

Brent Yamamoto

**Mrs
Johnson**

paperbytes

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Mrs Johnson

SKIP WAS ALARMED he had put on so much weight during the Christmas holiday. Three, maybe even four pounds too many. He didn't understand how something like that could happen to him. He didn't drink; he didn't eat a single potato chip, cashew nut or bit of cheese, of which there was plenty available. He politely refused the cup of egg nog, waved his hand at the candied yams, skipped out on the mashed potatoes and corn bread and the thick and spicy sausage dressing, as well as the home-made bacon and cheddar perogies with fresh sour cream and the sweet relishes his grandma brought over. He wouldn't touch a single chocolate, apple strudel or piece of mincemeat pie. Instead his plate was covered with a pile of salad, some cooked carrots and peas without any butter added, and of the

turkey he sampled, no skin, only white meat and not a drop of gravy.

“It’s winter weight,” Skip’s mom said in a singsong voice when he complained what was happening to him. “Happens to everybody. Nothing to worry about, dear.”

Skip’s dad sat at the head of the table, eating skin on a bun with cranberry sauce dipped in gravy, wondering what the hell kind of kid he had raised here.

Skip had maintained his exercise program, five times a week at the gym, an hour with the weights plus another hour on the stationary bike or treadmill; he swam at the university and did aerobics three times a week. Yet there he was with four extra pounds. Four pounds? It might not have sounded like much, normal weight fluctuation, but it was the difference between having a sleek, feline body and being a fat, bloated whale.

“Pass the gravy,” Uncle Henry said.

“Oh, oh,” Skip’s mom said, jumping up from the table. “There’s

more. I'll fill the bowl again." She disappeared into the kitchen.

The whole family was gathered in the living room, aunts, uncles, grandparents, sitting on kitchen chairs, cushioned chairs, borrowed chairs and stools, around a long table stored in the basement for just such occasions covered with a white table cloth and all the food in the world. The nephews and nieces had their own special table, eating quietly and viciously, little rings of happy grease forming around their mouths. Could a person gain weight simply by watching others eat and enjoy themselves, fat gained through osmosis?

Skip was six foot one, a hundred and seventy pounds. Make that a hundred a seventy-four pounds, weighed on his scale at home, with no clothes on, in the morning before he ate anything, so it was definitely accurate. He was blond. He had a tan in the middle of winter and a handsome face, though his cheeks and eyes looked somewhat hollow, sunken almost.

"Mommy," a fat little kid said.

“What is it, honey? Do you want some more turkey and gravy?”

“Uh huh.”

“Skip, could you, please?”

Skip, who was twenty-four, was the oldest at the table by ten years, the youngest of four brothers and sisters, and since he didn't have a wife or steady girlfriend, had to sit at the kid's table, his knees stuffed into his stomach, his fat, pathetic stomach; he tossed some turkey and gravy onto the fat kid's, whatever his name was, they were all kind of fat, plate.

“What do you say, Marcus?” Skip's older sister said.

“Thank you, Uncle Skip. Aren't you having any?” He drank purple stuff out of a plastic cup.

“No. I'm on a diet.”

“What's a diet?”

Something Skip had been on for as long as he could remember. It wasn't for weight loss, some fad thing, eat all the grapefruit you want,

eat only things that begin with the letter A. It was a healthy eating regimen, high protein, low fat, health shakes. Six meals a day, he counted calories, weighed things on a scale. He didn't deny himself though. Once a week he was allowed half of a fast food hamburger, plain, no mayonnaise or fries; either that or a single slice of pizza with low-fat cheese, quite tasty, as long as he didn't eat anything else the rest of the day.

"It don't make any sense, that's all I'm saying. It's Christmas. He can't go off his diet for one lousy day instead of making us all feel self-conscious about what we eat?"

"No one is making you feel like anything, Marvin. Have some more carrots and peas."

"Not on Christmas, thank you very much. Not when there's all this other good stuff to eat. I'm not too proud to enjoy myself a little. I eat vegetables every other day of the year." A little less than true. "Give it to the diet boy, assuming it's not too fattening for him. All

this good food and he won't touch it. Think of all them starving kids in the world. Bet you a dime to a dollar they wouldn't turn their noses up at what we have."

