

K. Nadine Kavanaugh
The Way Maria Moved

At the party Bill tries to talk to Maria, but Maria isn't interested in Bill. He is in her science class, and she has known him her whole life. The idea of kissing him seems funny. She walks away carefully every time he tries to approach. Maria has her eye on Josh. Josh is Julie's brother, and he is sixteen. He is the reason that there are older boys at the party; all of these boys are Josh's friends. Maria thinks that Josh must be nice to let his little sister invite her friends to his party. She would never let Jackie bring his friends to any party that she held. Then again, Jackie is only twelve, which is much too young. Maria knows that she is just as grown up as Josh. She is willing to prove it. After she drinks half a beer, Maria feels warm. She looks for Kelly, but Kelly is making out with another boy, a stranger. Maria is jealous. Now she will have to find someone to kiss her, or Kelly will be in the lead. Maria's legs wobble; she is unused to wearing heels, and these don't fit her well. They belong to her mother; they have thin gold straps that criss-cross over Maria's long feet and tall, thin gold heels no larger around than a dime. The straps squeeze Maria's feet and make her toes very white. Maria's mother is tiny, shorter than Maria is now, and she has smaller feet. Maria's sneakers are stashed in her backpack along with her nightgown and toothbrush. Maria is learning to walk in heels.