

Posey's Assets

By

Mariella Starr

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Prologue

Washington, D.C., May, 1946

The lights were beautiful reflecting off the Potomac River. Posey took a deep breath wishing for the scent of cherry blossoms, even though they had bloomed several months earlier. There were other fragrant flowers in bloom now, but she could not distinguish one from another.

In spring and summer, Washington, D.C., was like no other place. Now that all the monuments were fully illuminated, there was nothing more beautiful than the Capital District area. There had not been blackouts of National Monuments here, as there had been in European cities and even some northeastern cities on the shores of the Atlantic. The Washington politicians had refused to cower in fear or bend to pressure from the military to blacken the skies of the Nation's capital. There had been only a subtle dimming of lights during the war years.

She was so glad the war was over. It had been a year now, and the country was slowly recovering. She had not fully recovered yet. All the years she had given to government service were now neither recognized nor accounted for in any meaningful way. She was unable to explain her war year activities to anyone because they were classified. She had done her duty, as had many millions of Americans. However, Posey would receive no credit for her work. When she had been of no further use to her particular agency, they had casually discarded her, telling her to return to civilian life.

The problem was that Posey couldn't return to what hadn't existed. She was a child before the war, a young college student on the path established by her family when she was very young. She had been dutifully working toward their predestined goals before the war. After all, she was the granddaughter of Phillip Abram, the renowned physicist and mathematician, whose footsteps she was to follow. She had studied hard and advanced quickly. With her grandfather pushing her, along with his personal academic tutoring, she had been granted early entry into Columbia University at sixteen. She had been two years into an advanced mathematics degree when everything changed.

December 7, 1941, changed the world. Still, she had finished her sophomore year at the age of eighteen. She was ahead of her peers and remaining under the strict tutelage of her grandfather.

Phillip Abram was determined *his* granddaughter would not be one of those silly *bobby soxers*, mooning over the likes of Frank Sinatra or Mel Tormé. *His* granddaughter would accomplish what his child had not. It had never been precisely determined what she would become, merely that she was to study mathematics or the sciences. Luckily, she was brilliant in both. Her grandfather was sure he could mold her into someone suitable for the career he planned to continue the legacy of his genius.

Their goals were interrupted when a government agency recruited Phillip Abram for a top-secret assignment. He had taken Posey with him to work on his team.

During the four years of war, their project had been vastly important to the military. Now, in peacetime, the project had been downgraded to less essential for military use, although her superiors still wanted answers and results. The military only understood fast and complete. They certainly did not understand theoretical physics, which could take a lifetime to prove a single theory. She had done her part, but the project was no closer to completion now than it had been at inception.

In the beginning, Philip's high-ranking military supervisor resisted the idea that an eighteen-year-old *girl* was capable of complex mathematics. Older accomplished men and brash young men fresh out of college surrounded Posey. However, under her grandfather's continued guidance, she held her own within the gathering of intellectual prowess.

Her co-workers had responded to her in several different ways.

The older men would pat her on the head and praise her when her peers were around. Then, they would pat or pinch her bottom, and try to get her to kiss them if no one was around. The younger men were a bit more reckless, their strategies more forthright. They wanted to get into her panties and grab the real prize.

After Posey lost her virginity to a slick-talking co-worker, he indelicately bragged about his accomplishment. From her point of view, Posey thought the actual act of sex was rather disappointing. However, *Mr. Indiscretion* had boasted loudly. Phillip Abram heard and had been furious. At nineteen, Posey assumed she was beyond the age of being spanked. She had been very, very wrong.

She had felt the result of her grandfather's displeasure for several days, and decided her ass and all other parts were off limits to men. She did not want to be kissed, pinched, patted, touched, *or spanked!*

Posey began dressing down in plain, boring, black, or gray suits. She wore little or no makeup and donned bookish black-rimmed glasses although the lenses were clear glass. Posey considered herself a quick learner, but to her dismay, she still attracted the men.

From a scientific standpoint, she did not understand it. Men were supposed to be attracted to the opposite type from her—women with large breasts, long legs, and hourglass figures. Men wanted women who were not their intellectual equal. In her opinion, they wanted a woman to bolster their egos almost as much as they wanted someone to mother and take care of them.