"I'm sure it will all get eaten up."

Four pounds? Skip was puzzled how he could have gained so much extra weight. It was a real conundrum that confused Skip greatly.

"You put on another great meal, Marie."

There were murmurs around the table of agreement.

"You hear that, Skip? Your mother slaved away all day in the kitchen to prepare this meal for us and you won't even touch it. Aren't you ashamed?"

"Oh, Marvin, leave him alone. He has to watch what he eats."

"What does he want to be, a movie star? If he was in training for something that would be different; a man who eats lots works hard, knows the value of a hard-earned meal. In my day you judged a man

by how hard he sweated, not whether he looked fat, if his hips were too wide. La de da.”

“Skip does work hard, you know that. But times change. There are lots of jobs where a nice appearance matters.”

“Not for my money, thank you very much”

Skip bet it was that cookie he ate last night when he came over to open presents that was the cause of so much worry and concern. It was home-made shortbread and he felt awful about it, about himself, no self-control, but he couldn't help himself, his mom waving underneath his nose that tray filled with butter tarts, lemon squares, Christmas cake.

“Nothing wrong with a little fat around the middle. Shows you're healthy. Time was when only women were concerned about their appearance and that was to attract the boys, not because she was concerned about some career. Now it's all these diets and crazy exercise programs and plastic surgery. Taking fat out of legs and sticking

it in their lips. The whole world is nuts.”

Skip was so relieved. It was frightening to think one cookie could cause so much damage but now that he knew he could take the necessary precautions to make sure something like that never happened again. He needed to be vigilant.

“People want to stay young. It’s vanity, all it is. God made you a certain way, accept it. You want to lose weight, go chop some wood or cut the lawn, that’ll fix you right up. Time was when women knew how to look after their figure without jogging till they threw up, starving themselves to death. Men too.”

Like the rest of the meal, his parents’ conversation was for public consumption. It was nothing Skip hadn’t heard before, that morning for instance when he came over – only then it was his mom who told him he was too skinny, he should eat more, have a piece of pie. When he was young he used to be overweight and then all he heard from her was that he shouldn’t eat so much; then she would make him

potato pancakes and hug him and say it didn't matter that he was fat, that just meant there was more of him for her to love. She never seemed quite sure whether he should eat or not, only that she should be the one to decide.

“Who the hell ever heard of paying someone to tell you to do another push-up anyway?”

Skip was a personal trainer; he got paid for telling people to do another push-up.

“Waste of money, that's what it is.”

Skip wiped his mouth with his napkin. He got up from the table and went to the bathroom, something he normally did after every meal at home. He was done, fed up to there.

THE GYM WAS CLOSED Boxing Day so Skip went for a ten-mile jog in the snow, then hurried home to weigh himself. Still two pounds too many, but he had on a full set of clothes; plus he had eaten

already, an apple and a bowl of wheat germ with no-fat milk, plus his vitamins and other supplements.

Skip was at the gym first thing the next morning. The gym was packed. People were getting an early start on their New Year's resolutions; either that or a very late start on last year. Running, stepping, pumping, surrounded by mirrors and posters of skinny women doing interesting poses in bikinis; one was an ad for jeans though it appeared that her jeans were in the wash and all she had to wear were her panties. Wasn't that always the way? There was loud music playing, an equal mix between men and women, some old, mostly young, some in excellent shape, most nowhere near.

Skip had several clients he worked with every week, a couple here at the gym, most in their own homes. He did one-time, hour-long sessions for fifty dollars a pop where he took the person around to teach them a basic program and how to use the machines. It was pretty expensive but he found it to be quite popular, probably

because they would never have to actually do it again. It was worth the extra cost. Each regular session cost thirty dollars per hour.

Skip was done his cardiovascular workout and he started on the lat pull-down machine. He planned to finish later with five hundred sit-ups to get rid of his flabby gut. He had on a black muscle shirt and bicycle pants – not the biggest guy in the gym by any means. He didn't want muscle mass. He used Creatine, not Andro, the steroid so popular people pretended it wasn't a steroid. It was a health supplement. Skip wanted lean muscle, important to look fit, not turn off potential customers by looking like a big freak of nature.

