MY SUMMER VACATION

Oh, PUH-LEEZE! Did she just say that? Did a twenty-first century professor of literature and composition assign an essay on ‘My Summer Vacation’ to her class of twenty-first century students? I believe the last time I was given this assignment was in the forth grade.

Professor Hixon continued, “You can make it as long or as short as you want as long as it’s at least a thousand words. You can use as much slang, idiom and dialogue as you want. This essay will be graded on originality and its ability to hold the interest of the reader, namely, me. Are there any questions?”

I held up my hand.

“Yes, Sean.”

“Does it have to be true or can we create something?”

“Well, I’d like it to have at least an element of truth in it but you’re free to spice it up in the interest of interest. I don’t intend to challenge your honesty but try not to get too carried away. Are there any other questions? No? OK, see you next week.”

I was still grumbling to myself as I walked across campus to the dorm. This is about the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard. ‘Spice it up’ she says. Well, I’ll give her some spice.

I’d like to have given her something else; my hard dick! Janet Hixon was a knock-out; tall and willowy, raven hair falling half way down her back and a body good for hours of fantasizing. I had signed up for this comp class just to be able to sit and admire her form for three hours a week. Oh well, life’s full of trade-offs. A stupid essay for the privilege of ogling Janet Hixon’s ass isn’t too bad a swap I guess.

I had to think about what to write for a couple of days. The only real break in an otherwise somewhat boring summer was the weeklong camping trip in the Wheeler wilderness area in southern Colorado. The scenery there is fantastic and, from time to time, I crave the sense of solitude you can only get in the deep forests. As much as I enjoyed the trip, there weren’t a whole hell of a lot of exciting things to write about. I didn’t wrestle any bears or anything. I just took my time enjoying the view and filling up the memory card in my camera with pix.

But there was an idea beginning to form in my devious little mind. The more I thought about it, the more compelled I was to carry it out. It would probably get me into a world of shit, but I couldn’t resist. Oh, the confidence of youth! I sat down in front of my computer with a mug of tea, took a deep breath and waded in:

My Summer Vacation

By: Sean O’Reilly

I love the outdoors. Exploring back trails in the deep woods is just about my favorite pastime and I seldom pass up an opportunity to indulge it. Last summer it was in a southern Colorado wilderness area. I knew I might run across one or two people like myself but mostly I’d be alone with the pristine mountains and my thoughts. Not a lot of people knew about this place since it wasn’t shown on hiking maps anymore, all the better for solitude-loving souls like me.

I spent a day getting my gear together before driving up to an old abandoned sawmill at the end of a dirt trail that wasn’t much more than a cow path. That was as far as I could go in my old second-hand Land Cruiser. From then on, I was on foot. You might try it on an ATV but I think you’ll wish you hadn’t.

If you’re not an outdoors kind of person, I don’t think you can appreciate the sense of exhilaration and freedom that comes from looking back and seeing no signs of civilization; no highways, no McDonalds, no eye-stinging pollution. By the end of the day, my camp would be about eight miles up the mountain. My only concessions to technology were my cell phone which probably wouldn’t work anyway, my Kindle and a solar charger taped to the top of my backpack. So sue me!

When I arrived at the large open area at the top of the mountain, I pitched my tent close to a small stream and a few yards from the rock formations that gave the place its name, Wheeler Geologic Area. I built a little fire pit and started to heat water for some bland but filling dehydrated food. If I was lucky I might snag a couple of brook trout. I’ve never once suffered pizza and beer withdrawal symptoms on a camping trip.

Just as I leaned back against my pack to relax and sip some soup, I heard first a ‘Whoa!’, then ‘Ouch!’, and ending with ‘Oh, shit!’ coming from the rock formations behind me. I set my soup down and trotted up the path into the rocks. Around a tight bend I found a woman sitting on her butt and rubbing her ankle.

“Are you OK, Miss?”

“No, I’m not OK if you must know!” She appeared to be in pain or pissed or both. Probably both. But then her expression softened a little and she managed a friendly smile. “I’m sorry I snapped at you. It just makes me angry when I do dumb things. I was climbing up that rock to get a better view when I got over-balanced and started to fall backwards, so I turned and jumped. I guess I came down with my ankle turned under. I’m pretty sure I’ve got at least a bad strain if not a sprain and here I am at least day’s hike from anywhere.”

