**Walks in the park**

by Emi Tsuruta

I do like the outdoors. I love the fresh smell, the warmth of the sun, the sound of crickets chirping or waves on a shore, the majesty, the beauty of some of the scenic places. I like communing with nature, roaming around, exploring, soaking it all in, relaxing and recharging my batteries far from the rush and the pressure of life in the city.

That's probably one of the reason I came to Oceanview in the first place. It has this exotic resort feel to it - the parks and forests, the mountains and the palm trees lining the creamy sand beaches looking out over the sparkling blue water of the Pacific. Sometimes on my days off, I'll head down south of town, and wander along the coast looking for little inlets sheltered by the cliffs. It's so peaceful and quiet down there that sometimes I'll go in for a swim in the ocean, diving to look for shells. It does take quite a while to get down to that part of town though, so I began to wonder if there might be a place like that closer to where I'm living.

There is the park that runs along the creek behind my host family's house. Nearby, there are all these houses looking out over the park, so it's not all that private. You have to follow the path along the creek all the way up to the far end before you come to the real forest. There are apartment buildings overlooking that part, but there are more trees, so in the summer, you are shielded from view by the leaves. That area is still right in town, so people do pass by, but it does seem to be one of the more secluded places near my house.

For a while there, I went on a bit of a jogging kick. I'd see these joggers file by - on my street or in the park - all dressed up in their bright colored Day-Glo jackets, skin-tight yoga pants, jogging together in time. Jogging seemed like a sociable thing to do - a way to get out of the house, and meet new people. My friends Minori and Nao were interested in jogging, so sometimes we'd all go running together. A lot of the people in the park would say hi to us as we passed, or strike up a conversation, so that was kind of cool.

There was this one pair I saw quite a bit in the park - a father and son. The two of them are not joggers - they dress warmly in hunting hats and lumber jackets, but they were friendly. The son was around my age or a bit older. His name is Gavin, I think. Gavin seemed kind of shy. He smiled a lot, but his father did most of the talking.

"Is the path muddy down that way?" the dad asked me one day as I came jogging along. I slowed down, and walked beside them.

"It is a bit wet in places... but you can still get through. I guess it rained this morning."

"We usually don't come down into this park... even though we live right there," the dad told me pointing up towards one of the buildings. "It always seems so wet because of the reservoir. Are you out for a run?"

"Yeah, I live back at the far end of the park, and go shopping up this way. I kind of like this park actually."

We got talking about the people who come through, the nearby shops, a whole bunch of stuff. The dad talked more than the son, but as time passed, we sort of became friends.

After I'd run the length of the ravine a few times, I began to explore some of the smaller side trails, leading off into the woods. The main path was paved with gravel, and lit with street lights at night, but there was another rougher path running next to it. Deeper, inside the undergrowth, hikers had forged their own trails. On these small forest trails, I'd rarely see anyone at all. It was like this quiet little oasis in the middle of the city, away from the madding crowd.

Up at the grocery store at the far end, a poster caught my eye. It was a woman and man sitting on the shore of a pond in the jungle. The woman was wearing a white blouse, but the man, all rugged and muscular, didn't seem to be wearing much of anything at all. It seemed to be for a movie 'Tarzan' playing at the local civic center. Hmm. That might be fun. I wrote down the details, and made a note to go check it out.

I mentioned it to Ryosuke, my on again off again boyfriend of the last few years. He looked at me, a bit amused I guess that I was into this kind of thing, but he eventually, said sure, we should go, so we made a date.

I'd never been to that particular civic center before. It wasn't that far from the grocery store and the park. The movie turned out to be about Lady Jane Parker, a noble lady whose mom dies, so she goes to Africa to find her long lost father. Her father is out hunting for some mythical elephant's graveyard in the jungle. She finds her father, and they set out to find this graveyard, and eventually come to a white sandy beach. Jane tells her father to go on ahead, so she can take a bath in the ocean. She strips naked, and frolics in the waves. Unfortunately, a lion shows up, but then Tarzan comes to rescue her. Her father doesn't like Tarzan of course, but she finds herself drawn to him. It's kind of a love story I guess.