“Hiya, Skip.”

“Hi, Kiwi. How was your Christmas?”

“Great. And yours?”

“Great.”

Kiwi was a regular down at the gym; she had her own step aerobic program that Skip sometimes joined. It was an advanced program

and she really knew her stuff. She always had so much energy – a lawyer with two kids, though you could never tell by looking at her; as soon as they popped out, her stomach had snapped back into place like an elastic band. She had on a pair of black spandex shorts that immediately ran up her powerful thigh as soon as she took a step. She had a towel around her neck and drank bottled water and sweated.

“What are you working today?” Skip asked.

“My legs and my butt. What about you?”

“Back and shoulders.”

“Want a spot?”

“Sure. That would be great.” He set the weight at a hundred and thirty pounds, not too much: low weight, high repetition. He needed help on the fifteenth rep; she stood behind him and told him to go hard, pull hard.

“Thanks,” Skip said, as he eased the weight back down and stood

up to stretch. It was important to stretch after each exercise. “That was a great spot.”

“Mind if I work in? I could use the back work as well.”

She kept the same weight and started pulling down, one after the other, like a piston working. She needed help on number ten and it was his turn to yell at her to pull hard.

“Thank you,” Kiwi said. “That was a terrific spot.”

“You’re in terrific shape,” Skip said.

“I’m down to four percent body fat,” she said happily. “Here, squeeze my leg.” She took his hand and put it on the back of her thigh; he gave it a squeeze and ran it up and down once or twice to be polite. “I’m on a pure protein diet. Pretty solid, huh?”

“Rock solid.”

“You’re in pretty good shape too, Skip, though it looks like you might be packing on a couple of extra pounds.” Still wearing a pair of lifting gloves, she patted his stomach .

Damn that cookie anyway – why did he have to be such a pig? What could have possessed him? “Would you like a cookie, dear? One won’t hurt you, fresh out of the oven. Don’t they smell nice?” What vile trickery. Skip’s mom knew she couldn’t come right out and tell him to eat. If anything, that made him more determined not to. She resorted to covert tactics, subterfuge. Cookies.

A couple of huge guys in muscle shirts walked by on their way to lift heavy things over their heads. Kiwi turned her head sideways to catch a good glimpse.

“Wouldn’t mind letting them bench press me.”

Skip sniffed the air, taking a look himself. “Not bad lats, but their butts are weak. Typical, most guys spend their time working their upper bodies and end up with sticks for legs.” Kiwi looked at him oddly. “Women are opposite. Look at Vonda on the stair climber. She’s got a nice ass but someone should tell her to do something about those spaghetti arms of hers.”

Kiwi laughed. “I thought women were the only ones who noticed things like that.”

HOW TIMES HAD changed. When Skip first started going to the gym, he enjoyed looking at all the women. He hardly gave any thought to his own appearance; now he found himself looking in the mirror more and more, not simply to check his form during exercise but because he realized women also came to check out the guys. His appearance was under scrutiny.

Skip found himself looking at other guys as well, not in any sexual way, but in order to look for tiny flaws in them, to see which parts needed to be worked on; he was surprised how disappointed he was if he didn't see anything wrong, how he would magnify even the tiniest of defects, even going so far that if nothing was wrong with their bodies, to start attacking their faces, how they looked, or even the clothes they wore. He heard other guys talk as well, any guy who was

bigger than them they would say he must be on the roids; though Skip never said that about anyone, even those who were obviously on them, he would get a secret thrill hearing others say it out loud. He had even stopped just looking at the women for the fun of it, finding fault in them as well. Kiwi, for instance, needed work on her inner thighs, but then, who didn't?

“There's a fitness pageant in Calgary next month,” Kiwi said. “We should head up together.”

“Sure. Sounds terrific.”