“I’ll be happy to look at if you’d like. I’m no doctor but I used to be a trainer for our football team and I’ve taken an EMT course. At least I know how to wrap it if it comes to that.”

“Then you know more than I do. Thanks for offering.”

I knelt down to unlace her boot. She winced and sucked air through her teeth as I pulled it off and again when I did the same with her heavy wool sock. The ankle was already beginning to swell so I was pretty sure she had at least a sprain. I looked at her and shook my head. “It needs ice but, unless you have some in your back pocket, we’re out of luck. You’re not going to be able to walk on this.”

“Shit!” Tears of frustration were welling up in her beautiful brown eyes. “What the hell am I supposed to do now?”

“First we need to wrap it. Wait here, I’ll be right back.” I had forgotten about the instant cold-pack in my first aid kit. I brought that and a three-inch Ace bandage. After the ankle was properly wrapped, I helped her slide her wool sock on over it with the cold-pack tucked inside.

I stood up and looked around. “Is your camp close by?”

“Down to the end of the path and turn left.”

“I guess we’re neighbors. I just set up around to the right in the clearing.”

“Yeah, I thought I heard something.”

I helped her up onto her good foot and put my arm around her waist and her arm over my shoulder. We managed to get to the bottom of the path before she had to sit down. “This pain is getting pretty bad. I don’t suppose you have any aspirin or Tylenol, do you?”

“In fact, I do. Do you think you can make it another few yards or would you like me to carry you?”

“I can make it.”

We hobbled to my camp and got her settle on a blanket with her foot elevated. I gave her two industrial strength painkillers and some water.

“If you want, I’ve got a flask of brandy in my pack and some water heated up for coffee.”

She smiled and nodded her head.

I poured a couple of ounces in a cup and added instant coffee and water. I asked her name as I handed her the cup.

“Jane. Jane Dixon. And yours?”

“Sean O’Reilly. Nice to meet you Jane. Sorry it wasn’t under more pleasant circumstances. You know, that ankle is going to restrict your movement quite a bit. Why don’t I move your camp over here next to mine?”

“I guess that would be a lot more convenient but I hate to put you through so much trouble.”

“Not a problem. Just relax and I’ll go get your stuff.”

As I busied myself getting her tent set up next to mine, I kept stealing glances at her. She really was an attractive woman; almost as tall as I am, raven hair cascading halfway down her back and a body that just invited lust. I almost asked her what she was doing out alone in the wilderness but caught myself before I wound up looking like a sexist idiot. How dumb would that have been?

After a couple more laced coffees and two more pain pills, the throbbing must have eased up because she was looking a lot more relaxed. We spent the rest of the afternoon trading stories about our lives and our plans for the future. Turns out she’s a professor of literature and composition at the same university I attend. Fancy that! The sun was warm and pleasant and during a lull in the conversation, she drifted off to sleep. She looked so sweet and innocent I just wanted to hug her. I didn’t, though.

Maybe two hours later, I shook her shoulder gently to wake her up. “Hey, Jane, supper’s ready. We’ve got chicken soup with dumplings, rehydrated, of course. Are you hungry?”

Looking up with sleepy eyes, she said, “Well, aren’t you sweet. I’m starved enough to try it without the water. Help me up?” With me supporting her she hopped over to a big rock and sat.

“That brandy must have really done a job on me. How long was I asleep?”

“A couple of hours, I guess. How’s your ankle?”

“Pretty sore but I’ll live. The question is how do I get myself back to civilization?”

“I’ve been thinking about that and I’ve come up with a couple of options. I’ve already tried my cell phone and there’s no signal here so that’s out. We can rig up a crutch for you but the terrain is too rugged to make any time on the trail. I think our best plan is to sit tight. Since today is Friday, I’m thinking sooner or later other campers are going to come along. I figure we can ask one of them to notify the Forestry Service and they can either chopper you out or send up a crew to carry you down in a stokes stretcher. What do you think?”

“Damn, Sean. I’d be embarrassed to be so much trouble. How long do you think it’ll be before I can put weight on this ankle?”

