

# All Secretaries are Women



Part Two

Eleanor Darby Wright



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# ALL SECRETARIES ARE WOMEN 2

by Eleanor Darby Wright

## X. A WORKING WOMAN

Al Bridges almost pounced on me when I made my timid, feminine way out of Dana's office, having been given a poke in the back by Roz, to start my terrified walk past the working girls, in the administrative assistant pool, towards the Committee Room at the end of the floor. Unbelievably, I was totally dressed as a woman. Yes, every stitch that I was wearing was part of a woman's clothing or underclothing, her stockings, her silky, swishing dress or her high heels. Oh, or part of her lovely hair, a most luxurious and expensive wig,

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specially delivered to Dana's office that very morning, for me to make my disguise complete.

"Damian is already in place with the CEO of Technivision and his chief financial officer," Al Bridges said with a grin, looking me up and down which made me even more terrified than I was before. He was studying and appeared to be admiring me as a woman. Realizing that, made me quiver even more than I had since I started this silly exploit, all to save a job that I'd soon be leaving. "You look ravishing this morning in that dress, Trish. I suppose it's sexist to say that to you. My brother wouldn't say that, but I believe in paying compliments to attractive women."

"Th-thank you," I managed to mutter. Roz had insisted, after we'd come in early, that I change completely from the clothing I'd worn over the weekend. Abigail Henning would have been really proud of me. If only Al knew the way I was dressed beneath the tight-fitting top of my dark bronze, flowered dress, he would have thought me the most glamorous of women.

Roz had insisted I wear the Merry Widow corset and pack the bra and derriere parts with pads she claimed she'd worn as a girl. I only know that with makeup on my face and my wig in place, shuddering all the time that I looked at myself, dressing like a showgirl, especially when I put on my stockings and perfumed myself with *Opium*.

Roz had hugged me from behind. "Oh, you are so beautiful," she'd said, crushing my hair against my neck and blowing in my ear, making me tremble all over my newly depilated body. What was worse was that I felt like a showgirl. I even liked the feeling of being so girlish as I shivered, eyeing myself and liking what I saw. I closed my thickly made-up eyes and felt

so wonderfully womanly, even though it was Roz holding me. I knew that I really had to stop all this. I wasn't a deviate, after all, was I?

Then my Executive Assistant, in my place as a secretary with the same title I'd had, not realizing what I was, a man in a woman's job, had had me put on the bronze dress that clung to the top of me. It so emphasized my female shape. The skirts flared away from my tiny waist and rustled shamelessly with the slightest move that I made, sending intense, shaking sensations of femininity through me, sensations that I was coming to expect and even beginning to enjoy. I put on my open-toed high heels, an inch shorter than the heels I'd worn over the weekend. They felt so right on me. I could hardly imagine not walking in high heels any more.

"You'll have to look up to everyone," said Roz as she put on long, golden bands at my ears and bangles at my wrists, a ring on my right-hand ring finger. She caressed my fingernails and smiled at me. I had struggled but managed to smile back as I realized, at last, that I was going to go out of the office and into that meeting as a woman.

I swallowed hard as I looked at the woman in the mirror, clutching the purse that Roz made me take with me, as well as the briefcase with the papers and program disks that I needed. I had moments of doubt at the door, my bound-tight groin twitching in most unladylike fashion beneath my panties, but Roz had hustled me out. I'd seen heads come up and people frown as they looked at me across the desks of the women doing secretarial work.

I'd been turning, my hair swinging against me, my earrings dancing, determined to retreat, since the women must have recognized me as Dana's assistant,

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the only male secretary in the firm, when Al had come down the hallway and held out his arms to me. Roz had hustled into me. I had been catapulted timidly into Al's arms, he hugging me as if I was indeed a woman. He'd given me a hug, a friendly hug, one that made me break out in nervous goose bumps.

If there are such a thing as female goose bumps, that was what I felt as my dress swished about my legs as I clicked forward on women's high heels. Yes, I was a woman! Oh, I couldn't do this. Be a woman in Dana's place. Then Al had put an arm about my shoulder as if to comfort me as he walked me a few steps. I couldn't look up at him. I was so dumbfounded at myself at this stupid thing I was doing, trying to fool this man, all the people I barely knew at Ekco, that I was a woman. I shook as Al smiled and told me not to be nervous, before taking his arm away.

"Ken Barton is the CEO's name," said Al. I knew it well. I'd read about the man so many times in doing my research. I swished along with Al, feeling and sounding, I was certain, so girlish, in my lovely dress. I just prayed that Ken Barton had not been as thorough in his research about me as I had been about his company.

Damian turned and regarded me approaching, his eyes going up and down me in that scrutiny that made me feel as if I was being undressed. It was as if he could see me in my lovely black and gold Merry Widow and dark stockings on my rounded thighs. So what if you can see me, I thought, shivering femininely, knowing then why Roz had insisted that I wear it and my frilly black panties. I felt so womanly. I knew that I looked like a woman even without this, my pretty, bronze, flared dress. I knew that I behaved like one, like a woman, I meant. They would never know

me as I really am. Would they? Or were they all laughing behind their smiles at me, as they knew quite well what I was doing, pretending to be a woman in Dana's girlish clothing.

"Miss Kirk," said Damian Robertson with a nod to me, my nerves making me tremble femininely all over, while the two men he was with scowled at me. Well, one did and the other just looked very pleasantly surprised.

"It's nice to see you again, Damian," I murmured as I smiled while my insides churned at the way that I felt, the way that my dress stressed how feminine a woman I was. "Mr Barton," I nodded to the Technivision chairman, "Mr Lowe. I feel that I know you both already."

That shook Ken Barton and he frowned at me. I had a moment of anxious, womanly doubt that my voice had held up, but Al put his arm under mine at my elbow, guiding me into the Committee Room. There, all the men sitting, chatting, suddenly stood at my arrival. They waited until I sat nervously, wiggling in feminine anxiety, as Al Barnes did the necessary introductions.

The computer was ready, a tech there to take my disks and enter them. Then, on the connected screen, the title page of my report appeared, though it was captioned as if it was Dana's and she had written what everyone was going to see. I shivered again, but said nothing about the way Dana was stealing my work efforts. No, I tried to smile at all the men and sit down with some degree of femininity. I think I succeeded fairly well, my womanly hands and fingers quivering only a little.

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I barely recognized the girlish voice that did the voice over on the programs. I squirmed inside again as I listened to it and knew that it was me talking like that. It had taken me almost all the morning to change the pitch of the voice, adding in a little introduction, apologizing for the way I sounded and hoping that my bronchial affliction wouldn't detract too much from what I was saying.

Actually, it wasn't that bad, the recorded voice. Besides, the background, that I'd provided for the recommendations that I'd made, was compelling even to me. It was the pictures of Tech's assets, the open field that was a 'thriving multi-use industrial facility', the granaries that were apartment complexes, and the 'oil well' that was an oil tank for tractors to use that made the members of the Committee sit up.

There was the executive from the microwave company frowning as he told me on camera that Technivision had shares in his company but didn't own it, didn't own its facilities and wasn't going to, any time soon. I had tried to calculate the real assets of the company, but I was stalled by its accounting practices. I pointed out several 'innovative' ways of writing down debts that needed to be investigated as to their legality and ended with the negative recommendation to Ekco being involved 'at this moment' with Technivision.

"None of that is true," blustered Ken Barton, red-faced as the members of the Committee were all staring grimly at him. "There isn't an open field instead of an industrial estate ..."

"There is," cut in Al Barnes. He looked down the table to his brother who was looking back to him in surprise. "Sorry to miss your bash, Barry, but I had to go and look for myself. The information in this report of

Trish Kirk's is remarkably accurate. I talked to the owners of several theater chains mentioned on the asset list. They talked to me though they wouldn't talk to you, Trish."

Oh, that made my overloaded nerves suffer even more as I tried to sit and be demure, like an old-fashioned girl. But my brain and my groin kept telling me that I was no girl. I kept asking myself what I was doing in such a silly situation for a man. Why had I even tried to convert the interviews in the presentation from the originals to include myself as 'Miss Kirk', rather than "Mr Pat Kirk'. Still, since Dana had left the original with me, it should never matter to anyone, once I was no longer there, batting my eyelids like a woman and swishing about the conference room in my female skirts.

"It's even worse than you thought, Trish," Al went on after staring down an angry Ken Barton. "Technivision has debts in all those areas and holds less than ten percent of what it reports holding in that area."

