

The Gospel According to Teeny

by Gita M. Smith

Teeny's granny and mama ganged up on her and forced her to go to Vacation Bible School for two weeks.

The fourteen days dragged on, and to amuse myself I read three Nancy Drew books and a whole chapter out of my parents' Kinsey Report, which was something I was only supposed to do when Teeny was with me. We'd made a pact. It was the part about the Trobriand Islanders and men sneaking into women's huts at night to have sex.

I rode my bike around and spied on Mr. Jimmy Bigshot MacLean picking his nose in his Pontiac, but it wasn't the same without Teeny. I asked my Mom if Teeny would come home a changed person, all sanctified and such. She just laughed.

"From my experience, she'll come home with a whole new vocabulary of swear words and information about body parts," she said.

I was waiting outside Teeny's door with her favorite, an Almond Joy bar, when the yellow bus pulled up. I wanted to run and hug her, but Teeny was hinky about displays of affection. You had to punch her on the arm to show you liked her.

Sure enough, when she rolled her suitcase up the sidewalk, she grabbed the chocolate bar out of my bicycle basket and plopped down on the stoop beside me without a word.

"So how bad was it?" I finally asked.

"I got saved," she said, folding the candy wrapper neatly. She used to throw them on the grass.

"Saved how?" I said.

Her eyes got a far-away look and she lifted her head up, like she was checking for rain clouds.

"Baby Jesus told me I've been living a life of sin," she said, in a whispery voice. "I learned that God loves me, and I memorized the *whole* Book of Matthew."

I just sat there, afraid to move, almost not breathing. I would never memorize the whole book of anything. My best friend had undergone a brain transplant. My body hurt, like I was in the middle of a long race where you get a stitch in your side, and you're not sure if you want to go on.

Then I heard it -- a sound like an oboe being strangled. Teeny was farting onto the cement stoop through her jeans, a tripple flutter blast.

"GOTCHA, GOTCHA GOOD!!" she crowed.

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaahahahahaha!"

She jumped up and high-stepped like a chicken with her bent arms flapping.

I jumped up too.

"Baa-kaawww! *BA-KAWWW!*" we squawked, punching each other and stomping on the lawn.

"Hey," I said, "I gotta tell you about the new stuff I found in the Kinsey Report. Wanna?"

"You better," she said, "or I'll kick your dick in the dirt!"

That was a new one on me. I guess she learned it at Vacation Bible School. I couldn't wait to hear what else she'd learned