“I don’t think you shouldn’t even consider walking on it until it’s been x-rayed. We don’t know how bad the damage is; it could even be broken. If the swelling has gone down and there’s not much pain in the morning, we could try walking out. Do you need to be someplace soon?”

“No, I’m only four days into a one-month vacation so I’m in no rush, but I don’t want to be messing up your schedule.”

“Not a problem because I don’t have a schedule. I’m just out here to get away from it all and you seem like a nice person to get away from it all with. You can count on me for the duration.”

“Well, I thank you for that. It helps to put my mind at ease. Why don’t we give it a day or two then, if it’s not too much trouble.”

“We’ll be fine. We’ve got plenty of food and I know there are brookies in that stream over there.”

She sighed and smiled up at me, “I can’t believe how lucky I am that you happened to be nearby.”

Pulling a collapsible canvas bucket out of my pack, I said, “I’m going to go wash some of the day’s smell off me. Yell if you need anything.”

“I need something!” she yelled and laughed. “I hate being such a pest but I really need to pee.”

“Oh, sure, I should have thought of that. There’s a good spot over there behind the rock. I’ll dig a latrine in the trees later.” After she took care of business and we got her settled again, I started for the stream to get cleaned up.

“Want me to bring you some water for washing up?”

“Yes, that’d be great! You can do my back.” She was kidding, of course but it was a pleasant thought anyhow.

I’ll never get used to washing in icy water but it’s either that or stink. When I got back, she had managed to strip down to a T-shirt and shorts generating fantasies of intimacy, especially when I saw by the two little protrusions on the front of her T-shirt she wasn’t wearing a bra. And that she didn’t need one.

Looking for any opportunity to ingratiate myself to her, I offered to warm part of the water in a pan on the fire. She accepted but protested that I was spoiling her. It only took a few minutes and earned me a few points and little kiss on the cheek when I set the pan down in front of her. Aside from meeting her, that was the high point of my day.

“I’ll take a walk while you wash up.” I headed into the wooded area with my hatchet looking for a particular size and shape of tree to make a crutch. I found exactly the one I wanted, a small aspen that branched in exactly the right places. I cut it down and trimmed it before heading back. When I was maybe twenty yards from the edge of the wood, I could see through the trees that Jane was still washing herself. She had taken her T-shirt off exposing her absolutely awesome breasts. I couldn’t help myself; I just sat down and watched. After she was done, I gave myself a couple of minutes to let my woody deflate and noisily tromped through some brush so she’d know I was coming.

“Found it!” I called out as I emerged from the trees.

“Found what?”

“I’m going to make you a crutch so you can be a little more mobile.”

“Oh,” she pouted, “I was so enjoying using you as a crutch. Just kidding! I’m not sure I’ve ever met a real live Good Samaritan before. Well, as long as I’m taking advantage of your kindness, do you have any of that brandy left? I got a chill from washing.”

“You bet. Should I heat up some water for more coffee or would you prefer it neat?”

“Straight up would be fine,” she said holding out her cup. “And just a little bit. You must be thinking I’m a real lush.”

“Not at all. Actually I was thinking you’re a real fox, albeit lame for the moment.” My brash nature must have gotten the best of me for a moment. “Oops! Sorry, that might have been a little too forward of me.”

She laughed. “I gratefully accept the compliment. I was just thinking how lucky I was to be rescued by such a hunk so we’re even.”

As the sun set and the temperature dropped, Colorado’s infamous mosquitoes began buzzing around hungrily. I think they have a particular liking for insect repellent. “It’s probably about time to retreat into the tents, Jane. Is there anything you need from me before I zip up for the night?”

“No, thanks. Just one more trip to the lady’s but I can manage with the crutch. Thanks for making that, by the way. It works great. See you in the morning.”

Sometime in the middle of the night, I woke up to the sound of thunder and wind. Then I heard Jane outside the tent.

“Sean!”

She sounded distressed. I unzipped the flap and poked my head out. “Is there something wrong, Jane?”

“Um, you’re going to think this is stupid but thunderstorms scare the hell out of me, especially when I’m alone. Would you mind sharing your tent for the rest of the night?” Somehow, her being afraid of storms didn’t compute, but who was I to look a gift horse in the mouth?”