She was a small woman; too thin, too short, and too smart. She had an hourglass figure, in miniature. Men should not like her, except they did. She found herself oddly disinterested in them. She had no desire to play the game of man versus woman.

Posey was now almost twenty-four-years-old and she needed to make some serious decisions. Should she return to college or should she get a job? Should she continue with her self-studies as she had during the duration of the war and since?

She was drawn to the academics of college. However, from what she had witnessed during her first two years there, most young women viewed college as merely a mating ritual to find a suitable husband with the potential of a high salary. Posey understood this from a socioeconomic viewpoint, but what she didn't understand was why the young women wanted to relinquish their independence.

The messages and propaganda bombarding women for the last decade were decidedly confusing. During the war, women were told they were selfish and lazy if they did not work. Millions of women and girls responded by working in the war plants, thus freeing the men to go into the battlefields. Since the war ended, the government relentlessly broadcast the opposite message to women. Every day, women were reminded in newspapers and radio advertisements that they should give up their jobs. They were told they had no right to the jobs needed for returning servicemen. It was a woman's duty to be a wife and mother again.

Posey did not feel a desperate need to find a husband. She also did not need a job to support herself. Thanks to her so-called supervisor, a man whom she had trained, and the man who had taken her virginity, she no longer had a job.

Chapter 1

Sergeant Frank Ramsey of the Military Police, U.S. Army, got the relayed message on his walkie-talkie at 2300 hours. A woman had been seen on the Arlington Memorial Bridge, a possible jumper. He grumbled under his breath with impatience. It was his last night of service in the Army and he was to sign his final release papers in the morning. He was pissed that he had to deal with a jumper as his last assignment because it would cause him hours of paperwork before he could sign off duty.

He parked his jeep at the end of the bridge and took off walking. He saw her almost halfway across, sitting on the outside ledge of the bridge swinging her legs as if she had not a care in the world. When he was about twenty-five feet from her, he started to whistle not wanting to scare her into taking the plunge. He walked as quickly as he could, but from where she was sitting, there was no way for him to reach her without startling her.

“Miss? Miss?”

Posey glanced over her shoulder, surprised to hear someone addressing her. She had not heard him approaching, but then she had been teased most of her life about her ability to ignore all distractions when she was concentrating.

“Oh, hello. May I help you?”

“Yes, ma’am, you can,” Frank said. “Please, don’t jump!”

He heard a giggle of laughter that was almost musical. The young woman turned around and smiled at him.

Sergeant Ramsey’s M.P. training had included several hours on how to talk down a jumper. Most of the instruction covered calming down veterans who had gone off the rails and were threatening harm to themselves or others. His training had not covered stopping a petite blonde with the face of an angel, delicate features, and, from what little he could see by the overhead bridge lights, large eyes rimmed with thick dark lashes.

“I have no intention of jumping,” the girl said with a smile.

He frowned. “Give me your hand!”

“Actually, I need both my hands for balance,” Posey said. “I did not mean to worry anyone. It was such a lovely night and I wanted somewhere quiet to think. I thought some fresh air would help.”

“You couldn’t find fresh air anywhere except on the *outside* ledge of Arlington Memorial Bridge?” Frank demanded in disbelief.

Her tinkling laughter came again. “Of course, I could, but the river is very peaceful.”

The amusement in her voice grated on his nerves.

“Oh, dear, I have made you angry,” Posey said responding to his frown. “I didn’t mean to upset anyone. I truly have no intention of jumping. I’m taking an early train in the morning.”

Sure, you are, Frank thought, *if they let you out of St. Elizabeth’s Mental Hospital after your psychiatric evaluation.* He did not dare say it aloud. The woman was walking calmly along the foot-wide concrete walkway built for bridge maintenance workers. He followed on the roadway side of the bridge watching carefully. He was ready to grab for her if she made the slightest movement toward the edge. Not that he stood a chance of stopping her if she did jump.

She didn’t jump, quite the opposite. She seemed more than comfortable walking along the narrow path that was on average forty to fifty feet above the water level.

