

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/1

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### Petite Suite Esthétique

#### 1. Career Move: *Allegro Poitrinesque et Féministe pour Quatre Seins et Choeur Masculin Augmentif en La-Majeur – Vite, Comme un Oeillade*

Emma delighted in her new breasts. In the bathroom she used her make-up mirror to examine them from the side, above, below, luxuriating in the taboo sensation of being proud of herself as an object.

“My masterpiece,” Dr. Wilkes had sighed, as if he were Titian looking over the *Venus of Urbino*. “My *chef d’oeuvre*.” Well, no doubt he always said that, Emma told herself; to do less would be bad for business. Doctor Wilkes was what her mother called *suave*; he grasped the psychological freight of his profession, was tactful, earnest, and managed to convey both an affection for women and the soothing assurance that he had no illusions about them. Moreover, unlike Victor Frankenstein, he knew that, as the first to look on his handiwork, his reaction would be indelible.

The speed with which Emma appropriated the augmentation, and felt augmented by it, shocked her. The body that for nearly three decades she had washed, fed, exercised, worried over and thought she *was*, had been revised and so, it seemed, had she. The disjunction between *inside* and *outside* beauty she now questioned, even though it had been axiomatic for her even before she read about Plato calling Socrates the most beautiful man in Athens. And yet, she believed the objectification of women was high on the list of the original sins. So, the trouble was that Emma was also ashamed of her new breasts. She repressed the craving to show them off and warred against her new self-confidence.

When she had almost mockingly broached the idea of the surgery, her mother, the notorious feminist, had not laughed the idea into oblivion; in fact, she had almost given her blessing. “Why not, dear?” she said.

Emma—still amazed she had gotten up the nerve just to mention the procedure even in the most ironic, dismissive way—was flabbergasted.

“This friend of mine, Suzanne?”

“She the one who was trying to give up smoking?”

“Yes, that’s her. You’ll never guess what she said to me last week.”

“You’re right. I won’t. Unless it was something about how she’d kill for a cigarette.”

“No, not that. It’s really ridiculous. She actually suggested I get enhancement surgery.”

The fiery bra-burner, the implacable crusader, the lawyer who had a hand in exterminating the stewardess and launching the female jock, her mother had looked over her half-glasses and said, “Why not, dear?”

“You’re kidding, right?”

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Emma's mother pushed her glasses back in place and returned to her magazine, then stopped. "If you think it'll make you happier, then why not?"

This was a typically exasperating bit of maternal ambiguity, giving and taking at the same time. Permission, that is. As always, Emma tried to make out the subtext. Was it *I love you and I'm for anything that will make you happy*, or was it *If you're so shallow as to believe that a thirty-six-inch bust is going to make you any happier, then go right ahead, Pinhead?* Or maybe Emma was wrong and it wasn't an ambiguous comment at all. Maybe her oversized, opinionated, briefly married mother—notwithstanding everything the woman had ever said about ruinous models of feminine beauty—had always been secretly disappointed that her daughter had a chest like an ironing board. After all, her own front was more than ample and had been much photographed in her heyday.

So, Emma had it done and not only did men begin to take an interest in her, women looked at her differently, too. There were no more blind dates with the former, and her advice was solicited by the latter. Emma stood taller and spoke more frankly, no longer looking for corners in which to conceal her body and clichés behind which to hide her views. The effect on her social life of comparatively big breasts conjoined with a tolerably large brain was practically electrifying. Flat-chested Emma wasn't gone, though. She had only curled up inside buxom Emma and become a citizen of her Unconscious who performed cameos in her less pleasant dreams.

"You're trying to become *you*," teenage Emma whined to post-operative Emma in one of them, as her face shot out of the bathroom mirror, "but I'm still *me*. Totally. God, you're such *phony*." Then pimply fifteen-year-old Emma derisively stuck out her tongue. "*Wah!*"

Emma recollected how the Alphas had plowed through the high school corridors like clipper ships, proud of their prows. She remembered the darting, downwards, disappointed glances of blind dates and the making-light-of-it sympathy from her girlfriends who cocked their heads and didn't say how glad they were not to be Emma.