"You can't say that!" snarled Ken Barton while I sat in my pretty, bronze dress and tried to be inconspicuous among all the grey and black suits. But so many of the men were studying me, as I sat there, in my rusty, colorful dress. Even my nails on the papers I gripped so hard, were shaking with my nerves so frayed, the hot pink nails vividly adding feminine color to the meeting. "Your lawyers ..."

"Should be preparing a defence for you in the securities commission," said Barry Barnes from the end of the table. "We shall have to send this report to them which means, Ken, that you are very likely going to be charged with any number of counts of fraud."

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"Fraud!" yelled Ken Barton. "If you say that outside this room, Barnes, I'll sue you for every penny you have!"

"Be on your way," said Barry Barnes curtly. "I've had enough of Technivision. I presume the vote is unanimous, gentlemen, that the proposed contracts for the development project with Technivision are refused."

"But the new methods of image delivery," began Damian Robertson. "The patents. We'd be in at the start!"

"Trish, what do you say?" asked Al Barnes, turning to me, sitting and shivering so noisily beside him.

"Technivision should have moved two years ago," I murmured. The man beside Ken Barton jerked as if he'd been shot. "There are patents now, as well, in this field, in Japan. You're in for a huge fight, a hugely expensive fight, if you try to match what their prototypes can do now, when your head of research says that you'll only be ready in a year for a testing of yours. I wouldn't know, anyway, what value to put on untested ideas."

"That's what we need the capital for," said James Lowe, the chief financial officer for Technivision.

"Call for a vote, Al," said Barry Barnes to his brother even as he glared at Damian and the Technivision men.

Al did. All the men raised their hands, all but Damian, and the two Technivision executives. Al waited and waited and then looked at me with a smile. I saw that everyone was looking at me. I blushed and knew then that I was discovered, or why else would they all be smiling and grinning at me.

"You have a vote as well, Trish," Al Barnes said then. "What is it to be? Are you going to make the Committee recommendation unanimous?"

"Oh yes," I squeaked femininely, even to my ears, as I timidly lifted my hand, my fingernails so vivid a contrast to those of Al's hand beside mine.

"That's unanimous," said Al, going through the technicalities of who would be informed of what, in the company. Ken Barton stalked out after the vote had been taken. We could all hear him yelling at Damian Robertson in the passageway outside.

"Let's take a recess for a moment and have coffee," said Al. I felt such intense relief as he said that. My thought was that I could race back to Dana's office and become, me, Pat, not Tricia, Kirk. It was quickly shattered as all of the committee members seemed to feel they had to congratulate me on my thorough report. Al disappeared to get me coffee while two Directors of Ekco, old Mr Barnsley and white-mustached Ross Adams, sat beside me, welcomed me to the firm and told me what a bright future I had.

I knew that I had no future. I shook with nerves. Even though the men saw my trembling in me, they thought that it was because of the pressure to do a good job on the report, my first to the Committee, that I was so anxious. I couldn't tell them that the compliments they paid me were making me more than nervous. They were actually exciting, in a way, as they showed that I had indeed fooled these men into thinking I was a woman. I had actually passed!

"Let's go on," Al said as he served me coffee and a piece of cake with a pink rose on it. "For saving this company a whole lot of money and keeping us from looking like a bunch of venal fools, I think Trish de-

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serves this little treat." I felt so thrilled as all the men applauded me. "Now, we'll hurry through the rest of the agenda so that Barry and Chris can slope off to telephone their brokers and sell, sell, sell all the Technivision stock they've been purchasing the last month or so, before it really collapses in the next week."

That brought a lot of guffaws and protests from the men named that they had any stock in a company the firm was trading with. I barely heard the rest of the meeting as Al was as good as his word and got through the agenda at breakneck speed.

"Just a minute, Trish," Al said, touching my arm and holding me back, as everyone went scurrying out of the room. He talked to the older directors as Barry Barnes came up to me and smiled. He was like a larger version of his brother, I saw with a quiver.

"Trish Kirk?" Barry asked. "Do you mind me calling you Trish as my brother is?"

"N-No," I said nervously.

"You didn't come to our social on the weekend," said Barry with a friendly smile. "I should have called you, especially since you've just become an Acting Section Head. Karen would have loved to meet you. She doesn't think that we do anything around here to promote talented women in the firm. Of course, she's right. I'm going to love presenting you to my wife, Trish. I know she'll love to meet you, too. I hope that you aren't doing anything on Wednesday."

"Well, I," I whispered, trying to think of anything that I could be doing that would be a convincing lie to this powerful member of the company that employed me, even if they didn't know, as a woman.

“Good,” said Barry with a smile. “We’ve several tickets for the Opera and I have to shanghai a gang of people from around here to go with us. That’s why everyone was running out so fast. Oh, Al, you love opera, don’t you? La Boheme on Wednesday.”

“Well, I,” began Al Barnes.

“We just recruited Trish who said that she’d love to come,” said Barry with a wink at me. I felt my temperature rising a hundred degrees as he said such an outrageous thing.

“Well, I guess I’d love to go, too,” said Al Barnes with a smile to his brother. Al took my shivering arm and directed me out of the Committee Room. “Just wanted to say what a great job you did there, Trish. There’ll be a tangible reward for you on your next pay check. Not just a raise in pay, which you have earned, but a bonus as well. It will enable you to buy a lot more, pretty dresses like this one, and brighten up our dull committee meetings no end.”

Roz was waiting for me anxiously when I returned to Dana’s office. I was shaking again as I repeated what Al had said to me. She threw her arms about me and hugged me in excitement when I mentioned the bonus.

“I will share that with you, fifty-fifty,” I told her which led to Roz hugging me even more. “And, as well, will you help me some more? I think that I have to go to the Opera on Wednesday.”

## XI. FORMAL DRESS

I tried to lay low while Roz made enquiries about the Opera. After all, I had work to do. No matter that my fingernails and the mounds on my chest distracted me all the time, I had reports to write, contracts to audit and give my opinions on, as well as all the administrative duties that I had carried out in the last few months for Dana Hansen.

Roz should have been doing those for me, but she was engaged full time on a project called Trish. Later, I got to look at my personnel file and saw that my photographs had been changed. I saw that my medical records were now for a woman named Trish Kirk, not me at all. All my records had been 'updated' because of my new status, even the identification boxes, where my sex was definitely shown as 'F'.

At that time, I didn't mind staying in my office and working while Roz gallivanted about the firm, as I saw it, chattering to anyone who would listen, about her wonderful female boss, me.

"The Opera," Roz said, storming into my office late on Tuesday morning, "is a completely formal affair. The women who go, must wear evening gowns and there's a rule that all of the gowns must be new, and designer-made. Look at these pictures I downloaded of Karen Barnes and Dana last year. Look at them! This picture was in the *Times*!"

I looked and saw that each woman was wearing a strapless evening gown, posing and smiling in their vivid, professionally done make-up and hair. I could recognize that so well now after being under Roz's tutelage in the office.

"I won't go then," I said in a panic, but Roz wouldn't hear of that. What she'd decided was that I had to leave work early and go shopping with her, shopping for a woman's dress, an evening gown, for me, now fully a woman in the firm, to wear. Roz had already made an appointment for me to see a hairdresser and a beautician on the following day, the very idea of which made my heart begin to beat with agitated palpitations.

"I can't do this, Roz," I told her. My nervous shaking threatened to overpower me and turn me into a quivering jellyfish or something. "This is going way too far. I have to quit being a woman, quit Ekco completely. I can't go to the Opera House as a woman and wear an evening dress like those in the papers."

My manicured hand and painted fingernails pointed at the sophisticated women in the pictures that Roz had resurrected and put up on the screen. She was already on the phone, ignoring me as usual, and calling to some friend of hers.

"That's arranged then," Roz said firmly to me while I dithered in my, Dana's, business suit and soft, blue blouse and, as usual, my wig. No, don't ask me at all what I was wearing underneath the skirt and blouse. "David is going to Martha's, and Abigail is catching the bus downtown and going to meet us at Giselle Lewin's."

"I, I can't go in there!" I stammered.

"Why not?" asked the fearless Roz, fearless now that she had me completely trapped into dressing like a woman. I was even doing the job that she should have been doing and was getting paid for.

"It's a woman's store!" I gasped. "No, it's a woman's boutique! It's the most exclusive boutique in

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town. Only the most elegant of women go there. It costs a thousand dollars, I read somewhere, just to walk in the door there and buy a Giselle Lewin headscarf."

