

Jammie remains still, as if in a trance,
~~though~~ ~~her~~ blistered face looks like a blistered peach.
She nudges the loose tooth with her tongue & glances at
Cammie.

Get into Cammie's head - how she would think about her own look
now - - transfer to daughter - - later behind belief that she looks rich - remember
keep original idea of moving to cornerville so child can still *Brook's work*
compete in little miss contests--husband has to drive to valdosta
every day where he works as a cpa--cammie has told tammie not to tell
about the other contests, not to give away her trade secrets

notes from dateline: partners, mother and daughter, diamond cluster
earrings, strapless gowns and swimsuits, tap shoes, french twists,
Texas blue and white outfit, crinolines, glamour, hair pinned back,
fluffed eyes rotating with heat, slow slow

check spelling of chanel's name - change Cammie's name
✓ CHAWELL

cammie is an outsider come to cornerville

F7 Tammie (may)

Little Big Girls

It's a real come-down, if you ask Cammie Lawson, to have to move *back*
to this hick town and enroll her daughter Tammie in this hick school,
just so she can compete in another Little Miss contest. No talent, no
swimsuit or personality competition, just evening wear in the one *pageant dresses*
coming up tonight. But that's the way of it: 1996's Little Miss
Valdosta, and 1995's Little Miss Sweet Potato Princess, is now too
old--old! at seven!--to compete on the Little Miss circuit. By moving *[scribble]*
to Cornerville, where the school board will permit Tammie to be held

back in first grade--emotional immaturity, Cammie claims--Cammie is delaying Tammie having to compete in the Junior Miss category ~~another year~~ ^{in which} where the older you are, the better you do.

Of course, the same is true for the Little Miss category; Cammie figured that out from watching Tammie progress year after year from ^{sweet precious} baby cute to sophisticated. Not that the Swanooshee County Little Miss contest calls for sophistication. Quite the opposite.

Cammie's eyes light on Tammie's fair doll face in the beauty shop mirror, those white-lashed blue eyes, without mascara. She is ^{SP} tonguing a loose front tooth, and Cammie wags her head for her to stop. (smells, etc)

Chanell, the beautician in Cornerville, ^{is winding Tammie's sleek blonde hair on pink curlers,} ~~is~~ dark, busty and loud in faded blue jeans and a white sweatshirt, in perfect contrast to bony, blonde Cammie in the north ^{section} of the wall mirror. ~~Chanell is winding Tammie's hair on pink rollers.~~ "Sugar, I don't know who that tooth's bothering more," ^{Chanell} she says to ^{smallest of Alex} ~~smallest~~ person in the mirror, "you or your mama." She always talks to her customers' images in the mirror, and now she is talking to the mother through the daughter, as if she can get away with such jabs if she doesn't look you straight in the eye.

Cammie laughs and sits on a wooden stool before the ^{only} ~~only~~ window ^{in the narrow room.} She is used to comments like that: from her husband, Wendall, a CPA, who never stops bellyaching about ~~having to move~~ ^{my} from Valdosta to Cornerville and now having to drive one hour round trip each day to and from his office in Valdosta; from her mother, in Birmingham, Alabama, who accuses Cammie of trying to relive her life through Tammie; and from her daddy, the only one who isn't making like a

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psychologist, but who blew up when Tammie wore diamond cluster

earrings and a ~~French twist~~ ^{strapless gown} in Birmingham's Little Miss pageant. ~~Along~~ ^{blowing moss in the oaks along the creek slope.}

Cammie stares out at the ~~wind-blown~~ ^{blowing moss} on the viney slope of Troublesome Creek. Sunny but cold, the coldest March evening in South Georgia in her recollection; and when it is cold, Tammie tends to stiffen her neck and grit her teeth, which might just cause the loose tooth to let go tonight.