She had always thought of the breast fixation as male. Hadn't Darwin delighted in a pair of rounded South American hillocks and declared good-looking bosoms a pro in natural selection? Didn't Hollywood and Hefner fetishize the Great American Mammary in the middle of the last century? Didn't boys devise degrading nicknames to disguise their obsession—*melons hooters, headlights, racks?* All her fellow art history majors knew on what the reviled Male Gaze focused first. When some old pig of a journalist in the Seventies had snidely praised her mother's "notable charms" (the Victorian nickname), she had retorted with a philippic: *It's not the benighted triviality but the sheer childishness of men that knocks you for a loop: mammary equals mommy. Sisters, if you ever have trouble understanding what motivates a man—and I know this happens rarely—just imagine he's six years old.*

The only time Emma could remember hearing her mother and her coterie discussing women's attitudes towards their breasts was when one of them was facing a mastectomy.

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After college, Emma had worked for a series of non-profits, high-minded organizations that might have been set up expressly to employ young women just like her at risibly low wages. Her mother tried hard to recruit her for her own outfit, the Feminist Law Foundation, but Emma turned her down, politely. She wanted her own career, she said; she wanted out from under her mother's immense shadow. Nevertheless, when her mother begged, she did consent to volunteer at the Foundation in her spare time. Nobody there paid any special attention to her, which was fine with Emma. She was accustomed to being invisible. She fetched coffee, made copies and, if there were no one else around, typed up a barking speech or biting op-ed. Twice she was asked to research a piece of legislation and, once, to write a summary of an article from a law review. *Faute de mieux.*

The Feminist Law Foundation had picked out nine colleges and universities to sue for non-compliance with Title Nine; the numerical symmetry appealed to the Board. It was going to be a federal case and would draw lots of coverage. Emma's mother appointed herself lead attorney, a role she hadn't taken on in years, and was treated by the press like a heavyweight coming out of retirement for one last title bout. Almost the entire staff worked on the case but apparently it was not enough.

"Emma, dear, do you think you could possibly take a leave of absence from HMTI for a month or two? You'd be *such* a help." HMTI stood for Healthy Mothers, Thriving Infants, Emma's latest employer. "Of course, I wouldn't want it to interfere with your *social* life."

Emma was dubious. "I'd be glad to pitch in, Mom, but I can't afford to give up two months' pay and HMTI will probably fire me if I even asked for so much time off. Sorry, but I can't see Susan agreeing." Also, Emma really *was* worried about her social life.

"Of course we'll pay you. As for Susan Steinberg, you just leave her to me."

Emma rolled her eyes.

Her mother, an experienced interpreter of Emma's eye-rolls, simply said, "Good. Then it's settled."

After her mother did whatever she did to persuade Susan Steinberg, Emma became more than her aide-de-camp; she was pretty much second-in-command. Her mother involved her in every facet of the case, from research to courtroom strategy. Emma was detailed to interview expert witnesses, to calm the rowers and hockey players who were the putative plaintiffs, to memorize whole swathes of Title Nine. She began to feel herself becoming attached to the cause. Meanwhile, the men kept calling and she kept going out with them.

It got to the point where the only thing she could talk about on her dates was the case. The purveyors of cocktails, dinner, sex, and theater tickets were not put off; in fact, they seemed to find her ardor endearing. "Saint Joan of the hockey rink," one called her affectionately. Another deplored the backwardness of the nine offending schools. At dinner with a rather jolly conservative attorney who had asked her out on the courthouse steps she asked if he found their arguments persuasive. "Of

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course," he said promptly, "*irrefutable*. Every single one of them." Then he suggested a weekend in Vermont, "You know, to celebrate when you win."

Emma's mother insisted that she be with her in court. "I need you right by my side, dear."

"I don't know. . . I'm not a lawyer, Mom."

"Don't tell me you feel *unqualified*? Don't tell me you're *shy*?"

"Well—"

"What? *Still*? With all these men chasing you?"

Emma was unsure if her mother were mocking her but she went to federal court all the same, carried a briefcase and all. It was exciting, exhilarating. She and her mother had never been closer; they even talked about clothes.

"Wardrobe's *always* critical," Emma's mother had explained, "but even more than usual this time. This is going to be a public event. So get your coat, dear. We're going shopping."

Her mother bought herself two new suits that looked pretty much the same as her old ones except that one was pink and the other a shimmering pale green. She picked out three dresses for Emma, all close fitting and cut low in front.

Emma rolled her eyes.

"No, no. Just try one on."

She tried one on. "Come on, Mother, this doesn't look exactly, well, professional. It's the kind of thing I *might* wear to a party if I didn't mind getting called names."