“Of course not. Let’s get your sleeping bag in here. You know what? These mountain thunderstorms can get pretty impressive. I’m going to stuff the packs and the rest of the gear in your tent if you’re not going to use it.”

After I got it all stowed and zipped up, I crawled back into my tent just as the rain arrived. It was quite a storm with heavy rain and lots of thunder and lightning, but fortunately the wind wasn’t gale force. Maybe Jane wasn’t joking about being afraid; with every crash of thunder, she would squeeze her eyes shut and duck her head down into the sleeping bag.

“God, I hate storms! Have since I was a little girl.” During the brief lightning flashes I could see she was really scared, actually trembling.

There was only one gentlemanly thing to do. “Jane, unzip your sleeping bag.”

“What for?”

“Just do it! I’m going to zip them together and then I can hold you.”

That got her attention. “Jeez Sean, you’re a saint!”

We were sharing a double sleeping bag within a minute. She scooted her backside against my front and I hugged her to me with my nose buried in her hair. “Just try to relax now, OK? Nothing’s going to hurt you.”

“I wish I’d taken some more Tylenol. My ankle is starting to throb again.”

“I thought you might so I’ve got it right here. Got the brandy too if you want a snort.”

She turned and looked at me for a moment, then broke into a laugh. “You must have been one hell of a boy scout. Is there anything you’re not prepared for?”

‘Faint heart ne’er won fair lady’ as Cervantes said, so I just came out with it. “As you probably noticed, I wasn’t prepare to be holding a beautiful woman against me in the middle of the night.” I was referring of course, to the prominent erection pressed into the crack of her butt with only her panties and my briefs between us.

“Yeah, I was enjoying that. Well, that’s something I can help you with but first I’d like those Tylenol and that snort.” She swallowed four pills and a good ounce of brandy. I hoped her liver was in good shape. “Let’s give this a chance to take effect before we deal with your issue. Meanwhile, a little back rub and maybe a front rub might help take my mind off the pain and the storm.”

She wiggled her butt against my dick and, taking my hand, guided it up under her T-shirt to her firm, silky smooth breasts. I couldn’t help but make little thrusting motions with my hips as I kissed her neck and rubbed my fingertips over her hardening nipples. I remember feeling glad that I’d remembered to brush my teeth.

“Mmm, that feels nice,” she whispered. “You have very gentle hands among all your other wonderful qualities.” She sat up and pulled her T-shirt over her head, then lay on her back, guiding my face to her tits and moving my hand down to her crotch. Between the two of us, we had her panties off in no time. I broke contact for a few seconds to shed my underwear and quickly got back to business. As I slid my hand through her dense bush finding her labia already wet and swollen, she found my cock and stroked it’s length.”

“Ooh, Sean! Somehow I knew you’d have the perfect cock. I hope you have a condom because I’m anxious to find out how it fits.”

All the air dropped right out of my sails. “Uh, no I don’t. Sorry, I wasn’t really planning on having an opportunity like this.”

She squeezed my erection and said, “Yeah, I’m sorry too. I had to stop taking the pill because it was causing some problems.” She looked at me and grinned. “Well, that doesn’t mean we can’t still have some fun. Turn yourself around here and I’ll trade you a blowjob for a tongue job. How’s that?”

“Ms. Dixon, it would be a pleasure.”

We turned toward each other on our sides. Her hand gripped the shaft of my cock and guided it toward her lips as I buried my face between her legs and licked her pussy like an all-day lollipop. The heady aroma of her sex was intoxicating, adding so much to the already exquisite pleasure of feeling her warm, wet mouth ministering to my throbbing erection. I’m enough of a gentleman to not ask where she learned her skills but this girl was no beginner in the oral sex department. Her tongue moving around the glans sent little electric charges into my belly making me thrust forward in an effort to bury myself in her throat, but she had a firm grasp on my shaft controlling how much I could get into her.

I concentrated on stimulating her clitoris with my tongue and fucking her vagina with my fingers. As sexually charged as I was, I still tried to keep the pace slow to make it last as long as I could. I managed about fifteen minutes and elicited at least two orgasms from her before she sent me over the top by rubbing her fingertip over my anus while she crammed half my cock down her throat. I don’t know how much semen I fired into her mouth but I’ll bet my prostate shrank down to the size of a raisin.