Usually, before a contest, something like that would make Cammie feverish, but not this contest, not with these ~~countified little~~ ^{Daddy's little darlings} in ~~sweet~~ ^{sweet} ~~fraternal~~ ^{fraternal} girls with their toothy grins and ~~honey~~ ^{sweet} dresses and little-girl curls--never been taught even how to walk. Cammie should be relieved, ~~relaxed~~ ^{relaxed}, but she misses the tension, the edge--contest fever. In fact, in the honeysuckle-shampoo aura hanging over the walled-in front porch shop, she feels too relaxed, almost limp, and hopes it's not a bad sign--you never can tell about these hick-town judges--and almost believes that her ~~generally~~ ^{generally} hiked shoulders have bolstered Tammie through her recent winning streak.

She pushes up the left sleeve of her red Lacoste parka--old enough to look rich but not pretentious, though she doubts anybody will notice around here, ~~and~~ ^{she} checks her watch. It is now 5:20; the contest will start at seven. Chanell's dark eyes in the mirror shift from Tammie's head full of pink curlers to Cammie checking her watch. Cammie doesn't care if Chanell feels she is rushing her, ^{she is} She should have taken Tammie to her regular hairdresser in Atlanta. But in Cornerville, all the little girls come to Chanell on beauty contest day, and the judges might like, actually ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~Chanell's~~ ^{Chanell's} ~~sweet-little~~ ^{bange & bowe}

Truth is, she ~~cannot~~ ^{cannot} afford fashionable clothes even if she ~~could~~ ^{had the time or inclination} ~~to dress~~ ^{to dress} ~~the latest~~ ^{the latest} ~~women's~~ ^{women's} fashions as she still wears her bleached hair in the classic curled set do from her ~~own~~ ^{own} pageant days in the sixties (she was Miss Valdosta ^{once} & went ^{to} ~~competed~~ ^{competed} ~~also~~ ^{also} in the Miss Georgia contest). All pageant ~~mothers~~ ^{mothers} dress casual casual old & tummy, as if they ~~don't~~ ^{don't} care. ~~But~~ ^{But} with the price of ~~pageant~~ ^{pageant} fees, & dresses & ~~training~~ ^{training} & pageant mothers just hope to look ~~good~~ ^{good} enough to keep their daughters from being ashamed of them.

hairdos Chanell creates each year for the Swanooshee County Little Miss contest.

Cammie is wearing the same fixed hairdo from her beauty-pageant days in the sixties which doesn't count in her book--(Tammie's hair

"OK, sugarbooger," Chanell says to Tammie, "you can hop down now and get under the dryer."

Tammie scoots from the pine plank perch on the shampoo chair and steps one, two, three to the dryer chair behind Chanell, pivots and sits and ^{slides} scoots back with her white Keds and red socks sticking out. *She looks*

Like a doll twisted to sitting position.

Chanell lowers the ^{plastic chrome} hood over the curlers and sets the temperature and the time gauge. *on the ratty old dryer. Quite a feat I think she performed* The old dryer sounds like a storm blowing

perfume like clothes being ironed.

shampoo smells like perfume She straddles her stocky legs and

stiffens her knees and shakes her thick brown hair down ^{like} a screen over her face. *"make 13 little heads of hair if we done today." She stands straight and shies her head*

ad her hair brown falls into its side part. "I think I'll get some a glass of tea," she says,

Let me get me a swig of tea and I'll be right back. I got Linda Gay

"Linda Gay takes long hair her hair."

Sauls coming with her little girl in about five minutes. You want some tea?" she asks Cammie, ~~now checking her watch again.~~

Cammie pushes her jacket sleeves on her ^{planned} bony tanned arms. "No thanks, I'll just sit here." Checks her watch again to let Chanell know she is timing her. Chanell just grabs a damp white towel from the shampoo chair and heads out the door with her broad round rump ^{and} torturing the seat of her faded jeans.

Cammie looks out at the blowing moss again, at the ^{evening} shadows now switching on the bleached-green grass between the old renovated red brick jailhouse next door.

~~sits on a wooden stool by the window, watching the blowing moss through the window and begins~~ ^{she} ~~metally~~ ^{has a mental} checklist of things to do before 8:00 pageant time: makeup, dress, etch, coach Tammie one more time about looking sweet and grilish instead of glamourouse ~~for this once~~. All in the eye^s and the rotation of the head.