At the end of the bridge abutment, she stopped and bent to remove her shoes. She handed them to him across the four-foot-high concrete wall. Without her high-heeled pumps, she dropped several inches in height, which put her only a foot over the four-foot wall.

“If you stay there, I will pull you over,” Frank offered.

“I would prefer if you would turn the other way,” the girl said. “I am wearing a skirt and this might be a little embarrassing.”

“Sorry, but I need to be able to make a grab for you if you lose your balance,” Frank said.

“I have the balance of a cat,” she said matter-of-factly.

With a leap, she was sitting on the wall. Frank did get an eyeful of shapely gams as she swung feet and legs over the ledge. They weren’t long, but what there was... well, they were something. She scooted around on her bottom, jumped to the ground, and held out her hands for her shoes.

“I do apologize if I frightened you. I will be on my way, now.”

“Uh, no, you have to come with me,” Frank explained.

Posey looked slightly alarmed. “Excuse me, but I don’t know you.”

“Well, I’m sorry about that, ma’am, but you still have to come with me. I am Sergeant Frank Ramsey, U.S. Army Military Police. I have to take you into custody.”

“Why? I haven’t broken any laws.”

“It’s against the law to attempt suicide,” Frank said bluntly.

“I haven’t attempted suicide. I told you I was not going to jump,” Posey explained patiently. “It was not my intention.”

“It doesn’t matter, Miss. You were on the bridge, on the outside ledge. I have to take you in for evaluation.”

“Evaluation,” Posey looked up at him. “Why would I need to be evaluated if I haven’t done anything wrong?”

“Regulations, ma’am,” Frank said.

“I am so sick of government regulations and military policies,” Posey exclaimed. “One rule does not apply to everyone and every situation. There are exceptions and reasons why people do what they do. Why can’t the government or the military branches understand this and mind their own business?”

“You will have to take it up with them,” Frank said. “Would you please get into the Jeep?” He helped her in, snapped a handcuff on her wrist, checked to make sure she could not slip her hand out from the cuff, and attached the other end to a bar on the dash.

As the Sergeant spoke to someone on the radio, Posey got a clear picture of what was going on. It did not matter that she was not a jumper. She would have to go through the hassle of a psychiatric evaluation, probably at St. Elizabeth’s. She didn’t feel she had done anything to warrant going through such trouble and humiliation.

The Sergeant pulled out a clipboard. “Ma’am, I need your name.”

“No.”

“Excuse me?” Frank said, giving the young woman the look that had frightened many a young recruit.

She cocked an eyebrow, tilted her chin upward, and looked away from him.

“Fine,” Frank said tossing his clipboard to the seat and getting behind the wheel. “I’ll report to the orderlies that you are uncooperative.”

Posey did not have time for this nonsense. They were nearly at the hospital when she saw a gas station open. She had been there before when her driver occasionally stopped on his way to take her home.

“Excuse me, could you pull in there, please?”

“Why?” the Sergeant demanded.

Posey bit her lip and tried to look embarrassed. “I have a problem.”

“What kind of problem,” he demanded pulling into the parking area.

Posey looked away. “Female,” she whispered. “They sell groceries and drug store items there. I need a drugstore item. Quickly, please.”

“Look, I don’t have time for this...”

“Please,” Posey pleaded adding a little panic to her voice. “I am going to be so embarrassed! I am in desperate need of sanitary...”

“What? Oh shit, no,” the Sergeant exclaimed. “Look, I’ll unlock the cuffs and escort you inside to buy them.”

“I can’t,” Posey said not meeting his eyes. “I’ll need to go into the Ladies room immediately and the sign there is pointing to the side of the building.”

“Damn,” the Sergeant snorted. Three years in the Army where he had pulled some tough duties, he had never had to stoop to buy—those things—for a woman! Giving her an angry glance, he left her handcuffed to the Jeep and went inside.

Posey watched him watching her through the gas station window. She was secretly amused. Men could fight wars, handle guns, and face an armed enemy, but if a woman brought up an unmentionable female issue, they panicked.