I got turned back around and kissed her luscious lips. “Jane, you are a wonder! I’ve developed a whole new love for thunderstorms.”

She giggled, “I think I have too.”

The next morning it was sunny and warm when we crawled out of the tent. I helped Jane get her jeans on, then busied myself hauling water and getting breakfast started as she hobbled her way on her crutch to the latrine in the trees.

I cooked oatmeal and added some chopped walnuts and raisins plus a special treat, one of my favorite indulgences, a big dollop of raw honey. The lady said she wasn’t especially partial to oatmeal but my concoction changed her mind. She had two bowls.

When we were done and everything cleaned up, I kneeled down in front of her and said, “OK, let’s see what it looks like this morning.” I slid her wool sock off and unwrapped the Ace bandage. Unfortunately, the whole foot from her toes to above the anklebone was colored a deep purple. She definitely had a bad sprain at the very least. Her toes were warm and I could feel a dorsal pedal pulse so I wasn’t worried about impaired circulation.

She shook her head and sighed, “What, now, Doctor O’Reilly?”

“Let’s see if we can at least get some of the swelling down.” I helped her to her good foot and got her to the ice-cold stream about ten yards away. “Keep your foot in the water for as long as you can, then we’ll wrap it again.” It helped but it wasn’t a cure.

By mid-afternoon, we still hadn’t seen a soul. I still had enough painkillers for a couple more days but if someone didn’t come along by the next morning, we’d have to come up with a plan to get her down the mountain.

“You know what really pisses me off?” she asked as we were lying on a flat rock soaking up the sun. “I came up here specifically to explore these rock formations and now I can’t.”

“I think I can say with some confidence that those rocks aren’t going anywhere anytime soon,” I kidded.

“How clever of you to deduce that.” She wasn’t in the mood for jokes.

“Sorry. I’m still young enough that I occasionally lapse into smartass mode.”

She sighed and turned toward me. “No, I’m sorry. I guess my sense of humor’s stretched a little thin right now. Can I ask how old you are?”

“Twenty. I’ll be a junior this next quarter.”

“Have you taken any of my classes? I don’t remember seeing you in any of them.”

“No, I haven’t but I intend to remedy that ASAP.”

“I’ll look forward to it! Somehow I think you’ll do well.”

I couldn’t resist asking, “Are you married or in a relationship?”

She smiled. “Your smart, Sean, but subtlety isn’t your strong point is it?”

Blushing, I conceded that it wasn’t. “You have to give a guy credit for trying to assess his chances. I think you’re about the sexiest woman I’ve ever met.”

“Ditto for me, Sean but I’m also ten years older than you. I’d enjoy spending some quality sack time with you, discretely of course if it’s around campus, but I hope you don’t have any illusions that anything permanent or even long-term could develop between us. My career is the most important thing in my life right now.”

“I’m young but I’m not naïve. I’d be grateful for every minute we could spend together.” I rose up on my elbow and leaned over to kiss her gently on the lips. Her arms circled my neck, pulling me into a passionate lip-lock complete with dueling tongues. My hand explored her breasts as my cock strained against the confines of my shorts.

Jane broke our kiss and smiled up at me, “You know I still want to feel you inside me. Do you think you could exercise enough control to pull out before you come?”

“I know you should never trust anyone who says ‘trust me’ but you can trust me. You know I’d never do anything that would cause you any grief.”

“Then why don’t we enjoy a nice, slow, sensuous fuck, Sean?”

Grinning from ear to ear, I spread a blanket on the ground and after helping her pull her T-shirt over her head, I helped her into a comfortable position on her back. My trembling fingers unbuttoned her shorts and tugged the zipper down. She wasn’t wearing her panties. She raised her butt to allow me to draw her shorts down her long, beautiful legs and toss them off to the side.

In seconds, I was kneeling naked beside her, my dick swollen to its maximum and bouncing with each heartbeat. I kissed her hair, her forehead, her lips and whispered, “Since you’re temporarily an invalid, why don’t you let me take care of your needs?”

She raised her head and licked my lips, “Be my guest.”

“Roll over onto your tummy.”