"We are going to buy a great deal more than a headscarf," snorted Roz. "And no," she saw my eyes go towards the dressing room and the evening dresses that I knew were already in there. "Those dresses have been worn by Dana to company functions. That one," she pointed to the strapless gown, "is a Donna Karan and is hanging up at the back of the closet. I don't suppose you even noticed it. No, you can't wear it to the opera. Some rich bitch would notice," she added sourly.

"I'm sick," I said and did feel sick. I felt that I would throw up at any moment if I had to go any further with this deception that Roz and I were engaged in. Me in an evening dress, like a gorgeous fashion model. Oh, I shivered, making all of the feminine things I was wearing, check in with my brain. What I was wearing, pretending I was a woman, was too much. I couldn't do even more to be womanly!

"No, you're not sick," said Roz determinedly. "You are Cinderella and you will go to the ball. Your fairy godmother will see you through and you won't be discovered if you don't return by midnight."

"Money!" I gasped as Roz smiled at me.

"Look on your desk," said Roz smugly. "Read the note there from your boss, as well."

My fingers trembled as I saw the opened envelope waiting for me. The American Express card fell out into my hands. "Trish," read the two-page letter enclosed. "You might need this for whatever you need for the opera. My brother, Barry, doesn't think at all

about women and dresses and makeup, jewellery and stuff. I was going to mention it privately, but I'm snowed under as you are, I hear; and then I heard from Karen. She was livid with Barry for twisting your arm so cruelly, she says.

"She insists I tell you to charge everything you need to the firm's account. She insists that she and Barry will re-imburse the firm for whatever you need to spend on a dress, plus accessories, for the Opera House. She said I should expect bills of over twenty thousand across my desk and probably fifty thousand as you'll need jewellery. Karen tells me to tell you not to skimp!

"Please take some time today and tomorrow (I hope it's enough!) and buy an evening gown and whatever else you need for the opera. Oh, I have your address from Personnel. Barry, Karen and I will be there to pick you up on Wednesday at eight o'clock.

"To me, you would look gorgeous in sackcloth and ashes. I said that to my sister-in-law. She rolled her eyes at me and called me a Neanderthal. She told me to expect that you might call this whole thing off. She wouldn't blame you. No, I know Karen. She'd blame me and not let me forget it for months!

"So, please use this card now and all this month as a pre-bonus bonus, Trish! Ekco definitely owes you this much and more."

It was signed 'Al' and underneath that was written out 'Alexander Whitelaw Barnes' in full.

"Oh, I can't do this!" I exclaimed as Roz picked up the card and crowed with delight to me. I staggered to my feet as my heels wobbled as they hadn't for several days! I'd become so used to walking in them, well,



swaying or sashaying in them, Roz says I should say. "Who, who does Al Barnes think I am?"

"Isn't that obvious?" said Roz with a smirk. "Grab your purse, girl, and let's go shopping! I don't want Abby waiting and waiting for us, and she is on her way downtown."

I had come in that day in Dana's grey suit, the pencil-thin skirt tight and another of her corsets giving me the feminine shape that I had. I had to go out the same way. I think that my feminized, painted face, though, was on fire as Roz dragged me through the hallways that were usually so empty when we left, late in the evening.

There were so many women and men scurrying about, some who definitely knew me. Many looked at me and smiled as I minced along with Roz. I expected a call of, "Hey, that's Pat Kirk in a woman's wig and skirt! What's he doing here dressed like that?"

But nothing like that happened. In fact, a security man jumped up and opened the glass street doors for us with a smile. "Have a good day, Miss Kirk," he said to me. I know that I flushed like a girl, my skirt making me take short, feminine steps as I lowered my eyes at his smile and greeting. I could feel his eyes on me as I clung to Roz's arm and we clicked in womanly fashion across the concrete sidewalk into the crowds of people moving about at work and at play.

My heart was beating wildly as we clicked and swayed along the sidewalk and I could feel the breeze in my hair and on my stockings. It was quite chilly as it came up from the lake and reminded me that I was bound tightly in several places as I tried to sway convincingly like a woman.

"Mummy! Trish!" yelled Abigail as we came up to Giselle Lewin's boutique, named for the city's most famous dress designer. Abby was dressed in her school uniform, makeup on her face, which her mother scolded her for, even as Abby came running up to us to give me a hug in greeting. Last night, I hadn't gone back to her mother's place.

I wished I'd gone back with Roz as Jack and Dirk were pests when they saw me getting out of the elevator and going to my, Pat Kirk's, apartment. They pretended that I, Patrick, was going to meet them for racquetball. I was to meet them at Pat's, at my, apartment.

"I don't think so," I'd told them in my highest, falsetto voice. "Patrick is out of town for a week. I'm only using his apartment till he comes back."

I shouldn't have told them that as they found all kinds of excuses to visit me, even though I kept the chain on the door and wouldn't let either of them in. I had to run the gauntlet the following morning as Roz had picked me up for work, the invitations that they made turning me quite green. I'd almost gone back to hide in my apartment, still wearing Dana's clothes. I'd almost run away from my first full working day as a female section head at Ekco until I'd decided just to brazen it out and get away from the persistent, would-be, ladies' men.

"I've wanted to go in here for my whole life," said Abby in delight as she took my arm on one side of me while Roz held the other firmly as well.

A doorman opened the door doubtfully to us, looking at Abby who bounced away from us to shriek over a series of purses that she found to be absolutely wonderful.

A snooty, elegant woman moved forward and almost looked at us in disdain. I wanted to slink away in shame and embarrassment as she looked me over.

Roz kept a firm hold on me, not cowed at all. "My boss," she said to the woman, "is going to La Boheme tomorrow with Alexander Whitelaw Barnes and, believe me, she doesn't have a thing to wear to complement the tux he's going to wear. I've appointments with Madeleine and Ferencino's for her tomorrow, but her new hair and makeup will require a new dress, a fabulous dress, and all the accessories. Money is no object."

"You wouldn't be in here if it was," said the woman condescendingly, looking me over. "Is Maddy Gardner arranging your real hair or just the wig that you are wearing?"

I was shaking too much to answer such a question, panic gripping me, as this was the first person to tell me that I was wearing a wig. I didn't know what else she saw about me, but I didn't want to stay and find out.

Roz, however, was not to be put off. "Madeleine will decide that herself tomorrow," she said. "There's a mannequin in the window in a black and silver dress."

I almost died when she said that. I'd noticed that as we walked up and had almost turned away forcefully before Abigail had come running up to take my arm. The dress had been strapless. I was sure of it! Whatever was Roz doing, proposing that I, a man, could wear such a thing? I just wanted to grab something, anything, pay for it with the credit card Al Barnes had sent to me, and get out of the *Giselle Lewin Boutique*.

"That's fifteen thousand dollars," said the woman with a superior smile.

"Plus tax," murmured Roz without batting an eyelid at all. I knew my false eyelashes were fluttering at the whole idea of trying to make the woman think that we could buy a dress like that. She must know, the way she was studying me, that I wasn't a real woman!

"The necklace, earrings and bracelet, twenty thousand?" asked Roz coolly and the woman looked at her with interest, I think, for the first time. "The purse, Gucci? The shoes, are they designed by Giselle as well? It didn't say, I noticed. And then there's the lingerie. Don't look so terrified, Trish! You know Karen Barnes expects you to reach fifty thousand at least for your dress and accessories. We have to find you a coat or wrap to go with the dress as well; so we might in fact do even better at spending your expense account than Karen expects."

"The shoes are by Poulin," said the woman, snapping her fingers to a younger woman who came over to us eagerly. "Poulin is not well known yet but Giselle believes that, within a year, his designs will be all the rage here as well as in Europe where the best dress designers are using his shoes with their collections."

Abby saw the shoes and came running over, oohing and aahing at how lovely the shoes were and could she try on a pair as well.

"Then he would definitely be arrested for aiding in the delinquency of a minor," said Roz while the sales-girl's eyes went wide in surprise and humor. "Abby, you wanted to be here to assist Trish in picking out a gown. Now be good, as we don't have time to waste."

The older woman actually smiled. "Then we should have this young lady," she meant me, "try on the dress

of her choice," she said snippily. "Will you assist with the shoes, Grace, while I secure the gown that Mrs Barnes's friend has identified as liking? If you come this way, ladies, I can show you some other gowns that might interest you and would suit a visit to the Opera House, very well."