As soon as he turned down an aisle out of sight of the window, she pulled a bobby pin from her hair. A few seconds later, she heard a reassuring click in the handcuff cylinder. The Sergeant came back in sight, looked in her direction, and turned from the window to pay the cashier. Posey took off her high heels and bolted with them in her hands. She did not run from the station, but rather ran behind it, crossing the alley, and going into the men’s room of another gas station. There was a man in there already! She ducked into a stall and locked the door. There was shouting outside but she could not understand the words. The stall next to the one where she hid opened. She heard running water before a door banged open. She grabbed the hook on the inside of her stall door, raised her feet, and hung from the hook.

“Did anyone come in here? A blonde girl?” It was the gruff Sergeant’s voice.

“This is a men’s john,” the man washing his hands growled. The outside door slammed shut. “F’n M.P.’s,” he grumbled. “Hey, girly.”

Posey froze at the voice of someone she could hear, but not see, on the other side of her bathroom stall door.

“Stay put. The M.P. is still outside looking around. I own this joint and I am going to act like I’m closing down for the night. Maybe the jerk in the uniform will get the hint and get lost. Don’t come out until I bang on the door.”

“Thank you. I didn’t do anything wrong.”

“I don’t give a crap if you did. I hate the f’n M.P.s. Can you call someone to come get you, or do you need a cab?”

“I need a cab,” Posey said.

“Stay put! I’ll call and tell them not to come for twenty minutes.”

Posey dropped to her feet and put on her shoes. She had no idea if she had jumped from the frying pan into the fire or not, but she had to take a chance.

* * *

Sergeant Frank Ramsey was furious. He had thought her hands might be too small to stay in the cuffs, and he had checked, but that was not the case. She picked the lock! Now he had to explain how he had lost a psychiatric case. It was his last night on official duty. His entire last week in the service had already been a nightmare of forms and paperwork. Now, it had taken a dramatic turn for the worse tonight.

He searched the entire area twice without finding a trace of her. He had to report that he had lost his arrestee. He was told to come in and sign off his shift. He had nothing on her, no information, no name, nothing. He was furious. She had lied to him... tricked him. She had made him buy things no self-respecting man with gonads should have to buy! If he ran into the little chit again, he would like nothing better than to bust her ass! Man! He swore again, thinking of all the paperwork she was going to cost him. He had to admire her spunk, though. She had outsmarted him.

He could only hope this stunt would not cost him his civilian job. He was reporting for duty to the New York City Police Department in a week, stepping right into his old job as Detective. With his late enlistment and having to stay in a year after the war ended to fulfill his

term of service, he had been lucky to get his old job back. The ranks of every city police force had been flooded with G.I. hopefuls wanting jobs. As far as Frank was concerned, they were all after his job. He had hoped to regain some position on the force, any job, and thought he would have to work his way up through the ranks all over again. Stepping back into his pre-war grade and job was a miracle.

* * *

New York City, July, 1946

Posey regarded her image in the mirror. She turned this way and that, and decided she was doing it. She was going to wear trousers in public! Trousers had become acceptable attire for women working in factories during the war, although most women still wouldn't wear them elsewhere except for very casual outings. However, *Life*, *McCall*, and *Look* had featured articles and photo layouts of women wearing them almost everywhere. Many Hollywood starlets interviewed in the newsreels shown before the movies started, wore them. She felt she did not look as glamorous as Katherine Hepburn or Hedy Lamarr, but unfortunately, she had stopped growing at five foot and one measly inch. Wearing heels could only compensate for a small portion of her lack of height.

She would probably scandalize the elderly ladies in her building, but it could not be helped. Dear old Mrs. Rosendorn was the worst. She was more old-fashioned than Posey's grandfather, which meant she was practically rooted in the dark ages.

Posey shrugged and then pulled her waist length hair into a long twist wrapping and pinning it into a knot she would cover with a hat. She wanted to be a modern woman. She realized doing so meant taking it step-by-step as she fought years of ingrained training to be the perfect granddaughter and student.

She wished she had the nerve to walk into a beauty parlor and say, "Bob it," but she didn't. The very idea made her tremble. Her grandmother, Neria Abram, would turn over in her grave. She had believed a woman was meant to be a wife and mother, nothing more, and it was Posey's destiny, too.