It was Skip's lifelong goal to enter a fitness pageant, designed to show strength, flexibility and most of all good health, through gymnastics, aerobic talent and dance, all set to music and in front of hundreds of screaming fans. Calgary was the regional competition and if you won, you got an invitation to the Canadian championship in Toronto, and if you placed first or second there, you were on your way to California for the world championship, which was where he really wanted to be, dare

he dream it. Long gone were the days of muscle-bound guys standing around doing poses, or women in beauty contests wearing bathing suits and sashes, which were so ancient – this was about genuine human fitness. The women’s competition did have a bathing suit portion worth fifty percent of the total mark.

“Oh, by the way, Skip, my mom is looking for a personal trainer. Would you be interested?”

“Sure.”

“She’s in pretty good shape though her chest needs some help. I told her she should work out with me but I guess she would rather do it at home. I told her I knew you and she said that sounded fine. I can call and set it up if you’re not too busy.”

“Sure.”

Skip took a shower and got dressed in the change room. He gelled, he moussed, he deodorized himself. He was perfumed. Personal

hygiene was very important to Skip.

Skip spent several minutes looking at himself in the mirror. He sucked in his cheeks and pouted his lips. A couple of guys walked by with towels wrapped around their tiny waists and gave him strange looks; Skip knew they did the same thing when no one was looking. Besides, it wasn't to see how handsome he was; it was a search for defects of which there were plenty in his mind. For instance, his chin wasn't square enough, and a nose job wouldn't have hurt him in the least. What he really needed was a whole face lift; he was only twenty-four but you could never start too early. He thought about getting a penile implant; as he took a shower, he happened to glance around. He wasn't bad, definitely in the top ten percentile, but still, every little bit helped.

Skip weighed himself on the change room scale. One seventy three? Oh, no. But he had just showered, had sweats and a sweater on, and was pumped up from his workout. Besides, he never really

trusted that scale anyway.

Skip ate part of an apple. Then he met up with Kiwi who told him her mom could hardly wait to meet him. She gave him the address and said he was expected for one o'clock. It was short notice, but once her mom got something into her head, nothing could stop her. Like mother, like daughter.

SKIP PARKED IN front of a split-level with a large, frosted window. One o'clock, on a brisk, blue-sky day. Skip grabbed his gym bag and went up to the front door. A note told him to come around back. He had never met Kiwi's mom, though Kiwi said she was in her mid-forties and told everyone she was still in her thirties and could pull it off. Kiwi's father was a lawyer.

Skip rang the back doorbell. The door half opened and out came the sound of a voice trailing away, "Come on in. I'm almost ready."

Skip went in and closed the door. He didn't see anyone but caught

the drift of exotic perfume. He found it odd that she should open the door without asking who it was, but guessed she was expecting him. He took off his winter coat and boots.

“Hello?” he called.

“I’m downstairs. Come on down. I’m ready for you now.”

Skip had never been there before and it took a moment to orient himself. He came down the stairs holding the oak railing.

The first thing that greeted him was her ass. She was bent over at the waist, legs spread better than shoulder width apart and ram rod straight, her hands running up and down the back. She was doing hamstring stretches. She had on black stretch pants that were stretched to maximum. She looked up at him from between her legs, her face upside down. She seemed to have excellent flexibility, though Skip couldn’t help thinking her ass looked almost identical to Kiwi’s, not quite as firm or durable, but sort of apple shaped and maybe just a tinge thinner. Like mother, like daughter.

“You must be Skip.”

Skip let go of the railing, leaving a noticeable sweat print behind. It was hot down there.

“Kiwi said you were looking for a personal trainer.”

She laughed. “I’m in such terrible shape, aren’t I? You caught me trying to stretch before you came.” She straightened her back, then arched it, raising her hands over head. She didn’t turn around but Skip could see her face in the mirror. Actually the whole room was mirrored. None on the ceiling. Half of that floor, which was very sizeable, looked to have been transformed into a personal gym full of exercise equipment, a treadmill, Life Cycle, step machine, free weights, stretching mats, an ab machine. There was a poster hanging of a tanned man picking flowers in his bikini briefs; it was for men’s cologne. On the other side of the room was a wet bar and a pool table with blue felt, along with a large screen TV and sectional sofa. Soft instrumental music played on the stereo, a speaker in each corner. The whole room

must have cost a fortune to decorate.

“As you can see, Skip. I come fully equipped.”