After the movie was over, I looked over at Ryosuke. I don't know if he liked it, but he was glad that I did.

Anyway, soon, we headed home. The quickest way back was through the ravine, so down we went. It was a nice night out. The leaves on the trees rustling in the wind reminded me a bit of the jungle from the movie. It was dark though, so I held on tight to Ryosuke's hand. That path is usually well lit, but for some reason, all the lamps along this one stretch seemed to be out. It got so dark that it was hard to see where I was going, and soon, I bumped into a tree branch.

"Hey!" I cried out. I wasn't hurt, but I let go of Ryosuke's hand, and now couldn't see him anymore in the darkness.

"Are you okay?" I heard him ask. I still couldn't see him. It took time for my eyes to adjust to the darkness. I stretched out my arms, feeling for the trees, trying to tell where the path was.

"I can't see. Can you see me?" I asked.

"Um, to tell you the truth, no."

I could see a few buildings in the distance, but we were standing in this patch of deep darkness in the shadow of the trees. I walked back towards the center of the path, trying to tell where Ryosuke was.

"Are you there?" I asked.

"Yeah, I'm right here," his voice suddenly came from behind me. His hand struck my back, as he reached out to find me.

"It really is dark here!" I noted again. I had an idea though. "Hold on a second, okay?" I took off my backpack, and set it down on the ground. Ryosuke knew I must be up to something, but since neither of us could really see each other, he just stood there, waiting.

I peered back the way we'd come, but unable to see much of anything, I unbuttoned my blouse, and took it off. I guess you could hear the soft rustling of my clothes, but I tried to be quiet, so Ryosuke wouldn't know what I was doing. If Lady Jane can strip down in the wilds of Africa surrounded by lions and wild men, why can't I do the same here?

I set my blouse down on my bag, and then quickly took off my bra, shorts and panties. Suddenly, I was naked, save my sandals in the cool night air of the park. It was a bit scary. We weren't that far from the street, but actually, I felt energized, all giddy and excited. Here I was naked as a jaybird right in the middle of the park.

It was hard to tell what Ryosuke was thinking because I couldn't see him, but I figured he'd be into it. Back when we were going out, he was always the one to push me to do these kind of things.

I packed my clothes away in my backpack, and pulled it on, hoping to tease him, and see if he could tell. I reached out, and found his hand, and we set out again trying to find the path, except this time I was naked. I felt good - free and liberated - but a bit nervous too. My heart was beating away pitter pat at my own daring.

As we walked along through the darkness, up ahead, I noticed these two pinpricks of light. I wasn't really sure what they were at first, but as we got closer, I realized that it was another couple out walking in the park. The lights were the screens on their cell phones which they were using to light up the path in front of them. We were behind them, away from the light, so I don't think they could see us, but they must have heard our feet brushing against the gravel.

"Where does this path go?" the girl called out, evidently talking to us. I was freaking out because I was stark naked, but Ryosuke eventually answered.

"If you keep following it straight, it'll take you to the bus stop."

"Oh great. That's what we're looking for. Thanks," the girl chirped. As far as I could tell, the girl hadn't realized I was naked.

The couple continued down the path, while I held Ryosuke back, worried. Clearly, I should get back dressed, but actually, I was kind of marveling at the fact that they hadn't clued in that I was naked. My eyes were starting to adjust to the darkness, so I could make out their outlines. Ryosuke was peering over at me, not saying anything, but I'm pretty sure he'd figured it out by then. I studied his face carefully, but since he wasn't objecting, I set out again after the couple, following not all that far behind them.