Her grandfather, Phillip, had been equally determined that Posey would be a mathematician, physicist or scientist to continue the family genius. Posey had been caught

between their two ideologies until her grandmother passed away when Posey was twelve. After her *bobeshi* had died, Posey's life had been completely controlled by her grandfather.

Posey viewed herself in the mirror again and smiled. She really did like her long hair even though short hair was a symbol to most women of independence and freedom from the old standards. It took extra time to care for it, but was it worth cutting off years of length because she wanted to be modern? She looked around her apartment and, as usual, felt very satisfied to be so liberated. This was the first place she had ever been able to call her own. She couldn't claim she had earned it, but it was hers.

When she had returned to New York City, Posey hadn't moved into her grandparents' apartment, instead taking the adjacent suite of rooms down the hall from where they had lived. She knew she was lucky, beyond lucky. Upon her grandfather's death the year before, Posey had inherited the old Baskell Hotel building on 66th Street in New York City's Upper Eastside. Converted thirty years earlier from a hotel into apartments, the swank residential building was located in one of the better high-end rent districts of Manhattan. The seven upper floors of the Hotel were all apartments while the ground floor was shops and restaurants, and the second and third floors were business offices for insurance brokers and attorneys. Nearly all the apartment residents were Jewish and had been friends of her grandparents.

Posey occupied a two-bedroom unit. It was colossal, and she loved every decadent inch of it. The living room had a fireplace with a mantle high above her head. The eighteen-foot ceilings with elaborate plaster crown moldings made her feel as if she were living in a Parisian villa. Or, at least, what she imagined a villa in Paris would have looked like before the war. From what she had seen in the newsreels, most of Europe was now in ruins.

Posey collected a bag of books to return to the library, and another to drop off at the used bookshop. She was slowly emptying her grandparents' apartment and was gradually going through Phillip Abram's lifetime collection of books, donating or selling them. She had lived with her grandparents, and then her grandfather alone, since being orphaned at the age of eight.

She and her grandfather had moved to Washington, D.C. to work on the *project* four months after the war had been declared. Before then, she had quite literally grown up in a library. Over the years since her *bobeshi*'s passing, their apartment had gradually changed from a home to a library, which happened to include a kitchen and bedrooms. Physics, mathematics, problem

solving, theory, learning, these were the only pursuits of her grandfather's life. He was determined they were to be her destiny.

Except, now they weren't.

Feeling a little self-conscious in her wide-legged trousers, Posey dropped the two bags full of books in front of the elevator and made her way to the opposite end of the hallway where she knocked on the door of an elderly neighbor. She knocked again and waited, and knocked and waited, until finally the door opened to a woman even smaller than Posey, a figure wizened and bent with old age.

"Mrs. Rosendorn, I am going out. Do you need me to bring you anything?" Posey asked.

"No dear, I'm all right. My daughter, Livna, is coming today. You are such a sweet one. Neria raised you to be a respectful child."

"Thank you, Mrs. Rosendorn," Posey replied raising her voice. "I have to go; I have an appointment. Tell Livna hello for me when you see her."

She had almost made her escape to the elevator when Mrs. Ruth Rosendorn stepped completely out of her apartment. She stared at Posey and shook her finger at her.

"Posey, you cannot go out in public like this! Ladies do not go in public in trousers! Where are your gloves? You are a *tov maidel* (good girl). You cannot go outside dressed so; what will people think?"

Posey plastered a wide smile on her face. "They will think I am a modern woman, Mrs. Rosendorn!"

"Oy Vey! What would your bobeshi say! Do not let my Inez see you wearing those things. It's disrespectful," the old woman shouted as the elevator doors closed.

Posey smiled. She knew Inez Aaronson, Mrs. Rosendorn's granddaughter and Posey's best friend, was already wearing trousers, although never around her parents or grandparents.

"Good morning, Mr. Schultz," Posey said brightly as the Building Manager, and sometimes doorman took her bags to carry them through the revolving door for her.

"It is, Miss Wanamaker," Stanley Schultz replied relinquishing her bags. He watched as the youngest resident of the Baskell building strolled down the sidewalk. Sweet little Posey was always worth watching from behind.