The shop door opens and Linda Gay in her same-old-blue gabardine suit ushers her little girl inside. Same frail doll type as Tammie but with thick blonde hair ^{growing} that grows low on her forehead. A head full of it. But ^{she is as} timid and tentative as Tammie used to be before modeling classes.

"Turning ^{co-old} cold out there," ^{she} says. ^{Linda Gay & fake shivers,} "Say hey to Miss Cammie," Linda Gay tells her little girl. "And look who's ^{already} under the dryer." Linda Gay spansks Tammie on her right ^{leg} and speaks louders. "So pretty. Pretty as a ^{picture} little doll." Then to Cammie, "I bet you ^{'re} all up in the air about the contest tonight, huh?"

"I'm just anxious to get it over wiht," ^{she} says. ^{Cammie & uses from the stool to get a magazine of the ~~type~~ ^{prints} beneath the mirror.} "Arent we all?" says Linda Gay. She turns, speaks low to herself: "Chanell, come on here." And as if Chanell has heard her, she steps through the door with a jelly glass of tea.

(what is prissy doing)

"I thought I heard ^{your mouth, Linda Gay,} you come in," says Chanell. ^{Chanell looks the door shut with a white tennis shoe.} "Tell Miss Chanell about your report card, Prissy."

Prissy just stands there by the shampoo chair, fiddling with the lift lever.

"All A's, I bet," says Chanell and *motion toward the shampoo chair* lifts her under the arms.

"Smart like *be* your Mama," she adds. "Couldn't none of us ever keep up with Linda Gay *in school,* Cammie?"

Cammie's eyes are suddenly fixed on the blonde child's *cheeky tanned* face in the mirror, the *deep* blue eyes and *low lips* ~~sucked cheeks~~. What if she should win? Nah, not possible. No presence.

"You *OK*, Cammie?" says Chanell, *turning the chair with the child in it and* tipping the child's head back in the chair to the shampoo bowl *tipping her back to*

"Don't even ask her," says Linda Gay. "You wouldn't know, and you with no children, what us *no ma'am* mothers go through to get ready for these contests. I'm not doing it next year, and I don't care how hard Prissy begs."

Chanell laughs. "I heard that last year."

"I mean it." Linda Gay faces the mirror. "Sugar, tell Miss Chanell what Mama said."

Chanell turns on the sprayer, dousing the thick blonde hair that grows *ret'd* low on the child's forehead. "Listen, *ret'd* make my life a whole lot easier I can tell you if the school did away with these contests."

Linda Gay jabs Chanell in the ribs. "You love it, girl, don't say you don't."

I do. I tell the world I do." Chanell hoots *and tosses* *hair* *draped* her head. "Ever winner I take the credit for. Ever year." And then to the little girl with a white towel like a mantle *draped* over her head, "I'm gone set you up now, honey."

*Linda
Gay
Chanell
mentions
Prissy
contest -
Janice*

"Course you do the losers' hair too," says Linda Gay. "Ever think about that?"

I can take it," says Chanell and turns to the dryer chair to check Tammie's hair. "Just another minute, baby," she shouts,

*Chanell the hoodlum
of the dryer*

"You know what, Cammie?" says Linda Gay, turning to face Cammie on the stool. "I wouldn't put it past Chanell to have a pick and mess up the other little girls' hair so the one she wants ^{will} wins."

"Hair isn't all there is to ~~it~~," says Cammie.

"Well, I know that," says Linda Gay.

"If you ask me, I think they oughta have talent too. I know for a fact, Prissy--pretty as you are, baby--would stand a better chance of winning if she could play her piano recital piece."

Cammie watches Chanell comb out Prissy's ~~thick blonde~~ ^{darkened} hair. Abnormally thick for a child's hair, if the truth be told.

"Look at all that hair!" says Chanell lifting it from the back. "You're blessed, baby. I do love doing this hair."

✓ Cammie feels light, flushed, ~~blushed~~ ^{held self.}

"Sure didn't get it from mama, did you baby?" says Chanell.

"Prissy," says Linda Gay, ^{slaps} "tell Miss Chanell if she'd get Mama's perm right, ~~at~~ Mama's scalp wouldn't shine." And immediately follows with, "Cammie, what ~~a~~ color is Tammie's dress?"

