

# Jack and Jill

**A Short Story**

**by Bob Goodwin**

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**Jack and Jill**

It was often said that Jack Morgan bared a striking resemblance to a forty year old Clint Eastwood. He had the gravelly voice down pat, but that was where any similarity ended because when it came to intestinal fortitude he was just a big marshmallow.

He wedged himself harder behind the open barn door and peered through a gap between the palings. Naomi was standing about twenty meters from the barn looking about curiously.

'Keep quiet,' Jack told himself. 'Breathe softly.'

Naomi moved towards him. Jack gasped. He pondered his hiding place and decided he would have been much better off up on the stack of hay bales, right at the top - fifteen bales high. Perhaps at the end of the building at the back of the broken down tractor or under the greasy tarp would have been an improvement. Now it was too late. He felt paralysed. At least his dark overalls afforded him some degree of camouflage in his chosen hiding place.

Naomi was twenty years old and an old school companion of Jill, Jack's sister. This weekend Jill had invited Naomi and two other girls over to the farm, and since they had arrived they had done little else than tease and cause irritation. Jack wanted some peace.

It was so much better when it was just Mum, Dad and Jill. That's the way it had been for many years and thats the way it should stay.

Naomi entered the barn.

'Jack! I know you're in here.'

Jack turned his head slightly. He could see her through the gaps in the door. She fiddled with her singlet top pulling it down at the front so her cleavage was on full display. She adjusted her skimpy denim shorts.

'Come and play with Naomi. You know you want to.' Her voice had assumed a slower seductive tone. It was all part of the game, the teasing and tormenting. Jack could feel his pulse in his throat.

The temptress took a few steps back to the open door. *She's leaving. It will be okay. I'm saved!*

'Girls, over here!' she shouted. 'I'm sure Jack's in the barn.'

There was silly laughter and squeals as Jill, Emily and Julie ran over to join Naomi at the entrance.

A wave of nausea swept over Jack. Perspiration ran over his face and dripped from his chin. Why these younger women constantly sought his company had Jack perplexed. His mother had repeated often enough, 'You are an attractive well built man, of course any girl would want you. The more you are evasive the more they want you. It's a test, Jack.'

Test or no test, there was no doubt this would be just like last night when they had all just sat down for dinner and Emily piped up with that stupid question, 'So Jack, do you have a girlfriend?'

'Would you like one,' added Naomi quickly.

'Maybe he would like three,' said Julie.

'That will do girls,' cautioned Mrs Morgan. 'Jack has always been very shy. He doesn't like that sort of talk.'

'Maybe he doesn't like girls,' Emily replied.

Jack's Dad, Harry, raised his head, grunted and flicked a quick glance at each of the three guests.

'Now now, thats enough,' continued Mrs Morgan. 'Jack doesn't get out that much but he's a true blue Morgan. He's a hard worker and he will make a wonderful husband one day.'

'Please Mum,' interrupted Jill. 'Can we just say grace, I'm starving.'

Mrs Morgan smiled and nodded then lowered her head. Everyone else followed suit.

'Thank you Jesus for our wholesome food. And thank for for providing us with the enchanting company of our three guests...

The three turned their lowered heads slightly and looked at each other with slightly unsure and bemused glances.

'...Let your gift cleanse and nourish our guests,' continued Mrs Morgan. 'So they may be at peace in the company of our Lord. Amen.'

Everyone "Amen'ed" more or less at the same time, the three girls with a little less conviction than the others.

Harry wasted no time in tucking into the roast beef and three veg.

Naomi was not quite ready to let the previous topic go. 'So Jack, tell us about your last lady friend. What was she like? Did she please you?'

Mrs Morgan immediately replied on Jack's behalf, 'While you are guests at our home we would be very pleased if you save this sort of chat for another time. Thank you, Naomi. But rest assured that Jack is a simple, honest, clean living soul with simple needs, and he does love his Mum.'

She turned to Jack who, as always, sat next to her. She rubbed her hand through his hair.

'Don't you dear?'

It was at this moment that Jack stood and with a slight tremor in his voice, politely offered his apologies. 'Please excuse me but I need to attend to a personal matter.' And with that he left the room.

Now, back in the barn, the bitches were back. This was his area - his retreat. It's one thing being harassed in and around the homestead but not here. This was just not right. *They better not touch my Chevy.*

Jack had been working on a 1956 Chevy pickup. It sat, bonnet raised, in the middle of the barn facing the door. It looked like a wreck. Sure, the body needed plenty of work, but he had just got the engine running after weeks of hard work and now this unwelcome intrusion.

The girls moved to the end of the barn. Naomi immediately scaled the long ladder to the loft. She poked around for a moment amongst some old paint tins, farm tools and boxes but no one was there. She stood high in the loft and pushed both her hands through her long blonde hair.

'Jack, I really wanted you to be up here. It's a great place for a special cuddle with your number one fan.'