I managed to persuade Roz, in the end, not to make me purchase the strapless gown at that time. I thought that that was the end of that; but I didn't know that Roz did order it the very next day. So, when I got back into Dana's dressing room the following week, there it was, still in its Giselle Lewin wrappings, altered and ready for me to wear at a moment's notice.

The dressing rooms were the only place where I got any respite at all from the excruciating buying of an evening dress, a woman's dress. All I could insist on was that it not be strapless. Mrs Croft brought me a dark blue gown with a fitted bodice, the neckline exposing most of my chest, my arms bare as thin, dark-blue, shoulder straps went behind my neck, crossing on my bare back to be attached where the dress plunged quite severely down my back. It was definitely a rich, shapely, woman's dress, and intended for a woman like me, Mrs Croft intoned.

In my Merry Widow and stockings, I shuddered as I was fitted into the dress, the top of the corset exposed as were its shoulder straps. I shivered as Mrs Croft arranged the skirts about my Poulin high heels.

"Hmm," she murmured. "This fits you so well, Miss Kirk." She had learned my name from Abby, who thought I looked 'heavenly' in the dress. I saw the way Abby was looking at me and could guess what she was thinking. She was smiling as she knew that I, a man, was trying on a woman's evening gown about my womanly lingerie. I shivered even more strongly

as Mrs Croft attached pendant diamonds at my ears and about my neck.

“Do I suppose that you are not well endowed at the front?” Mrs Croft then asked me in front of Roz. My blushing and anxiety told her everything. “We often have flat-chested models here who can’t do justice to Giselle’s designs. We have learned a few tricks for girls like you, Miss Kirk. If I could get you out of that corset for a little while, Miss Kirk, I can show you the kinds of bras our flat-chested models use to pump themselves up.”

I shuddered but Mrs Croft persisted and showed us how and where to tape and how to put on the bras, in strapless models as well. The ‘falsies’ were sucked tight to the chest because they were gel pads, inflated until they gripped tightly enough that they’d never come off, Mrs Croft assured us, me presenting myself in such girlie things to Roz and her smiling daughter.

Well, we bought them, bought the lingerie, the dress, the accessories, the shoes and the purse. While I was trying on a long, silk-lined satin and silk coat, I cringed inside me as I realized that yes, I was going to the opera as a glamorous woman, after all.

## XII. THE OPERA AND AFTER

Al Barnes was the perfect gentleman in coming to pick me up right on time at my apartment. He gave the would-be lotharios just one look and they melted away into the woodwork of the foyer. I didn’t see anything of them again for several days.

Karen and Barry, elegant and stylish, waited for us in the foyer. Karen came forward, as I trembled and thought about hiding from her, she so beautiful in her

black and white gown, her shoes Poulin creations like mine. Her hair was swept up into a chignon and covered with a rope of pearls. Her makeup was exquisite as she had been in Ferencino's, I heard, just a little earlier than me.

My hair at the front was my own, dark brown, pulled back severely into a diamond band from which a mane of hair, the same color as my natural hair, fell down my back, tantalising me with such soft touches and caresses.

Yes, after saying that I wouldn't, I did. I had pleaded and begged with Roz and then I had capitulated, waiting to be discovered by the beauticians for what I was but, if Madeleine or the beauticians of Ferencino's had discovered me, they said nothing to me. Well, they said plenty, but it was all praise and commendation of me as a woman. Ooo, they made me feel that I was indeed how I appeared, a woman. I even talked and acted like a woman with them all. Yes, it was femininely heavenly as I behaved as if I was really a woman, thinking most of the time, that that was what I was, as well, a beautiful woman, as they all said that I was.

My makeup was as exquisite as that of Karen Barnes, my dress a Giselle Lewin original as Karen told me that hers was as well. I was every bit a gorgeous, elegant woman as she was, but she wasn't shivering with nerves the way that I was as I sashayed out to meet her and her husband in my female evening gown. No, she wasn't wondering why she was dressed in such completely feminine clothing, was she?

Karen linked her arm through mine so that we made a phenomenal, exciting, thrillingly feminine exit from my apartment building. Several young people,

male and female, gathered across the street to watch us parade out of the building in our long gowns, me trembling and rustling, while Karen just smiled and told me not to respond to the hoots and hollers from the upper floors of the apartment buildings around us.

The limo was what I expected. I think Dana had been photographed getting out of the same one with Al the year before. "Giselle's?" asked Karen, drawing me to sit beside her as the brothers sat opposite us and grinned at us like fools.

"Yes," was all I could murmur anxiously at Karen but that was enough. She kept the conversation going with Al and Barry, her husband, letting me know, I realized, the plot of the opera if I hadn't known it already and who the principal singers would be and what they were like.

The men got out of the limo first. The men. I shivered as I thought of them that way, men and so not like me, a woman, as they each helped us from the limo after them.

"See, Al," said Karen gaily as she held my hand and Barry's while Al took my other white-gloved hand. I struggled not to shudder and to endure what it was that I had to endure, an evening in a woman's evening dress, my chest and neckline showing for all the world that I was as full-breasted as Karen Barnes.

We strolled into a barrage of lights and photographers. Karen stopped us so that we could have our pictures taken. I got the shakes again as I realized that I would see them in the paper the next day, pictures of me in my lovely gown, a woman to all intents and purposes, my skirts draped and swishing about my stockings, so seductively feminine, like me.

"I love that scent you are wearing," said Karen with a smile as we went in, the ushers leading us to our seats. "*Opium*, isn't it? I like some of the newer ones myself. What I'm wearing," she wafted a different fragrance to me, "is one that Giselle will be marketing later in the year." She giggled at me. "It pays at times to be married to a powerful business tycoon, doesn't it?"

Al had been listening. "Karen, you are priceless," he said with a grin, still holding my hand as he had done since I had exited the car.

I was paraded through the ranks of the very rich at the intermissions. Al, however, also insisted that we meet and chat with every Ekco employee who was there and the men and women who'd accompanied them there. I noticed that Karen and Barry Barnes, arms about each other were doing the same thing as Al and me.

I had frights all night long when my hair was brushed, when Karen wanted me to go with her to the Ladies' Room, and when someone stared at me. Oh, that was so often.

"You're not used to being stared at," smiled Karen Barnes at me.

I shook my head, my hair cascading around my bare shoulders. My earrings touched my neck, so cold and metallic, sending real chills through me.

"It's taken me three or four years to get used to it," Karen said to me. "But I've figured it out that this is what these first nights are for. It's not about the opera or Leanne Knight's singing; it's all about looking at everyone else and seeing how we fit in. And since we are with two of the richest men in the city, everyone wants to see that they fit in with us and, of course, they do."

"I'm not sure I fit in," I said hesitantly.

"I'm sure," said Karen immediately and firmly. "You fit in wonderfully with me. I am taking you for lunch tomorrow as well. Don't go into the office in the morning. I'll come and pick you up. We'll have a lazy lunch and get to know one another."

I shuddered again, wondering what Roz would say to that. I had another woman who seemed to want to be my friend. This was a beautiful woman, however, one whom I would have loved to have known, before she got married.

"Oh, about Al," said Karen, waving to the brothers across a crowded foyer, stopping me so that we could talk. "He's a nice guy but I'm not out to marry him off to you if you think I am. He'll find a nice girl some day and settle down. No, I'd like to get to know some of the senior female staff at Ekco. I've told Barry again and again that his father is a misogynist and his sons have to start moving women into top jobs. I want to pick your brains ..."

"I've only been at Ekco for two months," I protested.

"And what an impact you've had," smiled Karen. "Dana Hansen was so useless as an auditor as I'm sure you know. Now, Ross Adams and Jim Barnsley are singing your praises. So, I want to take advantage and advance the cause of women in the firm again. You tell me who is deserving of advancement, Trish, and I'll make sure they get it. How about this Executive Assistant of yours? She seems pretty enterprising in hitching her star on to yours."

"Rosemary Henning is a great person," I said to Karen as we swished our skirts. I felt so womanly as we

daintily joined the line going back to be seated for the last act.

Karen smiled at me, her red lips almost the same shade as my own. "I'm sure she is," she said ironically. "Now, you, my girl, won't be staying where you are for long. Barry mentioned something about a mess with a Texas firm that you've unravelled just like that Technivision thing. I'm quite jealous as he thinks you are Wonder Woman now and not me."

"Mr Barnes seems to be very much in love with you," I squeaked at her.