Jane got comfortable resting her face on her arms and closed her eyes, smiling in anticipation. My fingertips began moving across her shoulders, barely touching the skin, then drifted down her arms and back up to her neck. I’ve had this done to me before and the sensation is delicious. At a snail’s pace, I continued down her spine, moving side to side and eventually reaching her enticing ass. As my fingers traced down the crack, she moved her legs apart to allow access to my ultimate goal, but I was careful not to touch it, moving instead down the outsides of her legs and up the insides to very near to where her labia were becoming moist, erect and opening in invitation. I leaned down and lightly kissed her neck causing a little shiver. This pattern continued for maybe ten minutes before I asked her to turn onto her back.

Her eyes remained closed as my feather touch continued from her forehead, brushing her eyelids, her nose, her cheeks, then down her neck to her breasts. Even before I touched them, her nipples were hard and erect. I rubbed them softly for a few seconds before continuing down her belly and into her dense, black bush. Again avoiding the labia and clitoris, I moved down the outsides of her legs and up the insides to within an inch of her now very wet sex. I continued moving up and down her body like this until she whispered with a shuddering breath, “You know I’m loving this but when are you going to fuck me?”

“Soon, beautiful lady, soon.”

I traded fingertips for lips and the tip of my tongue, alternately kissing and licking a hundred places from her hair to her toes, again missing her pussy now demonstrably craving attention. Every time I got near it, her legs would involuntarily open.

Finally, because my need for her was as great as her need for me, I spread her legs wide and moved between them. I licked and sucked on the engorged labia and clit until her orgasm caused her hips to buck and she actually squirted her juice onto my face. That was the cue for my body to slide up over hers and for my cock to slip smoothly into her vagina. When I was completely in as far as I could go, I stopped, just letting my cock rest there as I hugged her tightly and mashed my mouth into hers, searching for her tongue and reveling in her taste.

Her vaginal muscles began a rhythmic contraction around my dick as if it were trying to milk the semen out of it. My response was to move inside her just enough to maintain a continuous gentle stimulation. My aim was to stretch out the sensation for as long as I could. I managed several more minutes before I felt the tide of an impending orgasm rise in spite of any efforts to slow it.

“I’m getting close!” I pulled almost all the way out and slid back in with a forceful thrust, pushing my pelvis hard against her. Now it was a rush to the end, penetrating her with full, impassioned strokes until there was no holding back. I had no sooner pulled out of her than steams of semen shot out across her belly and breasts. We both cried out in blissful abandon, straining against each other and finally collapsing together to catch our breath, smearing my cum over our chests and bellies.

“Ohmygod, Sean! I’ve never been made love to like that, ever! This is going to make the pages of my diary curl up from the heat.”

“Just say the word, beautiful woman and we’ll do a replay.”

“You can count on that! Right now I need some recovery time and another round of booze and Tylenol.”

I wiped our bodies with her T-shirt and brought the meds and the brandy along with a clean T-shirt.

It was getting on toward evening and we still hadn’t seen another human being. What’s more, since the weekend was half over, there was a good chance we wouldn’t. I was still worried about her ankle and decided to strongly suggest we get her down off the mountain.

“Jane, where did you park you car?”

“I didn’t. My brother drove me to the sawmill. He’s supposed to come back Wednesday to get me.”

“I don’t think we should wait that long to get you to some professional medical help. I think we should leave tomorrow morning.”

“How, Sean? I sure can’t walk that far even with the crutch. Then there’s that rocky slide area we have to climb down.”

“I know but I have a plan. I’ll pack everything up and stash it in one of the caves in the rocks along with a note in case somebody finds it. If we start early, we can probably get to the slide by noon. I’ll carry you piggy-back any place the terrain is too rough and drive you to the hospital in Alamosa.”

“But I weigh a hundred and thirty pounds on a good day. I can see you’re a big, strong guy but that’s asking a lot.”

“I don’t see that we have any choice, Jane. I thought for sure help would come along by now but it looks like that isn’t going to happen. You don’t want to take a chance that the damage to your ankle could become permanent.” I grinned at her, “Besides, the brandy’s almost gone and so is the Tylenol.”

She considered it for a while and then nodded her head in agreement. “I guess you’re right but you’re in for one helluva hike.”

“Good! First thing I need to do is to fold one of my T-shirts into a small pad and duct-tape it to the bottom of your crutch. That’ll keep it from sinking into the dirt. Then I’ll explore the rocks for a cave.