She gave an exaggerated sigh of disappointment as she made her way back down the ladder.

Julie and Emily lifted up one end of the dirty tarp holding the edges between their fingers as if it was contaminated. Naomi stepped onto the opposite corner. She briefly studied a large bulging area in the middle, glanced at her companions, raised her eyebrows then jumped on top of it. It collapsed to the ground sending a puff of dust out one side and disappointing three of the girls simultaneously.

*So the tarp was not a good hiding place after all.*

'Come on Jack. We want to be your girlfriends,' announced Naomi

'I don't,' said Jill emphatically. 'Why don't we go for a swim in the dam?'

'Good idea!' said Julie. 'Hey Jack, how about you come for a swim with us,' she shouted.

'Yeah, we won't be wearing anything,' declared Naomi.

'I will,' said Jill. 'Let's go.'

Emily looked around. 'I think he's near the tractor.'

Jill shrugged her shoulders, 'Well, I'm going for a swim and I'm going now! Is anyone coming with me?'

'We're going when Jack's going. Aren't we girls?' said Julie with conviction. She got immediate nods of approval from Naomi and Emily.

Jill marched towards the barn door. 'Come on girls. Forget about Jack.'

'But you said Jack wanted us over this weekend,' stated Emily.

'Yeah, you said he really liked us,' added Julie. 'So you go. We will be there soon - with Jack.'

'I think you girls should stop this tormenting. It's not a healthy way to behave. It's sure to land you in hot water sooner or later.' The three paid Jill no further attention. She left the barn.

Jack watched as the girls fanned out and encircled the rusty tractor.

*Not such a good hiding place either.*

He couldn't move from where he was they would spot him immediately. In fact he was unsure if he could even move at all.

His tormentors moved about the building checking possible hiding places. Julie and Naomi climbed gingerly amongst the hay bales pushing a couple away which fell heavily to the floor. Naomi laughed.

*Yet another hopeless spot.*

It seemed to take an age, but Jack was eventually able to move the fingers of his right hand, then his arm. He placed his hand over his chest and looked down. He could see his hand vibrating. If this got any worse he would surely have a heart attack. It was even worse than yesterday afternoon.

After working hard all day he was enjoying the sensation of a heavy stream of hot water running over his head when Julie and Emily burst into the bathroom. They grabbed his clothes and towel and shot through. He could hear that irritating giggling fading into the distance as they fled the crime scene. All that was left was a small hand towel and with that held over his genitals he strode boldly down the hall to his

bedroom. On opening his door he saw Naomi posing suggestively on his bed. She was dressed, but barely. His cheeks filled with colour, perhaps there was a feeling of embarrassment, but there were other feelings welling up also. He tipped his head, and much to Naomi's displeasure, excused himself, backed away from the room and closed the door.

Jack progressed through his limbs moving fingers, arms, toes and feet. His pulse was still going at a hundred miles an hour but his body had loosened up. Maybe he could make a run for it soon, but this wasn't in his nature he would rather excuse himself, apologise and walk away.

*As long as they keep their distance from the Chevy.*

The three girls were making their way towards the front of the barn progressively checking everything on their way. They were only a few metres from Jack's pride and joy. He swallowed heavily and moved a little closer to the edge of the door.

'Maybe he's inside this beat up shitbox of a car,' called Julie pointing at the Chevy.

'Let's check it out then,' replied Naomi. 'I'm coming for you Jack!'

The critical point was approaching. Jack took another step and stood at the very edge of the barn door. His body trembled. His eyes widened. 'Shitbox car! Stupid bitches! You know nothing,' he whispered.

A loud knocking sound emanated from the rear of the building then stopped. The girls all turned in unison and looked back. The knock, like a hammer on wood, sounded again three times. Naomi was first to dart back to the rear of the barn. Emily and Julie followed.

'We can hear you, Jack,' shouted Naomi eagerly.

This was it. This was the moment he was waiting for. Jack hurried from the door and went straight to the Chevy. Out the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of some movement and a bright light, but he was focused only on the car. There was no time for anything else.

It wasn't until he had cranked over the motor that the girls looked back. Despite the open hood the car shot straight forward and out of the barn. Then the barn door began closing. Jill was behind it. She had a burning oil lantern in her hand. Just before she squeezed around the closing door she tossed the lantern onto the floor where the Chevy had been. With all the oil and residual fuel on the straw it lit up immediately and tentacles of fire stretched out in many directions.

Outside the barn Mrs Morgan dropped a timber beam across the four metal hooks and the door was secured.

Harry Morgan sauntered around the side of the barn with hammer in hand and the four strolled back to the homestead. Jack now calm with his arm around his Mum and Jill hand in hand with her Dad.

The screams had stopped by the time they reached the landing.

'So, Harry,' said Mrs Morgan after a lengthy but relaxed silence, 'How's the new barn coming on? Will it be finished soon?'

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