Karen nodded and swished her skirts gaily to mine, making mine caress my stockings again and send tingling, womanly sensations through me. "And I am very much in love with him," she said, waving to her husband. "I hope you'll find a man like him some day, Trish. A good man can bring out the woman in you that you never knew was in there. Barry did that for me."

No, I did not want a good man to bring out the woman in me, I thought with shudders and thrills going through me at the same time. I had no time to talk to Al then as the final act was beginning but I held his hand in my lap as Karen was holding Barry's. It occurred to me that, if I was going to continue as a woman for a little while, I should try to follow Karen in what she did. She was a better role model for me than Roz Henning.

Al was the perfect gentleman in seeing me right to my apartment door. He hesitated in the doorway as the tension rose in me as well. "This wasn't really a date," Al said, his arm on my elbow.

"No," I agreed, an intense feeling of relief flowing over me as well, strangely, as a twinge of disappointment.

"If it had been a date, I would kiss you good night," Al Barnes said, a little smile on his face.

"But this wasn't a date," I said, looking up at him with a smile.

I had thought that I was safe, but I wasn't. His arms went about me. He hesitated. I should have done something, anything. I should have taken his arms off me. He was a gentleman. He would have known what that meant. I could just have said, "No," or, "This isn't a date, Al," or something, anything. But I didn't. I just looked up at him and my heart beat at a thousand beats per second. He kissed me. I was so glad that he did. Ooo, yes, I deserved it, didn't I, for being the sweet, imitation woman that I was, as much for what I'd done in my job as a woman. My dress swirled about us as he held me. I held onto his arms so that I wouldn't fall as he kissed me again, sticking to my glossy lips.

It was amazing the sensations that woke and poured through me. Oh, I felt so feminine. I felt so female, so like a woman as Al kissed and kissed me. He didn't seem to want to stop. He nudged my arms. I put them about his neck, on tiptoe as my dress swung so wildly about my stockings. Al kissed me so intensely as I kissed him back, loving to treat such a nice guy as he should be treated by a pretty girl. I kissed him back and loved every second of the guilty, feminine feelings that ran through me. It was so incredibly different to feel so womanly, so feminine, so female.

"Next time," said Al, finally breaking off as I still clung to his neck. "It will be a date. I will kiss you properly and for a very long time."

The devil must have been inside me. "I would like that," I murmured as he took my hands from about his neck, squeezed them and left me to enter my apartment alone as a woman, a tingly, excited woman who had to talk to Roz for over an hour to tell her all the wonderful things that had gone on at the Opera, what every woman like me had worn there and that I wasn't going to be in the following day as I had a lunch date.

### XIII. A FIRST DATE

I had more than a lunch date with Karen Barnes. When she found out that I was wearing a wig, she took me to her favorite hairdresser, Edward, at his private store in Greensview, insisting that I get hair extensions and that Edward do me immediately. I'm sure that Edward must have known that I was a man when he removed my wig but if he had suspicions, he never let on.

He and his staff worked on my hair and head for hours, it seemed, but when they were done, I couldn't believe what they had done to me, how girlish they had made me feel through the whole experience. My hair not only seemed to be long, but it was also streaked with blonde, gleaming strands. I had appointments for weeks ahead to get my hair washed and set and re-braided or whatever and, 'touched up', whatever that meant. Karen put the whole bill on her credit card.

"Let Ekco pay for it," she said to me as I weakly, femininely, protested. "They expect the females in the

office to look like fashion models. So, let's have them pay for it for once."

"This, this isn't me," I said to Karen as I staggered out, a womanly dress swaying about me, a woman's arm through mine, a smooth as hers. In the mirrored doorway, the long-legged, mostly blonde woman couldn't have been me, could she, not with the way that her hair was blowing across her face. Beside the blonde woman, Karen Barnes, very much like her, was grinning at her, at me.

We had to pick up Barry and Al at work and go out. Karen insisted. "It's not a date," she told me, her eyes sparkling, as I flushed, wondering how much she had talked to her brother-in-law about the kiss. Yes, the one that had made me dream all night that I was a woman, Al Barnes really my boy friend. Oh, how we had kissed in my dreams! I shuddered as our heels clicked on the sidewalk, making a womanish noise, me feeling so stupid as I thought of, dreamed about another man kissing me. I must stop thinking of such things, I told myself.

"My brother-in-law kissed you for a long time, after the Opera, didn't he?" Karen asked me, trying to keep the smile off her face as she did.

"It wasn't that long," I protested. That made her giggle and that turned to laughing as Karen held on to my arm. I realized she was teasing. "What, what, did Al say about kissing me? I finally had to ask her.

"I thought you'd never ask," laughed Karen, squeezing me to her as she took me to her car and driver. "Oh, he enjoyed kissing you and thinks you enjoyed it as well. Did you, Trish?"

What else could I say to that? "He kisses a girl really nicely," I finally admitted to her, giving in at an 8 or 9

rating on how good a kisser he was for the first time kissing a girl, me (!), whom he really didn't know.

"He gave you a ten plus," Karen said seriously to me, finally erupting with giggles at whatever look there was on my face. "No, Trish, he didn't!" I gasped at her as I'd been so pleased with him saying that about me. "I didn't ask him for numbers. I didn't have to. He did tell me what I think he told you, too. It wasn't a date, was it? Al really wants to date you, which told both of us, Barry on me, what an impression you've made on his brother. Expect him to ask you out, Trish. So, if you've a boy friend somewhere else, or abroad, consider dropping him completely, because, I think, Trish, that once you take up with my brother-in-law, you and he are going to become an item, really fast. What do you think?"

"I, I'm not thinking along those lines," I said to her, my new woman-friend.

"That's what I told him," whispered the irrepressible Karen. "Take it slow and make in last forever, I told him, like Barry and me."

Oh, her smile was brilliant, as I swayed nervously and femininely into her car. We talked about previous boy friends, before she'd found the love of her life, Karen proclaimed, in Barry Barnes. I made up a few stories which sounded unreal to me. Karen laughed and picked holes in all the stories I told her. I was glad to get back to Ekco and solid work.

I got in a couple of hours before Karen came back, sat in Dana's chair, and told me that I had a date that evening, but I didn't have to change as it was 'only' with Al. Yes, men were so unlucky, their business suits could be worn even on a date. But she and I, Karen said with a satisfied smile, were women. We'd dressed

up for our lunch date, hadn't we? We didn't have to go home, and change again, did we? Our men friend, our dates, didn't know how lucky they were.

We dined together with the brothers. I didn't have to say very much as the other three seemed to sparkle in their conversation. If they were out to impress me, they really did. Barry had a dry sense of humor that poked fun at everything that Karen said. She laughed at him, however, and punched his arm whenever he said anything derogatory about her 'woman's agenda'.

"You're probably a feminist as well, aren't you, Trish?" said Al with a smile at me.

"Of course, she is," said Karen, taking my hand and squeezing it, me shuddering to be referred to in the feminine. "We've been doing a lot more than getting our hair done this afternoon. We've been getting to know each other. I'm going to have my own spy right inside your company, Barry, Al. Trish is going to tell me all about your sexist behaviour in the office."

Barry protested. I had to tell her timidly that, as far as I could tell, Al was a perfect gentleman about the office. "Just wait a while," said Karen. She looked to her husband. "Come on, Bonzo," she said to him. "You have work tomorrow. So, you can dance with me now. Al's away next week, as well, Trish. You'd better get him on the floor now since it's what we came for."

Karen swept away as Al looked at me expectantly. "It's all right," I murmured to him, hoping he couldn't see how deeply I was blushing, how womanly I was feeling, as this day of being a woman stretched out. "It's what Karen came for."

Al grinned at me. "That's my sister-in-law," he said with a huge smile. "She's been like that since we've

known her. She's had Bonzo, I mean, Barry, wrapped around her little finger for over five years now. Actually, I don't know how he puts up with it all. I prefer a woman who's a lot quieter, a lot more demure. Please don't let Karen influence you, Trish, into becoming the kind of woman she is. I like you just the way you are."

I shivered all through the dances then, that I had with Al. He held me so gently, as if I really was a woman, besides praising my hair and how it was done. He held me so tightly and securely that my feet, in womanly high heels, just seemed to know where to go so as not to trip him. The little floor was crowded, anyway, so that we couldn't do much more than cling together, and exchange hugs, no matter what the music was that was playing.

"I'll take Trish home," said Al, taking my arm possessively, making absurd, womanly feelings course through me.