Skip nodded his head, looking around.

“Mr. Johnson bought it all for me. He’s a lawyer. He isn’t home. He’s never home. In fact no one is home. It’s just us. We have all afternoon.”

She turned and faced him. Her front side looked a lot like Kiwi as well. About the same height and weight, though Kiwi had better muscle tone. Her black stretch pants only covered the bottom half. Up top she had on a black spandex sports bra. Her mid-section was bare. She had not-bad abs, though softer than Kiwi’s. Her chest also seemed smaller than Kiwi’s but more natural somehow. She had short chestnut hair that Skip imagined Kiwi also had when hers wasn’t coloured yellow. They both had deep-blue eyes. Skip could see how she might pass for someone in her thirties and wondered why she needed a personal trainer. She looked in pretty good shape already.

“We can take as long as you need, Mrs Johnson.”

Mrs Johnson smiled. She said, her voice deeper, more throaty than Kiwi’s, “Call me Heather.” Her name was Heather. “I’m afraid I’ve lost my motivation. I need someone to keep me going, force me even if I don’t want to. I think a man is especially good at forcing a woman. Or maybe it’s the other way around.”

Skip smiled and nodded his head, no idea what she was getting at; he opened up his gym bag and put on a pair of sneakers. She watched him, licking her lips.

“Can I get you something to drink, Skip?”

“No, thank you, Mrs Johnson.”

“Scotch, perhaps.”

Skip raised his eyes to that. “I’m sorry, Mrs Johnson. I don’t drink. You shouldn’t either, at least while we’re exercising; alcohol can dehydrate the body.”

“I see. We’ll have to go slow then, won’t we?” She went behind the

bar and fixed herself a vodka and cranberry juice in the spirit of Christmas. “So tell me, Skip, have you been doing this long? Training people, I mean.”

“Almost four years now.”

“And do you like what you do?”

Skip nodded his head. So many opportunities available. Work with the physically challenged, the elderly. Earn a degree in physiotherapy. Get on with a pro sport’s team as a trainer. Go to Hollywood as a trainer to the stars, if not a movie star himself (Brad Pitt was a personal favourite, someone people said he looked like on more than one occasion). Write his own fitness book, make a video, design his own athletic apparel and equipment. Modelling, if he got that nose job; it was a tough life, always working out and worried about diet, but people could make a good living at it, if you were one of the top ones; fitness magazines were always looking for new models. The whole world was open to him. A man in control of his weight was in

control of his life.

“I hope you don’t mind my asking, but I like to know who exactly I’m entrusting my body to.”

Skip didn’t mind talking about his body at all; he found it a great way to get to know people. He said he had been working out since the age of sixteen; then it was for high school baseball, but after he hurt his knee he took it up full time. Training wise, he had several long-term clients. It was a competitive field, but a good personal trainer was hard to find. Most knew the different exercises, but the real quality came in the one-on-one relationship. That was why he tailored the workout to each person’s needs and desires, to make sure they got the results they wanted. He had a certificate in personal training. Plus a course in CPR and first aid.

“CPR?” Mrs Johnson said. “Well, I hope it won’t come to that. You certainly sound like what I’m looking for, Skip. Tell me, what do you think about Y2K?”

Skip was taken aback by the question. “I’m sorry, Mrs Johnson. I don’t do steroids.”

She laughed out loud. “You’re definitely what I’m looking for. And here I thought only a woman could be an airhead; nice to see times have changed. A new breed.”

Skip wasn’t sure what she meant. She certainly didn’t seem like an airhead. She seemed to know exactly what she wanted, though what exactly she wanted he didn’t know.

“Are you sure you won’t have a drink before we get started?”

“No, thank you, Mrs Johnson.”

“Call me Heather. That’s right, you don’t drink. What about something to eat then? There’s leftover turkey in the kitchen. I could make you a hot turkey sandwich with gravy and stuffing.”

She sounded like his mom: eat, eat. She didn’t look like her much, though.

“What about some banana cream pie?” Mrs Johnson said. “Or

chocolate. We have tons of chocolate around the house.”

Skip shook his head. He’d already had lunch. An apple.