* * *

Posey finished her errands, went to the library to the research department, and then spent three hours at the Metropolitan Museum of Art wandering through an exhibit of modern art since it was part of an assignment for her art class. She did not fathom modern art. Oh, she vaguely liked some of it, disliked most of it, but of more importance, she did not understand any of it.

One of the co-students in her Art Appreciation class said Posey was seeing art only through her eyes and her mind, not her emotions. It was probably an accurate statement because most of what she saw made no sense to her. For the first time ever, Posey was seriously considering dropping a college class.

When she had returned to New York City, she had been unable to enroll in Columbia for a summer semester. Classes were full and men were given preference in the mathematics, science, and engineering courses. Most of the men returning to school were on the G.I. Bill and, although they might not be as qualified as she, they were given priority.

She had known this was the case in employment hiring practices. Men who served in the war did not lose the seniority in their jobs. When they returned, women had to relinquish those jobs to the veterans. A married woman was often refused any employment as it was thought her husband should support her. The government was now more interested in giving jobs to their returning soldiers. Posey had not realized those same policies had extended to colleges and universities.

She had been sent to the counseling department where they had encouraged her to take liberal arts, teaching, or home economics. At first, she had been genuinely shocked. No one had ever suggested anything to her beyond mathematics or science.

Posey had given the matter a great deal of thought and decided to try something different since she couldn't register for the classes she wanted. She would continue her self-study in preparation for when classes were available in her chosen fields. She had a complete library of science and mathematic studies at her disposal in the library at her grandfather's apartment.

She had also tried to register for daytime classes, but discovered most of them were filled, too. She had managed to find space in two daytime classes, one in Art Appreciation and one in Basic Art 101, as well as an evening class in American Art and Architecture. She was doing badly in the Art Appreciation class, as well as Basic Art 101. Art was not her forte. She was doing much better in the American Art and Architecture class, where the techniques taught made sense to her since a lot of the work relied heavily on math.

Posey stopped at Gimbels to purchase a lamp she liked for her apartment. She was carrying it down the sidewalk looking for a taxi when she felt someone pinch her bottom.

“Oh!” Posey wheeled around to face a young man with slicked-back dark hair and a cocky sneer.

“Looking good, cutie,” he said with a grin.

“Keep your hands to yourself, pervert!” Posey exclaimed marching away. Unfortunately, her response merely elicited a whistle and something in Italian she did not think was a polite compliment. She crossed the street and quickly walked a half block before having to slow down from the oppressive city heat. She set her lamp on a bench outside a drug store and considered going inside for a fountain soda.

“Stop! Catch him,” a woman’s voice cried out from across the street. Posey saw the same miscreant who had pinched her now running through the heavy traffic to her side of the street. He had a woman’s purse under his arm.

As he ran toward her, Posey stepped away from the bench and swung the lamp at him. She knocked him sideways and he lost his balance, falling to his knees and crashing into a lamppost head first. Posey’s lamp was broken, but she grabbed what was left of the base and marched over to the young man. “If you move, I will bash you over the head!”

People stopped what they were doing while two men held the thief in place.

“Someone needs to call the police!” shouted a bystander.

“That’s him! That’s him!” An elderly woman wailed as she tried to get across the street. Drivers were yelling and honking at her. “He pushed me down and stole my purse!”

Detective Frank Ramsey and his partner, Marc Kelso, had just gotten out of his car when they heard *police* being shouted. Both of them responded at once. They saw the commotion on the sidewalk three doors down, and side-by-side jogged to the scene. They took in the situation immediately: thug on the ground, an elderly woman crying about a stolen purse, and a purse lying beside the thug.

Frank did a double take when he saw the pretty girl wielding a broken lamp as she stood over the thug. Correct that, she was not a little girl. She was a small, young woman... and he knew her. She looked up at him and her eyes widened with recognition, as well.

“Police,” Frank said flashing his badge as Marc bent down to handcuff the thug.

“I’ll call this in,” Marc said. “Meet Dino Franzoni. You haven’t learned your lesson yet, have you, Dino?”