"I told Trish that this wasn't a date," said Karen with a sparkling smile. "You should just make him let you off at the curb, Trish. Oh, and since Barry is joining Al out on the West Coast, how about you come over and see me next week. We can do girlie things together. Chippendales is in town at the *Mocadero*, I hear. We have to go and see what handsome, male bodies really look like."

"Oh, woman," said Barry with a huge grin. "You don't know what you're asking for now, tonight."

"Same old, same old," laughed Karen as she danced away from her husband and into the chauffeured car that had been at her disposal all day.

"See," said Al, his arm about me, sending tingles again through me. "I could only bear a woman like that for short doses. How about you? I can give you a

dozen excuses to use from work to keep Karen away from you when you don't want to be rushed by her. She does that to almost everyone she likes."

"It, it's all right," I said as I got into the taxi with him, remembering all the lessons Roz had taught me on how to enter a car like a woman. I shuddered as Al took me home, paid the taxi and gave the driver an extra twenty to wait for him.

Of course, Al took me to my door. I wanted him to, anyway. Of course, he kissed me good night. It lasted just as long, no, longer, than it had the night before. And I felt so womanly that I almost invited him in as he kissed me gently. At last, he saying how he loved my hair, he added that he would pick me up on Saturday night, his last in town for a while, and we could have our first date together.

I should have said, "No!" What I actually said was that I'd love to go out with Al on Saturday. If he had asked me, I would have said that I would love to go out and dance with him forever if he wanted me to. Oh yes, his kisses made me swirl about him as if I was real, a real girl, that is.

It might not have been a date, but I loved all the long, exploring kisses I was given. I even loved the gentle ways he touched me and awakened femininity in other parts of my body, especially in my thighs and tush. I liked him stroking me there. I did feel so girlish, and kissed him so much more actively when he did that.

"Goodnight, Patricia. Till Saturday," Al whispered and was gone. I stood in the dark of my apartment and shuddered uncontrollably then as the word, 'Patricia', reverberated around me. I was Patricia, Trish, Trisha. I had a date with a man on Saturday who was going to



kiss me, again and again, at the end of whatever it was that we did together.

I looked at my image in the little black dress of Dana's that I had worn to go out. Well, I didn't have that much choice as I only had a little of her clothing, left in the office with me. When Karen had called, and said that we were going out. I'd had to call Roz in and anxiously ask for her advice. She'd laughed a little but had told me what to wear. Now, I looked at myself with my long hair on my shoulders and my makeup mussed up a little and couldn't see anything masculine about me at all.

I was a woman. I lifted my skirt and I was still a woman in my stockings, garter belt and panties. I looked at the girl in the mirror and loved her. I knew that she loved being who she was. I shivered as I went to bed and changed. Yes, I willingly put on a nightie, going to bed with my hair in a net, my skin covered with softening, woman's lotions. Then, I got up on Friday, eager to be a woman again, all day long.

Al took me to the theater on Saturday, introducing me again to Ross Adams and his wife who were also there for *Waiting for Godot*.

"I suppose you like this Becket stuff," said Ross with a smile.

"Oh, I do," I said, not having to feign my enthusiasm. I'd seen the play at grammar school with semi-pro actors but, with real professionals, it was so wonderful and exciting.

"Another Karen," said Ross with a huge smile at Al, as I went on, in the accented, girlish voice that I seemed to be able to speak now at will.

"I hope so," said Al with a returning smile.

"I, I thought that you didn't like girls like Karen," I said with a tremble to him.

"The one thing I like about Karen," whispered Al into my jewelled ear, "is that she had the good sense to marry a Barnes man."

That left me in a complete nervous funk all through the last act and all the way back to my apartment. It was our first date and so Al walked right into my apartment after he opened the door for me. He hung up my coat, took off his jacket and held me, shaking and tingly, in front of the mirror and so I could see myself through my thick lashes kissing him with such eager enthusiasm.

Only it wasn't me kissing him. It was some woman with blonde-streaked hair in a stylish dress, stolen again from Dana Hansen's dressing room, even the stockings, hers. They made the woman's legs seem so long and so feminine.

"I'm not going to rush you," Al whispered in my ear. "I do think that we should get to know each other a lot more before we go to bed together. So, let's sit on your couch and get to know one another a lot better."

On the couch, Al got to know me a great deal better. I lay, as a woman, beneath him and let him caress me, my legs on fire as he caressed my thighs and stockings, sending incredibly wonderful sensations through me. He devoured my mouth as I was French-kissed fiercely by a man. Oh, I didn't want to think that! And so I didn't. I wanted to enjoy Al kissing me and not think about the future or the past. I didn't want to think about Roz, who'd told me how disappointed her daughter had been that I couldn't spend Saturday with them as a woman.

Roz said that she understood and drove me back to my apartment with three suitcases full of female clothing from Dana's dressing room. She taught me how to separate the dirty clothes I had into different colors and different materials for the wash. I tried to get it right but, in the end, Roz just put it all into several garbage bags and took my soiled female clothing home with her.

"Well, I won't have much else to do this weekend, will I?" Roz said sharply to me as I thanked her profusely.

Al Barnes was a gentleman. I was a lady. I did cling to him a kiss him ferociously when he really aroused the woman in me, which he did very often, smiling and kissing me more gently when I explained why I was demanding his caresses so forcefully. I was losing the demure woman in me. He went home, even though I was still clinging to his lips with mine. I was still pressing my body into his and wishing, wishing that I could have been a woman, a real woman, for him. I loved him kissing my neck and upper chest and held him to me as hard as I could, quivering and moving beneath him as his mouth found mine for another rapturous kiss.

Al stood up when I realized how aroused he was kissing his active woman, me. I realized what he might expect by the way that his pants jutted out. "I have to go, or I'll be staying all night," Al said huskily to me. I shook at that, wanting him to stay longer, and knowing what that would inevitably lead to, in the fey, womanly mood that I was in. I hung on to him and kissed him all the way to the door before we wished each other good night and a good time while we were away from each other for a couple of weeks.

## XIV. STUNNED

Roz wanted all the details on Sunday, especially about how I'd felt when Al Barnes had kissed me. I didn't tell her everything, but I think she guessed anyway.

Abby was entranced by my pictures in the Sunday paper with Karen and the Barnes brothers at the opera. "Your hair!" she shrieked. "It's so different there and so different again today! You're becoming a blonde! Mum, I want to be a blonde as well! Oh, and that gown you wore. Look at the front of it, Mum. Trish really does have boobs just like you!"

"Not like mine," said Roz sotto voce to me. I had to agree and blush at that. Louder, Roz said, "You know that all these pictures are going to be circulated non-stop on Monday at the office, Trisha. You'll find them up all over the place on a dozen different notice boards. Wow, look at this one in silhouette. I think that Abby is right!"

"Please!" I begged her nervously, but I had to cut out the picture and keep it when I got back home. I couldn't believe that the girl in the picture was me. She had an almost perfect female figure. Her makeup was exquisite, her hair a long mane down her bare back. I was looking over my shoulder at Al behind me but he'd been cropped from the picture. I seemed to be smiling and pouting girlishly for the camera.

As Roz had predicted, that picture was everywhere in the offices after Monday. I was glad that Al was away. I could stay in my office and work on the reports and audits that I had to.

I visited Karen and her girl friends several times as Al was away. He stayed on longer, a business matter

having to be negotiated, as Barry told me when he came back. He said to me that Al was really missing me. So, for a weekend I was Roz's entirely and she arranged for me to have a laundry service at my apartment.

"You aren't ever going to be a woman like me," Roz said with a smile to me to me. "Payday on Monday. You'll be able to afford this, you'll see."

It was ridiculous how womanly I was becoming. I went into work and began to speak to so many girls and women, feeling so incredibly wonderful. I was Trisha. I became one of them, accepted as Trish, loving all the compliments I got for Dana's wardrobe.

Then, I got my check and the bonus that Al had paid me. I gulped, stunned at the monthly salary I was shown as receiving and at the hundred thousand dollars paid into my bank account as a bonus.

"Half of that is yours," I told Roz as she sat, stunned, at her desk, staring at the amount of money paid to me, Trish Kirk.

We were both in the moment happily when the door to the office flew open, an elegant woman stepping in through the doorway and barging right into the inner office and thence to the dressing room.

Roz stood up, choking, as she came into the inner office.

"What the hell has happened to my dressing room?" said Dana Hansen, turning in a fury on the two of us, staring at her. "And what are you doing wearing one of my outfits?" she asked me tartly. "Where's Pat Kirk? You," she said to Roz. "Where is my Executive Assistant?"