"Pink," says Cammie, though Tammie's dress is royal blue with a silver overskirt ^{and none of her business.}

"You're kidding!" squeals Linda Gay, turning to Prissy. "Sugar, tell Miss Cammie what color your dress is."

^{Prissy?} "Pink?" says the child, ^Taring hopefully at Tammie under the dryer.

"Judges is gone have a hard time of it tonight," says Chanell, rolling Prissy's hair with the same pink curlers as Tammie's. Same style.

"Honey," says Linda Gay to Cammie, "they're gone look just alike. I told Joy Beth just this morning, if Prissy can't win, I hope Tammie does, them being best friends and all."

The dryer buzzer sounds and the ^{motor} dryer cuts off. Chanell turns and lifts the hood. "Sugar, you wanta just walk around and rest a little. Or go in the house and watch TV?"

Tammie looks at Prissy, smiles, ^{prissy on} lifts a curler ^{to relieve} from her scalp, ^{blistered} and it tumbles to the white tile floor ^{blistered face and scalp}

"Tammie!" says Cammie, ^{pickin'} picks up the curler and ^{it} tosses it into the ^{roller} standing bin next the Chanell.

^{Linda Gay} "Check to be sure it's good ^{her hair's} dry for me," says Chanell ~~to Linda~~

^{Gay} Linda Gay sticks a finger inside the ^{look} tubed curl. "Dry as can be," she says. "One good thing about having thin hair, right sweetie?"

^{Prissy} "All right, ^{Miss Prissy} Miss Prissy, it's your turn," says Chanell and lifts ^{how is Prissy dressed} down. The two girls eye each other, snigger, ^{trade} chairs.

Chanell starts brushing out Tammie's hair.

(smells, sounds, etc storm of dryer)

^{keep as is} "Cammie, how old ^{was Tammie} were you ^{she} when you won your first beauty ^{keep as is} contest?" says Linda Gay.

^{There} "There, I think," says Cammie. "There or ^{from} there."

"And ever year went by," says Chanell, "I thought I'd beat her."

"Well, honey you did. Finally."

F 7 left

curlers
&
rollers?

the dryer
is a friend

to relieve
blistered
scalp

look
take of hair

how is Prissy dressed
overalls

swap

keep as is

go back to
first para

move
back
home

"Yeah, once in high school. In high school I did."

under "That was just because of your big boobs," said Linda Gay *and laughs (describe her better)*

"True," said Chanell. "I pure hated them things."

"Beauty contest or your boobs?" said Linda Gay.

"Both," said Chanell (describe what she doing)

(could go back and have conversation reveal why Cammie has come back to Cornervill--might change all that and not go into her head so much)

rethink Chanell pipes up: "One thing I can say for beauty contest ~~though~~ is, they save a pile of money for mamas and daddies in the long run."

"Ha!" says Linda Gay. "You don't know what Prissy's dress cost if you think that."

"What I mean is," says Chanell, "by the time a girl gets ready to get married, she's over wanting to look like a beauty queen at her wedding. Generally don't want nothing to do with no fancy dress and big wedding."

"Well, I tell you one thing," says Linda Gay, "that little gal *right* there is going to have a big wedding if it's the last thing I do. I didn't have one but I'm going to see to it, she does."

✓ "Linda Gay, you're just as married as anybody else, big wedding or not. Take me, I got married in T.P.'s ~~m~~ mama's living room..."

"And now you're divorced."

Chanell laughs. "And happier on my divorce day than on my wedding day cause I'm smarter now, know what's importanta."

✓ Cammie is itching from her toenails to her gums: so far she has watched Chanell brush Tammie's hair out flat, then under one hand in a sausage roll and now she is trying to fluff it into a boufant with

wisps
tendrils clinging at the nape. Now she is parting it to one side and shaping a wave over Tammie's left eye, which along with the right, has stayed on her mother's face in the mirror since she sat down. She is sharp, sharply tuned to her mother's looks even with her face blank and pale and her wide brown eyes stretched as usual.