Unfortunately, that turned out to be a mistake. The guy must have heard me because he turned his cell phone this way, lighting up my naked body. Even I was shocked to see my own pussy and breasts suddenly all lit up in the dark. The guy flinched, but then quickly turned his light back the other way. He must have been so shocked to see me naked, but he didn't want his girlfriend to see. Maybe they'd been fooling around in the woods themselves, or at least had been thinking about it.

For whatever reason, they sped up their pace, while Ryosuke and I slowed down letting them go on ahead. I felt pretty embarrassed and foolish for letting the guy see me, but there wasn't much I could do about it now. I was vaguely thinking of getting dressed, but before I could, this other group came down the path towards us walking the other way. They didn't have flashlights - luckily - but they did kind of peer over at me as they passed. I stood stock still, but now I could see flashes of light from the stars above dancing on my naked skin. I was quite worried that they'd realize too, but they just said hi, and walked on past.

I could vaguely see Ryosuke's face now, and he was looking at me, wondering I guess why I'd taken off my clothes. It'd just been a whim really, a joke of sorts to see what he'd do, but I hadn't really expected to run into anyone. It was kind of silly I guess, but it was kind of exciting. It's not every day I get to walk around in the park in the nude.

Soon though, I realized that there were even more people coming this way. Trying to get out of sight, I cut off the path into the woods. As people would walk by, they'd always look over at me, straining to see in the darkness. I'd just stand there - what else could I do? - but I was getting worried that they could see me now in the brighter light of this part of the park. It was hard to tell if they could tell, but luckily, they all just kept on walking.

I was starting to get worried though, so I ducked behind some the bushes, and pulled my clothes back on. When we came out into the light near the bridge, Ryosuke gave me this big grin. It seems he had enjoyed my little show.

Eventually, we made it to my place. Ryosuke gave me the gentlest kiss good night. It had been a good night.

The following Sunday, I woke up early. My host family were still asleep, but I was kind of itching to do something, so I had a shower, and changed into my safari gear - my cargo shorts, hiking boots and safari jacket. I kind of wanted to go jogging actually, but I was a bit worried my jogging outfits might be a bit too flashy, especially after the stunt I pulled the other night. I did pack my jogging stuff into my backpack just in case I changed my mind.

Quietly, I slipped out the back door trying not to wake Loretta and her kids. It was a nice day out. The birds were chirping, and you could hear the wind in the trees, but there didn't seem to be anyone else around. I quickly hiked my way down to the far end, all the way to the spot where I'd stripped down the other night. In the daylight though, it seemed a lot more open than I had remembered. I could see the apartment buildings on either side. I decided to head down one of the smaller side trails looking for a place with a bit more privacy.

There was a small camping site down near the end where people had set out logs to sit on. There were fresh newspapers on one log, but no sign of whoever left them there. It made me a bit nervous seeing the newspapers, but whoever it was didn't seem to be there now.

To rest, I sat down on the newspapers, and peered out through the woods. I heard a faint rustling noise, but I think it must have been an owl or a rabbit. I wondered if I should change into my jogging gear. There didn't seem to be much of anyone around, so maybe it would be alright.

I undid the laces on my hiking boots, and pulled them off. I was pretty sure I was alone, but my heart was speeding up, my breath coming faster. My plan was just to quickly change into my jogging threads, but actually, I couldn't stop thinking about the other night. The park had been pitch black then, but now there was sunlight streaming down through the trees lighting up the whole forest. Even so, if there's no one around, it should be okay.

I undid the button on my cargo shorts next, and slipped them off. It felt strange sitting on the newspaper in just my frilly undies - strange but kind of thrilled too. I undid the buttons on my safari jacket, but I was getting more and more excited the more I stripped. I stuffed my shorts and jacket into my fanny pack, and undid my bra next. I looked back up at the street, but I still couldn't see anyone, so I slid off my bra and my panties. All of a sudden, I was naked again, shaking like a leaf from nervousness, but excited too. I looked all around, my senses heightened, my whole body charged.