Then, suddenly, she stopped. She stared at me. "Pat?" she asked. "Oh my god, is that you, Pat Kirk,

dressed up in my clothes. What in Hades has been going on around here while I've been gone?!"

## XV. THE FIRST DISCOVERY

I stood there gaping at an angry Dana Hansen. She had every reason in the world to be angry with me as I stood there in her clothes, in her wig and in her shoes. All my underwear was hers, from my panties and my bra, to my stockings and underslip. My makeup and my perfume were hers. But my earrings were mine. Those I had bought myself when I was out shopping with Roz when she'd made me get my ears pierced.

Dana stood in the open doorway of the third room of her offices and stared at me. "Pat!" she said sharply as I looked at her, stunned at her sudden appearance, at the way she'd immediately gone into the room she'd called her dressing room, and by the way she'd noticed, almost right away, that half of the female clothing she'd left in there, wasn't in there any more.

It was mostly at my apartment, along with the few items of women's wear that I had bought for myself. Since I was now the Acting Section Head of the Contracts Division at Ekco, basically the auditor division of the huge conglomerate, I'd needed an extensive female wardrobe since everyone thought that I was female. Roz had insisted that I utilize the one so obviously available to me, Trish, the new girl about the offices. Oh, how I had loved it all, wearing female lingerie and dresses every day, talking as a woman and being treated as such by everyone.

I'd never thought of Dana Hansen ever coming back. Her last note had ended with 'if I ever come back'. Everyone I spoke to, from Al, a partner in the

business, to Shauna, the older member of the stenographers' pool, assured me she was off with some famous plastic surgeon in the South Seas. She was going to be married and so, never coming back. Until, here she was.

I'd had committee and board meetings to attend in my new role as a woman. I'd had to go to the opera with the sons of the founding father of Ekco. Oh, how I loved it when the younger one kissed me. I'd had to go to lunch, often, with the wife of the other brother. She, Karen, pointedly quizzed me in front of her elegant friends on the way that women were treated in the company.

A woman like me was supposed to making it better for women who came now to work with Ekco. I stared at Dana, thinking of all the silly excuses that I'd used to myself, for taking her clothes and wearing them as I was, fully, at that moment. It came home to me, suddenly and viciously, that I wasn't a woman. I shouldn't be dressed in pretty women's clothing, and I certainly shouldn't be dressed as I was, right then and there, in Dana Hansen's dress, panties, stockings and bra.

Karen Barnes, Barry's wife, was a honey-haired blonde. She was a dynamo of a woman, on so many different charity boards that I'd lost count of them. "I only do it," she'd confided in me, "if they have charity balls in their fund-raising. I do so love to get dressed up in a Giselle Lewin or Francesca Brown ball gown and spend an evening being admired, not just by Barry but by the main part of the male audience that isn't gay. I saw you at the opera again, Tricia. I think you love it nearly as much as I do, don't you?"

I'd loved going to the opera in my designer gown, a Giselle Lewin. I was in all the papers on Al Barnes'

arm, those that hadn't cut his picture out. My hair reshaped by Edward and my makeup perfectly done at Menoncino's. Those were institutions devoted to female beauty that Karen and most of her friends attended. She'd made appointments for me to coincide with hers, so that we could be women together, as we had our hair, our hands and feet, 'done'. We chatted about the firm, the Barnes brothers, men in general and female fashions, as well as what my previous boss, Dana Hansen, was doing. Well, I didn't know that, or I wouldn't have been caught as I was, in all of her clothing, would I?

I finally loved the life of bliss I was living as a woman, I'd been living as a woman every second of the day for the last few weeks, even sleeping in nighties and panties since my date with Al Barnes. I dreamed of kissing him again and again, as he'd kissed me, outside my door, and on my sofa, while I'd squirmed at the girlish thrills he'd aroused in me. I'd hoped he'd be home soon from his West Coast business trip, that he'd ask me out on another date and that we'd do it all again, me his so feminine, womanly date.

But here was Dana Hansen, the Vice-President of our section, back from a 'holiday' that all of us, Al Barnes included, had thought was going to last 'forever'.

"What, what are you doing here?" I managed to gasp at Dana at last, as Roz stood in the doorway of the outer office, where Dana's executive assistant, me, was supposed to be working.

How could I explain to Dana that my name had led to my present predicament, not with how she was looking at me with aghast amusement. Others had heard my name and presumed that an Executive Assistant, a secretary by a glorified name, the one named

Pat must be a woman. If I'd been male, I'd have been fired after Dana went off. She'd left me with the controversial report to present in her place, which wouldn't have seen the light of day, or saved the company a fortune, if only she'd stayed to confront Damian and Technivision.

I'd have been fired, Roz said that she would have been fired, as she'd leaked the secret report she'd seen in Dana's office. I'd 'briefly' disguised myself as the 'Pat Kirk' everyone expected to see. I wanted to explain all this to Dana, more, as Roz had said the Employment Office wouldn't fire a woman, a girl, not with her boss, Dana Hansen, away.

Damian Robertson had thought me a woman, I'd have to admit to Dana. He'd tried to charm the report out of me. No, I thought with a shiver. I couldn't admit that, that he thought I was really a woman, just a day after she was gone. Well, he did get the report ahead of time but only because Al Barnes, the higher boss, of Dana, Damian and me, had got me to send copies to all the sections. He did it smoothly without threatening to fire me, convincing me, the female executive assistant he expected to be in Dana's office, to do it. Could I say that to Dana, staring at me, waiting for me to lie to her about dressing in her clothes, I was sure by the look on her face.

Odd details began to slip through my mind. Roz's arguments about me being dressed completely as a woman, keeping the Technivision thing alive and going; Roz covering for my voice because of the sickness I was supposedly recovering from; how I had attracted the solicitude and close attention of Al Barnes.

Oh, good grief, how could I admit that I liked going out, as a woman, loved it now, with Roz and her teen-aged daughter. Abbie knew all about me and loved

and encouraged me to wear the prettiest of dresses and makeup and jewellery. She kept telling me that she wanted to be a girl just like me, embarrassing me no end as I knew exactly what she meant and that she was only teasing me. Dana was not going to react to me, I could see, as Abbie had.

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“More to the point, Pat,” said Dana Hansen crossly, the silence between the three of us ‘women’ being finally broken. “What have you been doing to my office and to my dressing room while I have been away? And again, what are you doing, wearing my clothes and my hairpiece and,” she sniffed the air, “my Lancôme perfume?”

“We, we didn’t expect you back so soon,” I managed to babble at her, looking to Roz for support but my Executive Assistant, the job Roz had wangled for herself with my ‘promotion’, was for once in her life apparently tongue-tied. Roz, after all, had been the one with all the glib answers and lies that had charmed me into dresses and makeup and being this modern, elegant woman, as I thought I’d become, across the room from Dana Hansen.

“Evidently,” said Dana sarcastically, looking me up and down. “Those cannot be real, can they?” she asked with a smile, pointing to the two mounds on my chest.

“N-No,” I gasped. I couldn’t tell her how the saleswomen at Giselle Lewin’s had provided me with a special bra to wear with my taped chest and ball gown. I could have worn a strapless gown if I had wished. In fact, if Dana had looked closely in her walk-in closet, she would find a strapless dress that was there that

Roz had arranged for me to buy after the fitting to my first evening gown.

"It's, it's a long, strange story," I said hesitantly to my boss. I guess she still was, I guessed, as I swayed nervously on my high heels. Ooo, my skirt brushed so softly against my stockings, sending such pleasant, womanly sensations through me.

"I'll bet it is," said Dana with a smirk on her face. "I want to hear it all and, by the way, Pat, I must tell you that you do look lovely in that skirt and top of mine. And you have shaved your legs, too, I see, and pierced your ears. Or were you already doing those things before I left, and I just didn't notice at the time?"

"I, I was just trying to p-protect the Technivision report," I told her, feeling the heat of embarrassment all over me as she smiled at me, in womanly clothing, and studied the way I was standing, my nervous fingers with their long, painted nails so clearly on view to her.

"Al-Almost from the moment you left," I said nervously as Dana frowned at me, "Damian came after me to get a c-copy of m-my, of our, r-report. Cheryl Bonney phoned me," I went on as Dana suddenly gave me a very sharp look. "She, she thought that P-Pat Kirk was a woman and she, she wanted to warn m-me that Damian had heard of the report and wanted a copy. He, he said to F-Fisher in P-Personnel that h-he was going to fire me if I was a man. All my files would have to be turned over to P-Personnel, and so he would have my, that is, our, work, right away."