Her mother eyed her up and down like a general reviewing the troops. "Yes. This one'll do very well," she declared. "Now the others, please."

At the end of the first day of the trial Emma and her mother ran into a crowd of reporters bristling with microphones and cameras. Emma was careful to stand well behind her mother, but a few of the reporters tried to catch her eye. A photographer shouted "Emma! Over here!" and snapped her picture. It was in the morning paper.

On the second day, a dozen reporters blew right by her mother and pressed around Emma, asking questions. Then they cleared a space for a man with a video camera. That night she was on television. She looked good.

On the third day, Emma was mobbed. The questions came fast and this time most of them had nothing to do with the case. *What was it like to grow up the only child of a legend? What about law school? Rap and misogyny, any comment? Do you like tall men? When was the last time you heard from your father? Seeing anybody special? There's a rumor you're going to succeed your mother at the Foundation. Is that so?*

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On the last day of the trial, after they had stood together to hear the gratifying verdict, Emma's mother headed for a side door. "I've got a dentist appointment," she said airily. "You deal with them, dear."

### 2. Giftie: *Presto Chevelu sous Forme d'Oeuf en Si-Mineur pour Cor de Basset Triste - Rapide*

When Ronald Santore walked into the Rite-Aid to pick up a tube of toothpaste and a bottle of after-shave he was confronted with an image of himself walking into the Rite-Aid. Rite-Aid had installed one of those security monitors that show you yourself walking into Rite-Aid.

Robert Burns' most famous couplet: *O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us / To see oursel's as ithers see us!* Well, the *Pow'r* in Ronald's case was Rite-Aid's security contractor. Had Robert Burns been confronted by such a monitor he might written something else. Maybe the opposite.

We all carry with us a video of ourselves moving through the world, opening doors, pushing a basket down the supermarket aisles, writing in Scottish dialect with a quill pen. Does this movie ever match what others see, what a camera records? Doubtful—even for made-up and overexposed models and politicians. On Ronald's internal monitor he was a man with all the hair he had at twenty. He had deluded himself that his comb-over worked; he didn't even think of the comb-over as comb-over. The uncanny moment in Rite-Aid put paid to that.

It's not strength or masculinity that diminish with your hair, the Samson story notwithstanding. What goes is a conception of yourself. Ronald brooded on glabrousness. He wasn't yet into his thirties; he was too young and too single to go bald. There was nothing wrong with baldness in itself; in fact, it was common and, for some, ineluctable. What he couldn't accept was *himself* as bald; a bald Ronald simply wasn't the *real* Ronald. It was a Platonic thing: the idea in his head was the reality, the camera's actuality a mere illusion.

He read the ads, looked at the before-and-afters; he collected the brochures in which everybody appeared thrilled; he scanned the Internet, pored over the testimonials and the horror stories. He asked himself whether he was too vain to appear to be vain. He worried that, if he did it, everyone he knew would know. But then, he reflected, in time they'll forget and, besides, he would meet new people, new women. Didn't everybody forget about the Vice President's having it done, even though it happened in public? Now the Veep was just himself with hair again, the man he'd been all his life. Ronald began to entertain warm feelings for the Vice President. After the procedure, the man seemed more at ease with himself. The Veep could walk confidently into any Rite-Aid in the country. That was what Ronald wanted, too.

Still, he struggled with the decision. The point, he told himself, making a subtle distinction, wasn't to try to look *younger*, just not to look *older*. Properly understood, he wouldn't be altering nature, merely rectifying it. *Restoration* was the word favored by the brochure writers. Moreover, he would be rid of the ridiculous comb-over and the spacious forehead that

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had *shone* at him from the drugstore's monitor. He briefly considered simply shaving his head to be done with it. Shaved heads were said to make a man look stronger, more virile. But the truth was that shaved heads only did that for beefy men with bull necks and Ronald's build was what is derisively called *slight*.

It was humiliating always to find himself staring at other people's hair with resentment and envy—not only other men's but women's too. When he was a boy, Ronald's hair had been so wiry anything less than a category-four hurricane would barely have mussed it. All his life he had shampooed, brushed, and combed this part of himself and now it was being amputated. He compared himself to the victims of the rough Sharia justice he read about, the lopped-off hands and ears. But he had committed no sin; no, he told himself, the sin in question here was being committed against *him*.