“I didn’t do nothin,” the young man groaned.

“He don’t know from nothin,” Marc complained good-naturedly. “He never does.”

“You stole my purse, you hoodlum!” the older woman yelled kicking at the man on the sidewalk.

“Ma’am, we will get your statement in a moment,” Frank said turning his attention to the young woman. “We meet again. Why are you threatening him with a lamp?”

“Because he stole her purse,” Posey said.

“Go sit on that bench!” Frank ordered pointing. “You too, ma’am,” he said more gently to the elderly woman.

Posey limped over to the bench.

“Are you hurt?” Frank demanded.

She shook her head as she bent over, giving him a very nice view of a sweet little ass, and retrieved something from the sidewalk. “No, I broke my shoe,” she said showing him the broken heel.

It took twenty minutes to get the details, as few as there were to the incident. A paddy wagon arrived and Dino Franzoni was hustled into the vehicle to be transported to the police station for processing.

“Ma’am, do you need a ride home?” Frank asked the elderly woman.

“No, if you will flag down a cab for me, I will be fine,” Mrs. Galie Zhvikor exclaimed. “You should give this little girl a reward. Thank you, my dear.”

“You are welcome,” Posey said smiling sweetly. “May I go now, too?”

“No, you can’t,” Frank said sternly. “Marc, take my car and go to the station. It’s time for us to go off duty, anyway. Write up your report. I’ll stop in before I go home, read it, and file it before I leave.”

Marc looked at his partner and then to the young woman, and nodded. “Sure, I’ll leave the keys on your desk.”

“Why can’t I go?” Posey asked after his partner walked away and Frank hailed a taxi for the elderly woman.

Frank looked down at his notebook. “Posey Wanamaker. Is that your real name?”

“Yes, I showed the other officer my identification,” Posey said nodding.

Frank gave her a long hard look. “Do you know how much trouble you caused me?”

She shook her head looking at him through gray eyes with little bits of green in them.

“Five days,” Frank growled. “My discharge was delayed five days because I didn’t have any information on you. Where did you learn the fine art of picking a lock on a set of handcuffs?”

“From Nicky Van Deusen, when I was twelve. He wanted to be a magician and we practiced on a set of handcuffs he borrowed from his uncle.” She smiled cheekily. “His uncle was a policeman.”

“You almost caused me to lose my job with the New York City Police Department. Do you have any idea how hard it is to find a position on the police force? With all the M.P.s getting out of the service, police ranks are swamped with applications. I had to delay my starting date by a week. You almost blew it for me!”

“I’m sorry, Sergeant,” Posey said.

“Detective,” he growled.

“Well, Detective, apparently you didn’t lose your job. If you had arrested me and taken me to St. Elizabeth’s, it would have caused me a great deal of trouble.”

“You were sitting in the middle of the Arlington Memorial Bridge!”

“It doesn’t mean I am crazy,” Posey protested. “I like bridges and I’m not afraid of heights. I was sitting there minding my own business.”

“I was following military regulations and protocol,” Frank said.

“I am well aware of military regulations. I find them tedious and often times as stupid as the men who make them,” Posey declared. “Are you going to arrest me?”

“For what?”

“That is what I’m asking you,” Posey hissed in an exasperated whisper.

“Why did you throw the lamp at him?” Frank demanded.

“I told your partner!”

“Tell me!” Frank insisted.

“I heard the woman screaming and saw him crossing the street, it was him. I threw the lamp at him, and it knocked him into the lamppost and he hit his head very hard. I broke my lamp and my shoe.”

“You said it was *him*,” Frank said. “What do you mean?”

Posey looked away. “I crossed the street to get away from him. He pinched me on my... *tokhes*.”

“Your what?” Frank frowned.

Posey rolled her eyes. “On my bottom, all right? Tokhes is Yiddish for butt! He made crude remarks to me and about my...”

“Tokhes,” Frank interrupted her while drawing in a deep breath. “Has anyone ever told you, Posey Wanamaker, that you are a walking disaster? Are you trying to get hurt? You were casually sitting on a dangerous bridge at nearly midnight in an area that, although it might be our Nation’s Capital, is a hotbed of crime! Now, you attack a thug on the streets of New York while he is in the process of a purse snatching! Are you nuts? You are five foot nothing and probably don’t weight a hundred pounds dripping wet. You are a girl!”

