

Doreen - III

by J. Mykell Collinz

Not a drama queen, Doreen, a queen of drama. She listened. What goes on inside that beautiful head? I wondered when she held me in her searching gaze. She looked Native American. Long dark brown hair, big beautiful brown eyes, high cheekbones, tapered jaw, flared nostrils. Yet her finely sculpted features came from French and Norwegian ancestors. I learned that when she finally spoke to me. I did the modeling job on campus just to be around her.

I almost backed out the first time I took my clothes off. The painting class instructor, the woman from the coffee shop, stopped me at the door. She asked me not to leave, asked why I was so afraid. I told her I didn't know. So I stayed. Her eyes went immediately to my crotch when I stepped from the dressing room. Everyone who came into the classroom was going to do that, I realized, and the only solution would be to ignore it, don't even make eye contact with the student painters. I had practiced meditation and contemplation exercises regularly since my last year in high school and that helped. I even found myself praying to keep my thoughts from straying and my member from swelling in response to the arousing scent of so many female sex organs in close proximity.

Artists have been paying people to take their cloths off for at least two thousand years so I wasn't doing anything unusual. Once the initial blush faded, I almost forgot I was sitting there naked. The women painters who were staring at every inch of my body, including my penis, had receded from my consciousness while I contemplated my masculine archetype. Male genitals were usually portrayed diminutively in classical art. After forty minutes in a drafty room without cloths on, I was beginning to understand why.

The older man from the campus coffee shop entered the room shortly before the class period ended, apparently to hook up with the woman instructor. That same expression of indignation appeared

on his face when he saw me there, like I was an intruder in his world of romance. But my interests in the woman instructor were not romantic. As a friend of Doreen's, she could invite me to socialize within their circle. The older man's presence added a challenging complexity to the social politics of the campus coffee shop circle. He had been wanting to start an argument since he first laid eyes on me.

I began arriving at the coffee shop about an hour before the painting class began. I rushed home from work, showered and dressed, and then headed right over to the university without eating dinner. I might get a fruit salad, a yogurt, and maybe a blueberry muffin from the cafeteria and eat it in the coffee shop, as close to Doreen as possible. I wasn't the only one doing that but the older man criticized me for it. Right off the bat, as he put it, he wanted me to understand just who the hell he was: he ran the dramatic arts department, wrote the book on dramatic theory.

I let him do all the talking. I didn't even understand why he said most of it. He was talking to his own creation. Someone he assumed. Someone with ulterior motives, perhaps. I don't know. He was so far off the mark, I didn't take any of it personally. He seemed to like the way I submitted to his verbal tirade. Judging from the satisfied expression on his face and his relaxed body language, my chances of being accepted into their group had greatly improved.

Costume and set design were Doreen's immediate passions, I discovered. She made her own clothing, sewn together from recycled, multicolored fabrics. Collars and cuffs, belts and sashes, capes and hats, full length dresses and short skirts. I preferred the short skirts. She had beautiful legs and a sweet ass. But she usually kept it well hidden under layers of clothing to eliminate distractions: more important things occupied her attention.

An opportunity for a breakthrough in our relation came when she asked me to help her move some heavy equipment. She had recently made the purchase at a foreclosure auction. Included were three industrial sewing machines, one of which was a serger that could do a three stitch security wrap to keep fabric from unraveling at the

edge due to repeated washing. Doreen's studio was located on the top floor of an old four-story warehouse close to campus. I borrowed a truck from work on Saturday morning and we had everything moved by lunch time.

The freight elevator in her building was a slow but effective working antique. It opened on the fourth floor to the dim light of a broad, unfinished warehouse space with a high ceiling. The floor was strewn with mostly stage and lighting equipment. After unloading the industrial sewing machines from the elevator, she invited me into her work and living area on the other side of a temporarily constructed partition wall. My mood instantly elevated as I stepped from the dimly lighted grayness of the storage area into the brightly colored studio space and I was already floating on air just being with Doreen.