In all the busts and paintings, Socrates is bald. But all these images are of the Socrates Plato knew; that is, an old Socrates, a Socrates on the far side of sixty. Ronald reckoned he might not mind going bald if he too were sixty, or if he were Socrates. He did his utmost to accept going bald; he would have liked to be able to embrace baldness, but he just couldn't—maybe because, unlike Socrates, he didn't *have* to.

It was all the fault of the twenty-three O'Brien chromosomes he got from his mother. His O'Brien grandfather had been a redhead who lost all his hair before he turned thirty. The Santore men were all hirsute into their dotage. It was unfair.

Ronald chose the most expensive doctor he could find not because he equated quality with cost, but to punish himself.

Marlene Miller sat across from Ronald in the dimly-lit bar. The pianist wasn't bad; he modeled his playing on the styles of George Shearing and Bill Evans. Marlene was good-looking and exquisitely dressed. Ronald imagined sinking his fingers into her heavy dark hair. They talked about Philip Roth, the national debt, Bergman films, vegetarianism, and George Bernard Shaw. A dating service—also the costliest of the lot—had fixed them up. Ronald felt self-assured, entirely at his ease, and all because of the procedure. He was now an *after*. The evening had gone well: dinner at Scarpa's followed by a creditable revival of *Major Barbara*, now drinks and highbrow conversation. Ronald had just made what he deemed a witty remark about Simon Newcomb's opinion that charity created a demand for beggars when Marlene Miller leaned back, sipped her Daiquiri, looked at him appraisingly, and smiled.

"So, are the plugs new?"

3. Unanticipated Change: *Passepiéd Vivifiant en Do Dièse pour Flûte, Alto, et Corbillard - Funèbre, Brusque, Serré, Étonnant*

Katherine Sabia owned a small real estate firm, Sabia and Associates; her husband Carl worked as a software engineer. They owned their house outright, a solid three-bedroom ranch on a spacious lot in Abersfield

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where all the houses, cars, backyards, and children were nice. The Sabias only child, Brian, not only got into Cal Tech but was offered a scholarship to add his bulb to their brilliant chandelier. The Sabias had plenty of friends in Abersfield, couples with whom they'd shared cookouts, rung in new years, whose children they'd driven to soccer practices and dances. Many of these people had bought homes from Katherine.

One day Carl keeled over at work, a fatal aneurysm. To Katherine it felt as if he'd been flattened by a falling piano or sucked up into a spaceship. It was absurd. The lifelong tennis player, apparently healthy as ever, had been at breakfast and then he was gone. No transition, no getting accustomed, no doctors' offices. Just. . . pfft. After she got the call, Katherine left the office and went home without telling anyone why. The house looked different to her. She didn't know what to do with herself; she wandered from room to room as if the piano had fallen on her. Finally she called Charlie Gatley, the undertaker. Charlie was genuinely shocked, but then he went into professional mode. He knew just what needed to be done. He'd see to everything. Would she like him to send Anna over?

Carl and Brian hadn't had a single Oedipal moment that Katherine could remember. Brian had idolized his father. The two of them played computer games for hours. They talked cybernetics and watched stupid movies. When they weren't pals they were colleagues, master and apprentice. In high school Brian called his father *Yoda*; when he started college it was *Sensei*. All this was fine with Katherine, who assumed she and her baby were as close as they had been before he got his first X-Box.

She dreaded phoning Brian. When she did, when she gave him the news, Brian was silent for a while. She could see him in his dorm room, stunned, pictured him staggering to his bed.

"An aneurysm? That what you said?"

He sounded angry, angry with her. "Yes, sweetheart."

"You mean they couldn't *do* anything?"

"It was. . . no, they couldn't."

Another pause. "Is there enough money?"

Not the question she was expecting. "For the funeral?" she asked, confused.

"Well, that too, I guess. Everything."

"You've got your scholarship," she said shakily, at sea.

Pause. "Look, I'll get there by tomorrow night. Okay? I'll get right on it."

A question about money, no tears, misplaced anger, nothing about Carl, nothing about her.