“Thank you for the enlightening intelligence report,” Posey snapped as she jumped to her feet. “If you are not arresting me, I am leaving.”

“I’m not through with you, yet!” Frank growled.

“Well, I am through with you,” Posey shouted. She took four high-low steps, bobbing up and down because she was wearing one high heel and carrying a broken one. She bent over to remove the unbroken shoe and roll up her trouser legs, and then yelped.

Detective Frank Ramsey had smacked her across the ass in a stinging whack, and when she turned on him furiously, he picked her and tossed her over his shoulder.

“Oh!” Posey screamed. “Put me down!”

“There is a shoe repair shop across the street,” Frank said as he carted her across traffic amid chuckles and smiles from pedestrians. He carried her into the shop setting her down inside a small booth with a curtain. He took the shoe and heel out of her hands and handed it over to the cobbler to fix.

Posey yanked the curtain closed, but Frank pulled it open again.

“How dare you hit me?” Posey hissed.

“I didn’t hit you, I spanked you and, believe me, one spank does not begin to even the score between us.”

“What do you want, Sergeant?” Posey exclaimed.

“It’s Detective, now, and my name is Frank Ramsey. I don’t know what I want other than to throttle you. If you were my girl, Posey Wanamaker, I would spank that beautiful little *tokhes* of yours until you could not sit for a week. Maybe after that, you might use some common sense.”

“Well, I am not your girl, *Detective* Ramsey,” Posey snapped. “I am not anyone’s girl because I am sick of men and their preoccupation with my ass. It is an ass, and everyone has one! They come in all shapes and sizes. Mine is no different! I do not want anyone pinching, patting, or spanking it! However, I would not at the moment care if you kissed my ass! Now, please get my shoe!”

Frank backed off from her fury. She was like a hissing, angry kitten. Her words, though, had evoked an image of him kissing her very shapely ass. He was sure it was a slip-up from her temper, but he wasn’t opposed to the idea at all. He walked over to the counter to retrieve her shoe, paid the man, turned, and she was gone. Again! Blast it, she had run out on him, *again!* He ran to the door, looked in both directions, but saw no sign of her. He regarded the rush hour traffic with its bumper-to-bumper vehicles. The sidewalks were jammed with people getting off work and rushing toward the subway. He shook his head in exasperation. Well, at least, he would be able to get her address from Marc’s report.

* * *

Posey had jumped into a taxi and ducked down low in the backseat. Her face was bright red from embarrassment. She had gone off on a verbal tangent about her ass, and when Frank walked off, she realized the person in the next booth was a nun. *A nun!* A black-habited, white-coiffed, crucifix-wearing nun! If there was a hell, she was going to rot there for a very long time for being so disrespectful!

“Miss, are you okay?” the taxi driver asked looking over his shoulder at her in the back seat.

“I am fine,” Posey said, swiping at tears. “I have had a really awful afternoon.”

“We all have them,” he agreed. “Here, we will be a while in this traffic.”

Posey took the offered Tootsie Pop and smiled at the driver. She unwrapped the lollipop and stuck it in her mouth. “Thank you.”

This was her life. People either treated her as if she were a sex kitten in training, an idiot because she was female and blonde, or a child. For the duration of the taxi ride, she would settle for being a child and enjoy her Tootsie Pop.

Frank Ramsey did not see her as a woman, for sure. Not that she wanted him to see her that way. He was an unusually good-looking man, though. He had all the requisite parts and they fit together perfectly. He was tall, well over six feet, and his hair had grown a bit from the last time she had seen him as an M.P. He filled out his suit as nicely as he had his uniform. He wasn't blond, but he looked a little bit like Steve Trevor from her secret stash of comic books.

Posey daydreamed all the way home. She did not even notice when several people stared at her as she walked across the lobby in her bare feet. She was still deep in her daydream. Sometimes she really did wish she were six feet tall and built like Princess Diana of Themyscira. She would not mind taking a turn at being Wonder Woman.