“I know something you won’t be able to resist.” She reached under the bar and brought out a large tray filled with Christmas pastry, mincemeat tarts, lemon cups, Christmas cake, and cookies, all kinds of shortbread cookies in different sizes and shapes. She waved the tray under his nose. “Are you sure you wouldn’t like one of these?”

Skip swallowed and shook his head. He must resist the temptation. Be in control of his passion, not the other way around. Self-discipline was his greatest strength.

“Don’t drink, don’t eat. What do you do?” She glanced at the poster of the man picking flowers, then at Skip wearing all his clothes. “I suppose we should get started. We have a long ways to go. Tell me, Skip, which parts of my body need the most help? I bet you know my body better than I know it myself. I bet you know everything there is to know about the human body. Which parts of me need help and which are

okay by themselves?” She turned slowly around in front of him. “I’m in your hands.”

Skip suggested her back, since it looked a little flabby. He didn’t ask if she needed to stretch first; he had already seen her. He grabbed a bench and a twenty-pound free weight, resting his right hand and right leg on the bench, his left foot firmly planted on the floor. He lifted the weight with his left hand up to his side, then down again. He looked like a person sawing wood.

Mrs Johnson put her hand on the side of his back. “Do you mind? Yes, I can really feel the muscle work.” Skip lowered the weight and suggested she try now.

She shook her head. “You better show me again to make sure I got it. But not with that weight. That’s much too light for you. Why don’t you try one of the heavier ones? I bet you can do three times as much.”

Sure he could. Skip grabbed a sixty-pound weight and started lifting. Mrs Johnson moved towards the back of the bench; she said she

wanted to get a good look from all angles. She stopped at the end of the bench, sipping her drink. He was wearing tight sweat pants. She came up to the front of the bench, standing right where his head was.

“Mrs Johnson?”

“Heather.”

He gasped.

“Keep going. I’ve almost seen enough.” She moved around the side of the bench and ran her hand up the back of his right leg. Skip dropped the weight and stood up straight, his breath heavy.

“It’s your turn now.”

“Oh, but don’t you want to do your other side first? I would hate to think only half of you is pumped up. I insist. You better so I can see both sides.”

Skip changed positions and did his other side, then stood up exhausted. He had already gotten his workout for the day.

“That was excellent, Skip. You’re sweating already.”

“It’s hot down here,” Skip panted.

“That’s because you’re wearing all those heavy clothes. Why don’t you take your sweater off?”

“Mrs Johnson?”

“When I touched your back, I felt a muscle shirt underneath. Go ahead, I want you to be comfortable.”

Skip felt he had no choice but to take off his sweater. He had on a grey muscle shirt, the sweat glistening around his chest. Mrs Johnson sipped her drink and made no attempt to hide that she was staring at his shoulders and arms.

“It’s your turn now, Mrs Johnson.”

“I’m sorry, Skip. I really don’t feel like working my back today. It feels a little stiff. But thank you for showing me. You gave me a lot of good pointers.”

Skip asked which part of her body she wanted to work then. She suggested her legs. Skip asked if she was sure.

“Don’t you think I need help with my legs? Aren’t you sweet; here, you better make sure for yourself.” She grabbed his hand and stuck it on the back of her thigh, just below her butt. She ran it up and down, holding him. “What do you think? Squeeze it. Is it as tight as Kiwi?”

“Mrs Johnson? I never touched Kiwi.”

“Really? When she called she said you did this morning at the gym. I thought I would see how I compare. I want to have as strong legs as hers. Do you think I might?”

Skip pulled his hand away. “If you do the proper exercises.”

They went over to the personal gym. Skip suggested the leg curl for working the back of the leg. Done on a bench with a slightly angled middle in order to protect the back. Basically, you lay on your stomach with your calves underneath a padded cushion. Your hands were free to grip the handles on the side of the bench. And then, like a bicep curl, you curled the back of your legs up until the top of the padded cushion hit your butt, using a stack of weights attached to a

pulley for resistance.

“This sounds exciting already,” Mrs Johnson said. “Get on and show me how.”