Friends provided company and gobs of food. Carl's younger sister Cecilia flew in from St. Paul the day before the funeral. She didn't want to take her kids out of school and her husband had to stay with them. Cecilia stayed in the guest room. Katherine's brother Harry, the globe-trotting investment banker, squeezed in a day trip for the obsequies. Their parents

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had been dead for years and so was Carl's father. Katherine's mother-in-law had passed away just the year before and this made her recall a morbid Chinese saying she had come across in the coverage of a school bus accident: *Happiness is when the grandfather dies, then the father dies, then the son dies.*

Brian showed up with just one small bag. Katherine threw her arms around him at the door. He just touched her back, as if she was embarrassing him.

"You okay, Mom?"

It was something; it was enough. She began to cry.

Katherine was hardly conscious of the funeral. So many people came, all of Carl's colleagues, all their friends, her secretary and sales associates. Brian declined to speak and Cecilia passed too, so the minister delivered the eulogy. Katherine supposed it was okay; she didn't really pay attention.

Two days later the house was empty. No Brian, no Cecilia. Friends stopped by less often and, after another couple of weeks, the concerned calls petered out.

Katherine's social life in Abersfield had been that of couples and, as she was now single, that evaporated too. This was her own doing. She hadn't enjoyed the dinner parties to which she went alone, an odd-numbered wheel. After she turned down a few invitations they stopped coming.

At thirty-five, Julie Santasuosso, her best salesperson, was seven years younger than Katherine. They had always had a good relationship, but it had been a professional one. Julie was divorced and lived in Benton, one town over. She was a plain-spoken hot ticket; she dated a lot. She was particularly adept at selling to men. Katherine found she preferred Julie's company to that of her old friends. They began going out to dinner after work a couple nights a week and phoned each other on Sundays. Katherine would give Julie her emotional read-out and Julie would regale Katherine with tales about the men in her life. Plural.

"It's time, Kate. Time. *Really.* You have to put yourself out there."

Katherine winced at the phrase. Not only was it hackneyed but she didn't care for the suggestion itself. Put herself out *where?* It frightened her, *out there.* She was forty-two and not a good forty-two. She lacked the temperament and energy for Julie's sort of life. And she missed Carl, though not as a lover. What she missed was his presence, his smell, their routines; she missed him as a consort. Carl had become the kind of present absence she could live with. Why disturb the wobbly balance she had achieved? It had been hard-won and, anyway, she sagged; she was too old.

"There's more to life than flogging Dutch colonials and baking sour-dough bread," Julie argued.

"But, but—well, just *look* at me. Take a good *hard* look."

Julie did just that, bringing her face close to Katherine's, beetling her brows. Then she giggled and took Katherine's hand. "Look, I've got

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this friend. She's named Catherine too, but spells it with a C." This other Catherine—in her forties like Katherine and a divorcée like Julie—had gone out to California "to have a little work done," as Julie put it. "Just on her face. Best guy out there. She looks fifteen years younger. No exaggeration. It's *fabulous*."

"Oh," said Katherine taken aback, "I couldn't do anything like *that*."

Julie shrugged. "I'm only saying." Then she changed the subject.

Though the ground was stony, the seed struck root. Katherine found herself staring in the mirror as if she herself were a miracle-working Californian surgeon, contemplating emendments here and there. But what for, she wondered? She mocked herself. Do I want to *put myself out there*? Do I?

Julie gave her Catherine's telephone number, said she would be expecting a call, and promised to answer any and all questions. "She's in a hell of a good mood these days. Seems the girl just got *engaged*."

The trip to California was the greatest adventure of Katherine's life and the most solitary. It was a secret. Only Julie knew.

"This is great. Go, go with my blessing. I'll watch things here."

Katherine decided to take off a full two weeks, her first break since Carl died.

She was scared, excited, doubtful, ashamed, eager. *Why not?* and *How could you?* took turns in her head, like a pair of rival tap dancers. What would her friends think? That she was desperate? Vain? A fool? Might they worry she was on the prowl, a threat?

She could have seen Brian while she was in California, but she didn't want him to know why she was there. And what about *his* reaction? If he actually noticed, what would he say?

Everybody at the clinic was wonderful to her. Dr. Kramer couldn't have been sweeter, more encouraging, or soothing. He told her how many procedures he'd done in a way that conveyed confidence rather than boredom. She was reminded of Cary Grant's scenes with Mrs. Lord in *The Philadelphia Story*. The operation went without a hitch.

Katherine had made a reservation at a resort in Palm Springs to recuperate but, after a few days, she felt restless. She rented a car, drove back to the coast, then headed north. She wanted to see Big Sur, mostly because of the name. She spent a night in a bed-and-breakfast and put off as best she could thinking about what was going to happen when she got back to Abersfield. She re-read *Jane Eyre*.