“Duct tape? You carry duct tape when you go camping?”

“Yeah, a small roll. There are certain things you just shouldn’t be without. Duct tape is the best ‘quick fix’ invention in the last hundred years.”

It wasn’t easy to control myself but I didn’t do any body groping during the night, figuring she needed all the rest she could get in preparation for our hike down the mountain. We were up at dawn and made do with a cold breakfast of trail mix and water. It took me an hour to get everything packed up and stowed in the cave.

Jane was becoming pretty skilled at moving on the crutch so we made better time than I thought we would. We had to rest about every fifteen minutes and there were a couple of marshy areas I had to carry her across but we still got to the slide area about eleven.

I dug out a can of peanuts and some chocolate bars for lunch. After about a half hour rest, I stood and tipped my hat, “Afternoon, Ma’am. Could I offer you a lift somewhere?”

“Why, Suh! What kind of woman do you think I am!” she came back in her best Blanche DuBois impersonation.

“Ma’am, I think you’re the kind of woman I’d just love to have close personal contact with.” I squatted down in front of her and called out, “All aboard!”

The climb down the slide area was painfully slow and bordered on harrowing at times but we made the two hundred yard descent in about an hour. After another half hour rest, it was only two more hours to my Land Cruiser.

We made it to the hospital in Alamosa about six. I hung around the waiting room until they were done with her exam and x-rays. The nurse poked her head out the door and said Jane wanted to see me.

She was on a wheeled cart and was wearing one of the hospital gowns that everyone loves to hate. “Looks like you made the right decision, Sean. There’s a piece of bone broken off at the joint and they need to fix it into place with a couple of screws. Looks like I’ll be here for a couple of days. The doctor gives you kudos for the way you took care of me. We were lucky the orthopedic surgeon was here on a scheduled visit. He looked at the x-rays and said he’d go ahead and do it this evening since it would only take about a half an hour. They’re waiting for the nurse anesthetist to get here now.”

“OK. I’ll get a room at a motel and head back to get our stuff in the morning. Why don’t you call your brother and tell him you have a ride home?”

“Oh, Sean, I feel terrible about ruining you vacation.”

“Sweet Lady, you didn’t ruin my vacation. You made my vacation. I’ll probably write a story about this some day. Give me a kiss and I’ll see you tomorrow evening.”

Carrying two full backpacks down the mountain was about the same load as carrying Jane but not nearly so enjoyable.

I got back to the hospital about seven that evening and stayed with her until the nurse kicked me out. She was sporting a cast from her toes to just below her knee. The house doctor signed her release the next morning. They also provided a pair of proper crutches but she insisted she’d treasure my make-do job as a souvenir.

As we were headed out of town the next morning, Jane asked me to pull into a little strip mall. She handed me fifty bucks and asked if I could pick up a couple of items for her.

“Sure. What do you need?”

“Two things. First, go to that liquor store and get a fifth of Hennessy cognac to replace the brandy you were kind enough to share. Then go to the drug store and get a box of condoms that I hope you’ll be kind enough to share.”

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I put my essay into a blue folder to hand in at the next class. I expected it would get me a solid reprimand, but I guess that would depend on what she did with it.

The following week, I sat in my seat with my heart rate somewhat accelerated, waiting for the bomb to drop. Professor Hixon handed the essays back to their owners with the exception of mine. My heart sank as visions of it being in the hands of the Dean crossed my brain.

She stood in front of the class looking as gorgeous as ever and said, “Overall, I was pleased with your essays. Some needed a little more thought, some were well constructed, most were interesting. One in particular stood out, though. Mr. O’Reilly extended himself and composed quite a good short story. He earns high marks for his use of slang, idiom and dialogue and he certainly felt no constraints in the ‘spicing-up’ department. It most certainly held my interest. It was my intention to have him read it aloud to the class but I’m afraid I left it at home. If you’ll see me after class, Sean, I give you my address and you can come by and pick it up. There are also one or two points about it I’d like to discuss with you.”

As I was leaving the classroom feeling like I had just been handed a reprieve by the Governor, Professor Hixon handed me a folded piece of paper with her address. Under the address, it said, “I’ve got some excellent cognac if you’d like to share a drink with me.”

END