Skip looked at the machine; in a second his butt was going to be sticking straight up and his hands no good. He looked at Mrs Johnson who smiled at him. She licked her lips. Skip didn’t know why but he felt slightly alarmed.

“You know another great exercise is the leg extension,” Skip said. “It’s good for the inner part of the thigh.” Skip sat down on the cushioned seat, raised at a slight angle. He slipped his feet under the padded cushion, holding the side grips, and in the exact opposite motion to the leg curl, extended his legs forward without locking the knees. He didn’t use much weight and was able to hold his legs out in order to show what muscles were worked. He pointed to the middle and inner part of the thigh. Mrs Johnson ran her hand up the inside of his thigh.

“Is your whole body this hard?” Skip immediately dropped the weight with a clank. He was about to get up when she pushed him back down. “Show me again. And use more weight this time. I’ll be right back, I need another drink.” Skip increased the weight and did as he was told, his legs turning to marshmallow. She came back with a tart. “Sure you don’t want one?”

Skip grunted no; she breathed in his face: mincemeat smell mixed with vodka. “Look at you, you’re still sweating. You better take off your sweat pants next.”

“Mrs Johnson?”

“Don’t be modest. Men have been trying to get into my pants all my life. You’re wearing shorts underneath, aren’t you? Then what’s the problem?”

“If you could just turn the heat down a little. Please.”

Mrs Johnson shook her head. “It won’t help. I need to see what muscle is worked so I’ll know what to feel as well. Don’t be such a

tease. Isn't that what the boys always say?"

Skip took his sweat pants off, bicycle shorts underneath; she glanced at her poster for comparison.

"Good, Skip. We're half way there. What exercise now?"

"Don't you want to try the leg extension first?"

"Maybe later. Let's try this one? It looks interesting."

It was the pec deck where you sat upright with your back straight and your arms at a ninety degree angle and behind two padded cushions, which you squeezed together towards the centre. Great for the inside of the chest. She set the weight at maximum; Skip sat down and started working his chest, growing exhausted. He smelled smoke. He dropped the weight with a clank.

"What are you doing, Mrs Johnson?"

She was sitting comfortably smoking a cigarette. "Just taking a little break."

Skip coughed. "Smoking is terrible for you."

“I know, but sometimes I can’t help myself.”

“Look, Mrs Johnson, if you’re not serious about this, then maybe I better just go.”

“All right, Skip, you win,” she said. She took one more puff and put her cigarette out. “I want to make sure you can crack the whip when I get out of line. I think a man is especially good at cracking the whip. I wonder if I am?”

Skip was silent as she came over.

“All right, Skip. I’m all yours.”

“Okay, but no more fooling around; let’s do some squats, okay?”

“Whatever you say, Skip.”

They went over to the squat rack and she immediately hoisted a forty-five pound weight onto the forty-five pound bar. Skip was a little surprised but followed suit. Then she grabbed another one and stuck it on.

“Isn’t this a little too much weight for you to start out?”

“It’s not for me. It’s for you.”

“I thought we were going to stop fooling around.”

“I have, darling. But you can’t expect me to do this without watching you. Is this enough or do you want another plate?”

“No,” Skip said. He put the second plate on his end. “That’s plenty. But after this you’re going to do a set, all right?”

“Whatever you say, darling.”

He did several repetitions with her behind him, hands on his waist, as a spot. He lowered the weight back down on the rack; she grabbed his muscle shirt and yanked it over his head. He spun around, his arm crossed over his bare breast.

“What are you doing?”

“I’m interested in working out my abs.”

“What does that have to do with taking off my shirt?”

“I want to see what yours look like so I know what to aim for. I guess that’s what they call a six pack, isn’t it? You have an excellent body, Skip.”

He felt naked and fat. "I've put on weight."

"You look fine to me."

"Really, I'm fat."

She laughed. "You're fat? I thought women were the only ones forced to worry about that sort of thing. Of course we don't anymore. It's about time men stopped patting themselves on the stomach and calling it love handles. It's pie. Men should take care of their appearance. What else are they good for?" She laughed. "That's sounds familiar though opposite for some reason."

"Are you making fun of me, Mrs Johnson?"