It's a bit hard to explain why, but for some reason, I stuffed my fanny pack into the gap under the log, hiding it from view. I pulled my boots back on, a bit embarrassed to be wearing just shoes. I peered out into the woods for signs of movement. It didn't look like anyone was there, so I even stood up, shuddering from the feeling of the breeze on my naked skin. I could hardly believe I'd gotten up the nerve to this. Leaving my clothes there, I set out along the trail, leading out towards the main path. I'll just go out, and take a quick peek, and then come right back, I promised myself.

Shivering all the way, I did manage to make it all the way to the main path. I cautiously peered up the hill towards the street. There didn't seem to be any construction workers up there, but there were some cars going by. That made me nervous, but I just stayed there, wavering, wondering what to do. Soon though, I suddenly heard voices, coming up from behind - the same direction where I'd left my clothes!

My mind raced, but I stood there - frozen - not sure what to do. As they came closer, I slowly realized the voices were Gavin and his father. That was a relief in a way - they are pretty understanding - but even so, I didn't want them to see me naked like this.

They seemed to be coming closer all the time, so to get away, I stepped out onto the main path, and then headed down the hill to a fork in the road. This was clearly getting out of hand. I was way out in the open now, and moving farther and farther away from my clothes. Despite myself, I was getting more and more excited. Still I have to focus here. Not seeing any other way out, I headed out down the branch path hoping that Gavin and his dad would go the other way. Unfortunately, I think they must have spotted me because they took this path too, following me down.

I could see houses up on the hill through the tree branches. It was still early, and it didn't look like anyone was up, but I was really out in the open now with nothing to cover me. I rushed along the path, past a shed, but I was getting near the end of the park. The only place left to go was a metal staircase, and that led up to the busy street where I'd seen the cars earlier. I can't very well go up there!

Not knowing what else to do, I sprinted back to the shed, hoping that I could hide behind it. Unfortunately, the underbrush was too thick to move into, and soon Gavin and his dad came up staring at naked little me, mouths agape. They looked absolutely stunned to see me out here stark naked in the woods. I didn't know what to say. The two of them just stood there dumbfounded.

"Uh, Emi, was it? What happened?" the father asked.

"Um, I... uh..." I honestly couldn't think of how to explain. C'mon. Think. There must be something. "My friends put me up to this. I lost a bet," I told them. That sounded a bit better than the truth, if still a bit kinky.

"It's dangerous though. You shouldn't be out here like this. Where are your clothes?"

My whole body was shaking uncontrollably. Gavin was kind of looking me up and down in wonder.

"My clothes are back at the camp site."

"Where are your friends?"

"Oh they ran off somewhere...," I explained, more and more worried that they weren't buying my story. Luckily, though, Gavin took off his jacket, and wrapped it around my shoulders. They were willing to help me, even if my story didn't make any sense.

"Here, we'll walk you back to your clothes. I don't know what kind of bet this was, but you really shouldn't be fooling around out in public like this. It's not safe."

I bowed my head hiding my face in my hair. Gavin's jacket wasn't quite long enough, so he could still see my bare bottom. The whole situation was pretty surreal - me trying to back up this crazy story, and them trying not to stare. The two of them shielded me as we crossed the main path in view of the street. I was actually pretty horny by then. I had my two guardian angels to protect me now.

They let me lead the way, and I could feel their eyes on my hiney. Still all nervous, I stopped on the path to turn, and tell them this whole made-up story about making a bet with Minori and Nao. They were trying so hard to keep a straight face, but you could tell they were enjoying watching me prance around. I probably should have acted more weirded out, but I was actually kind of enjoying talking to them while naked.

I teased them as much as I dared, taking my time getting back dressed, but they ended up turning away, preserving my modesty.

Even after I dressed, Gavin continued to glare at me in awe. I think he liked what he saw, but he didn't ask me out or anything. I was really too embarrassed by the whole thing, so soon, I said thanks, and ran off back home to Loretta's. She didn't ask where I'd been which is just as well. If she only knew.