little One

by Tara Chen

Her little body
Nearly as large as my own
Guides her effortlessly
Into the high
Wafting limbs
Of our backyard
Her laughter carries
The wind

Her little legs
Nearly as long as my own
Propel her down the field
Checked ball in mind
Courage on her lips

Her little mind
Nearly as strong as my own
Devours whole libraries
No longer in need of my voice
Or presence
On the corner of her bed
To guide through wondrous
Written worlds

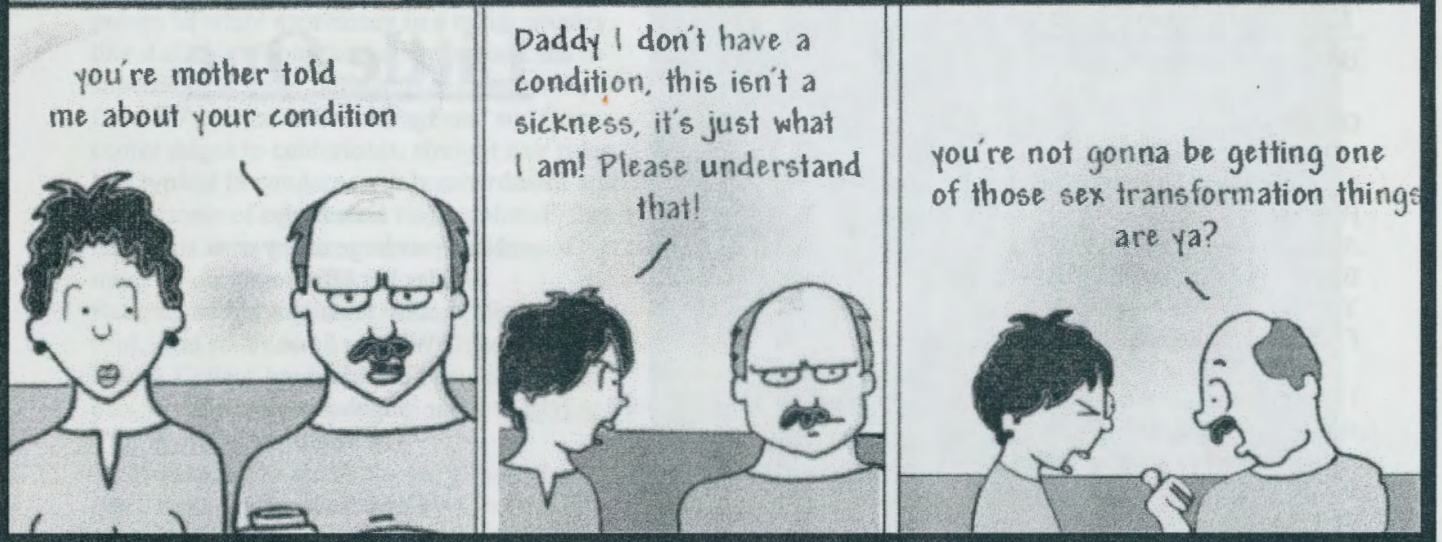
She has my Grandmother's
Resilient
Exotic heart
My mother's ceaseless beauty
Her cunning could almost be mine
But that it surpasses
And astounds me

No
Please Goddess
No!
Don't wake me
Not here
Not now
She needs me
And I her
Don't pull me away
From the child I will never have
Let me lie here
To live in this dream until I am gone
Without her
I will surely drown in these tears

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OUT THERE

BY DAVIS & SANDERS
DASA MOON



“Say, darling, where DID you get that fabulous outfit?”

www.QueerRamblings.com/gear_main.html

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