She laughed again. "Oh, I thought you asked if I was trying to seduce you. Of course I'm not making fun of you, Skip." She grabbed a towel and touched his glistening chest. "You better wipe down before you catch cold. Do you find me attractive, Skip?"

"Of course. You're very attractive."

"Even though I'm old enough to be your mother?"

“You’re not old. You look terrific.”

She continued wiping him, almost like a mom would only it didn’t feel anything like a mom doing it. “We better get back to work. Have you had enough rest?” She put a twenty-five pound weight on her end of the bar. Skip did the same – no other choice. He got back in the rack.

“Aren’t you going to do any exercise today, Mrs Johnson?”

She smiled at his near-naked body. “That’s funny, I thought I was exercising. Feel the burn. Let’s go, Skip, I want ten more out of you, no cheating.” He did ten, then two more, as she forced him to keep going, making him push the weight up himself.

“That was excellent, Skip. You’re so strong.”

He didn’t feel strong. In fact his legs felt like complete rubber. He tried to reach out and grab the rack but instead he collapsed onto the floor. Perhaps it was the fact that he had worked out already, or the fact that all he had eaten was an apple, or that she had pushed him so hard, but he passed out

SKIP WOKE LATER with his head on her lap. She looked down at him with concern.

“What, what happened?”

“You fainted. Must have been exhaustion.”

He tried to stand up but couldn't. His feet were shackled to the personal gym with leather straps. He tried to get them free but he couldn't move his legs.

“Mrs Robinson.”

“Mrs Robinson?”

“I mean Mrs Johnson.”

“Call me Heather.”

“What's going on? Let me go.”

“Take it easy, Skip. I have a little confession to make. I don't feel like working out today. In fact, I hate exercise.”

“Then why did you ask me over?”

“I like to be in control, Skip. The stronger I can control the better.

Is that like a man? No, maybe not, but close.” She thought for a moment, then smiled down at him. “Tell me, Skip, what should we do now?”

“Let me go. Please.”

“I think it’s much nicer to just lie here. I keep wondering what a man would do if he had a woman in the position you’re in. It’s happened plenty I’m sure. Of course I’m not a man. I’m a woman. Do you know what I want to do?”

“What? Let me go.”

“Eat cookies.”

“What? Help.”

She had the tray filled with pasty and cookies sitting next to them on the floor. She ate a tart. “Mmm, it tastes so good.” She held up another. “Do you want one, Skip?”

“No.”

She set the tart down: so many possibilities. “What about this

then?” Skip looked up. It was a shortbread cookie shaped like a little bell. His eyes filled with fear. “Now open wide.”

“No, please” She popped the cookie into his mouth. “No.” He kicked against the straps but he was fastened tight. She held him, as his body finally gave into hers, released and relaxed. His eyes dilated as the cookie taste filled his mouth. “It’s so good,” he moaned. “It tastes so good.”

“Do you want another?”

“No, I”

“You know you want it. Isn’t that what boys always say to girls?” She popped another into his mouth. He moaned again, chewing and licking his lips. It tasted so good. He had denied himself for so long, in every possible way. He swallowed, unable to control himself any longer. “That’s a good boy. Would you like another?”

He nodded his head up and down on her lap.

She held the cookie over his mouth. “What do you say?”

“Please.”

She smiled. “All right, open wide.”

He opened his mouth as wide as he could and she lowered the cookie excruciatingly slowly, teasing him with it before placing it on his waiting tongue. “Now what do you say?”

“Thank you, Mrs Johnson.”

“Heather.”

He swallowed and opened his mouth wide again.

“No, Skip, that’s enough.”

“Please.”

“You’re sure? I don’t want to do anything against your will.”

Skip opened his mouth.

“All right, Skip. Anything to please my baby boy.”

He moaned, “Heather.”

She gave him more. Lots more. There was nothing wrong with it; after all, they were both consenting adults. She fed him all afternoon.

Cookies, all the cookies she had, and when she ran out, she moved on to other things.

About the Author

BRENT YAMAMOTO was born in Regina, Saskatchewan. He now lives in Lethbridge, Alberta. He has a B.A. in English from the University of Lethbridge.