F7 em

✓ "Let's try a bow, sweetie," says Chanell and plucks a pink bow from the standing ~~card~~ *board* display on the counter and snaps up the wave and clamps the bow to a tail of hair. *(price on bow 3.00)*

No tip for you, dear, thinks Cammie, figuring how she will ~~red~~ do Tammie's hair when they get home. But what if the judges like bows, *pink* with a royal blue dress?

The buzzer on the dryer sounds and Linda Gay prances over and lifts the hood, pats Prissy's head and shouts, "Chanell, damn! This dryer's not working."

"What?" says Chanell and turns with the brush in her hand. "What you mean not working?" She pats *Tammie's* the child's head and then removes a curler and the thick lock *uncoils like a snake* falls like a *slaps* on the child's cheek.

"Pile of junk!" Chanell *peeled silver* *h* sucks the hood. "Don't worry, baby," she says. "I'll diffuse it. I do it all the time to the big girls' hair."

to many confusing honey & sugar

Cammie sucks in, smiles, and *her* eyes in the mirror bat.

"Chanell!" says Linda Gay. "You know better. All that hair's just gonna bush out."

"Well, Linda Gay, if I try to blow dry each curler, it's just not gone dry in time for the contest."

What makes Cammie crazy is the fact that the latest *rage* in Little Miss Pageants is the little big-girl look. Scrunched hair. She's so relieved she could cry, but what if...?

both girls crying

"All right, Chanell," says Linda Gay, "I trust you. What choice do I have?" She eyes ~~the child~~ ^{Chanell} with the pink bow and precious do enviously.

"Tammie, baby," says Chanell, "Step down for a minute, I'm not done with ~~you~~ yet, but this is an emergency. What time is it, Cammie?"

^{check time of payment}
"Six-~~ty~~ ^{ty}. But no problem. We understand."

Tammie is plucking at the ~~hair~~ ^{wraps on her red neck cord}, twisting the bow sideways.

On the pine plank, facing the mirror, Prissy watches as Chanell fluffs and scruches and diffuses her hair. It looks like a new string mop. (storm of dryer, smells)

"I don't know, Chanell," Linda Gay yells, "I really wanted her hair more like Tammie's. You know how these judges..."

"Shut up, Linda Gay," says Chanell. "You never can tell, they might go for this look. Put her on some makeup and..."

"MAKEUP!" shouts Linda Gay wringing ^{her} hands. "Her Daddy'll die!"

"Let him." Chanell looks electrified as the hair ^{shells} grows from lank locks to spirals and spurt of ringlets framing her elfin face.

"Listen, Prissy, ~~now~~ ^{now}, you gotta hold your head up high with all this hair; and look sassy, sling it. You're gone be a knockout."

(go back prissy starts crying when the dryer breaks, both girls dry, dryer sounds, loud talking, dusk, moss blowing outside as if wind is coming from the blow dryer, smalles of hair drying, nylon)

"Look at that little figure," Chanell says to convince Linda Gay that the little big girl look will do.

"Would you want all the big boys oogling your little girl?"

"Shut up, Linda Gay. I know what I'm doing," says Chanell.

"There's a first time for everything. This time next year, ever little girl in Swanoochee County'll be wearing their hair like this."

"And looking like hussies," cries Linda Gay. ^(hair her hair) "Daddy's gone had a heart attack." ~~(Chad's teeth could fall out)~~

Sitting in the dryer chair with Tammie on her lap, Cammie begins frantically brushing her flossy hair, ^{sweeping} brushing it back into a french twist and ^{tearing the} ~~tearing the~~ her bands to make them ^{look fuller} ~~stand out~~. ^{Rising} ~~standing up~~ to get ^{the} ~~the~~ hair spraying ^{the counter with Tammie tucked under her right arm} (she gets up and goes to the counter) she eyes the other child ^{the mirror} like a doll she would like to break.

Chanell speaks to Prissy now. "You just wait and see if you don't win tonight, Priss. You just wait. Then you tell everybody it was Miss Chanell made you a winner." she turns to Linda Gay, "You want a bow or not?"

"I reckon," says Linda Gay, ^{in a mean a thumb nail} "But I ~~sort of~~ lied about her dress being pink. It's royal blue with a silver net overskirt."

(notes: from dateline)