Katherine liked her face which she assured herself wasn't new but the one she used to have. She imagined Carl saying, "Yep. That's the girl I married."

Julie liked her face, too. She screeched like a teenager when she saw it.

"Okay. The dating service next," she said once she'd calmed down.

"What?"

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"Look, you fill in a form; you go for an interview; you make a little video."

"A video?"

"It's easy, Kate. They'll help you. You just talk a little about yourself, that's all. Catherine did it, you know. The one with a C. The one who's getting *married* next week."

Katherine felt misgivings when she saw the fourteen-page form and filling it in gave her fits. Should she rank *a good sense of humor* above *kindness to animals*? Did *like to travel* go before or after *enjoy theatre*? *Like to read* was so vague—she didn't want to go out with an illiterate or a man who only read books about war. Did she prefer *Italian* to *French* cuisine? Did they mean Tuscan or southern Italian, Parisian or provincial French? Could she honestly describe herself as *playful and fun-loving*? Wasn't it dangerous to check off *financially secure*? She had to rank the prospects' qualities in order of importance: physical appearance, love of the outdoors, sports, musical taste ("classical, jazz, rock"), childlessness, financial status, intelligence, homeownership, and on and on. Katherine might have given up if she hadn't, at Julie's prodding, already plunked down two hundred non-refundable bucks to DiscreetMatch, LLC.

Saturday was Katherine's busiest day. Ms. Stein was accommodating, though; she said they usually made the videos on Saturdays but could arrange to do hers on Tuesday evening at seven.

Julie's advice about what to wear wasn't exactly original. "Nothing *dowdy*, of course, and nothing *slutty*. Pants suits are a no-no. How about the emerald top you wore last week with your blue skirt, the pleated one? Oh, I know! That dressy sweater, the one from Nordstrom's, with the sequins. That'd be *perfect*."

Katherine went home after work on Tuesday, ate a chicken breast and some rice, then prepared herself. Julie had wanted to come with her but Katherine had drawn the line, pulled rank. She thought wistfully of her solitude in California.

It was as bad as a date—worse actually, since she had no idea how many men she was primping for. She felt the indignity of it all. She liked her new/old face, but did she *want* a man in her life? *Lots* of men? Was it worth this anxiety and humiliation? And what, exactly, was "it"? With Carl everything had been easy because they were young and they did what young were expected to do, what everybody they knew was doing, what the young had always done. Now it was all high-tech videos and matchmaking algorithms and multiple-choice tests.

The videographer was informal, charming, and—thank God—female. She stuck out her hand. "I'm Ginny, short for Virginia, and I promise I'll get you through this ordeal. You look *terrific*, by the way."

Ginny took Katherine to a tiny room with a camera on a tripod and a high stool backed by floor-length blue drapes.

"I think you should use this stool. A chair just isn't right and standing the whole time is worse. It's hard to know what to do with your hands.

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I've found the stool's just the thing. Now, relax. And remember, you're going to be talking just to *me*."

Katherine put Ginny in her early thirties at the most. She was cute, a little girl suddenly grown up. She wore pigtails and overalls. Katherine asked how had she gotten into doing videos for DiscreetMatch, LLC.

"Oh, it pays the rent," she explained. "I make documentaries—and I get to meet nice people like you, Katherine. Or is it *Kate*? Like Hepburn to her pals? Like in *Kiss Me*? Like that shrew that allegedly got tamed?"

Katherine laughed and really did begin to relax. She did as Ginny said and only talked to her; it wasn't all that bad.

Her first date was a disaster. George Karpas used too much cologne and chewed with his mouth open. The second was worse. Fred Sinkowitz was no gentleman. Her third date, Chad van Kuypers, drank too much merlot and confessed that wasn't his real name.

Katherine thought about Ginny, thought about her more and more, and what she thought was that she'd like to spend some time with her. She thought she'd like to see Ginny's documentaries and wondered what her hair would look like without the pigtails. It was ridiculous but not only wouldn't these thoughts go away, time seemed to fortify them. Ginny had been so honest and funny. Could she have a crush?

Finally, Katherine phoned DiscreetMatch, LLC and talked Ms. Stein into giving her Ginny's number. It wasn't anywhere near as difficult as she'd feared.