"So, you invaded my sanctuary and helped yourself to my clothes to save my files!" asked Dana in astonishment. She began to laugh. "That must be the weakest excuse I've ever heard, Pat, for a man wanting to cross-dress. I mean, look at you. Becoming all pretty

girlie just to save a few sheets of paper? How long have you been waiting for the opportunity to get into my office and try on my clothes? They do look good on you, by the way. You've used my makeup beautifully as well. You must have had years of practise. You have, haven't you?"

"No!" I gasped at her. "It, it wasn't like that at all! I just used a wig and a coat to Damian!" Well, and the makeup that Roz had put on my face. "It, it was enough!"

Dana came forward then, bent and lifted my skirt as I tried belatedly to stop her. "Panties and a black garter belt?" she asked. "You're dressed from the inside out like a woman, Pat, and there isn't a bulge, as far as I could see, at the front of your panties. Boy, did I ever make a mistake hiring you to break the glass floor for men in this firm."

"I d-didn't h-have to do this for D-Damian," I stammered, distressed as I pulled my skirt back out of her hand. "It, it was Al Barnes who, who kept coming in and, and I had to p-present at the P-Projects Committee, in your place, and then Barry Barnes made me buy an Opera ticket and Al and Barry and his wife came to pick me up."

Dana's mouth split open in a wide smile as she stared at me and began to laugh. "You had to go to the opera as Al Barnes's date?" she chortled at me.

"It wasn't a date," I protested, blushing to the roots of my newly tinted and braided hair. "Karen told Al it wasn't when he escorted me in."

"I bet that didn't stop Al Barnes," laughed Dana Hansen. "You did fool him, I take it. He thinks you're a woman, too. Good heavens, what am I saying? Just standing here looking at you, Pat, I can see that you're

a woman. You can't just have started, then, dressing in drag. You must have been a drag queen for years!" She laughed and laughed while I shuddered in distress and wondered what would happen if I tried to run away from that office. "Or did you have expert help?" Dana finally said, turning her attention to the petrified, silent Rosemary Henning.

"It was just me," I began.

"It was all my idea," said Roz, looking down at the floor. "I'm so sorry, Trisha. I should have checked Ms Hansen's itinerary much more carefully. We said that this masquerade would have to end in a month and we're so close to that now."

"It was your idea that my male secretary dress like a female?" asked Dana, ignoring me.

"No, it wasn't," I said desperately. I was going to go down in flames but there was no reason why Roz should as well. She did have her kids to think about. We'd said I'd get enough in acting like a woman in Dana's place to have enough to finance graduate work at university. The pay and bonus checks on my desk would enable me to do that.

"It, it was my idea, Dana," I told her, my color surely a scarlet, a crimson or something. "I, I've always wanted to get into your dressing room and, and try, try on all your c-clothes."

I shivered as I said that, knowing that, while that was true now, it wasn't true at the very beginning when Roz had to urge me to wear a pretty dress. Now, I needed no urging at all. I looked forward to wearing a dress and going out with Roz or with Al and occasionally with Karen. I even like going to a 'chick flick' with Abigail, Roz's daughter, who said she wanted me

to go with her as I wore such nicer clothes than her mother.

"So you are a trans- tranny something," sneered Dana at me. I blushed yet again as I had to say it to her.

"Y-Yes, Dana," I agreed as Roz stared at me in stunned silence. "I, I'm a transvestite. I-I'm a man who loves to wear women's clothing."

Dana Hansen burst out laughing again as she stared at me. She patted me on the shoulder then as she stared into my face, her smile so broad as she checked out all the feminine aspects of my makeup, hair and jewellery. I was now as tall as she was in my high heels, or I should say, her high heels.

"Amazing!" Dana said as she sat down in her chair where I'd been sitting when she stormed in. "No-one tumbled to what you two were up to? No, Trisha, is that what you call yourself now, Pat? No, I suppose they wouldn't, not the way you sound, Pat. You sound so, so girlish, in the way that you talk. You must have practised that for a long time! Geez! I can't believe it! Pat Kirk in my clothes and looking so beautiful. Am I ever going to have some laughs in the next committee meeting when I tell them all how stupid they've all been!"

## XVI. DANA IN CHARGE AGAIN

"You can't leave me all alone with her," whispered Roz, looking close to tears as I stood by the outer door, my purse in my hand.

Dana was on the phone, the two of us regally dismissed. "Oh, yes, Al," she said as she came from the inner office, holding out her hand to me. "She's right here, Al," she said into the phone, emphasizing the

'she'. "And I have to say, Al, that she looks twice or three times lovelier than when I hired her. I think it must be your influence, Al, that has made her become so colorful and beautiful a young lady. One moment, I'll give her over to you."

I felt sick as the phone was thrust into my hand. Dana stood back, gloating at me as I heard Al Barnes talking to someone else on the phone. "Hello, Trish, are you there?" he asked me as I quivered at the sound of his voice.

"Y-Yes, Mr Barnes," I said, shivering, feeling so awkward and upset as he sounded just as he always did.

"Mr Barnes?" he asked in surprise and amusement. I could imagine him smiling as he talked down the phone to me. "It's Al, not my brother, Bonzo." I heard laughter around him, and a giggle that I was certain was Karen's.

"Hey, Trish," said Al Barnes. "We just landed. Karen is here to meet us. She's informed me that there's this big charity ball on Saturday. She has tickets for us all. I asked her if she'd asked you to go with me. She just told me that she's not my social secretary and that, if I want to go out with a girl, I have to ask her myself. So, Trish, can you, will you, break off any engagement you have on Saturday night and come with me to a charity ball? You can wear the dress you did to the opera."

There was a shriek and some noise on the other end of the phone. I distinctly heard Karen's voice saying, "You cannot say that to a girl, Al! She must wear a new dress and, if she doesn't have one, she'll tell you she has to wash her hair on Saturday night or something!"

I forgot in the enthusiasm of their voices where I was. I smiled a little. "No," I said to Al, "I don't have to wash my hair or anything on Saturday."

"Then I can pick you up at eight," said a laughing Al Barnes.

I realized where I was then and the two women looking at me. "Yes, okay," I said nervously.

"Our second date," said Al. I could sense that he was a little puzzled by my more sudden, non-committal reply.

"Yes," I agreed. "Glad to hear you're back." I hung up quickly and gave the phone back to Dana. Only then did I realize that the dress I'd thought I'd wear was still there, in the back of Dana Hansen's dressing room, where Roz had hung it.

"Got a date with Al Barnes on Saturday night?" asked Dana Hansen with a smirk. "Going to the AIDS Charity Ball?"

I couldn't help the shivers that ran all over me as I looked at her looking at me, examining every inch of my femininity. I couldn't be going anywhere, ever again, as a woman, could I? I was finished at Ekco. But I could get some money back on returning that dress, couldn't I?

"Could Roz go back into your dressing room, Dana?" I asked her, knowing I'd be going nowhere with Al Barnes after Dana had an awful, gloating conversation with him. "There's that dress there that you ordered for me, Roz, so that I wouldn't always be wearing Dana's clothes. If Roz could get it for me, I'll get going with it, Ms Hansen, and leave your office to you."

Roz went off quickly.

"Not so fast," said Dana, staring after her. "You're keeping your dresses in here with mine? Oh, Pat, this I have to see. A man sharing his dresses with me! I should keep anything of yours in here until you return all the clothes you've taken from me!"

I hated the way she was looking at me. I hated the fuss Dana made over the strapless gown that Roz returned with, that clearly wasn't hers.

"This is one of Giselle's designs!" exclaimed Dana. "Can you wear a strapless like that, Pat, a boy like you? Surely you can't!"

"She bought it for the Opera, the first night of the season," said Roz, keeping the dress across her arm as Dana looked at it. "Then she decided to wear the other one. The picture was in all of the papers."

Dana's head jerked up at that. "Oh, that I've just got to see!" she exclaimed. "Show me the pictures from the first night of the Opera!"

Roz reluctantly opened the desk drawer, in what was her desk now, in the outer office. She took out the newspapers which had all the pictures of me and other members of Ekco at the first night.

"Fantastic!" said Dana, beginning to giggle again, as she spread out the picture of me in silhouette, my curvy picture so incredibly female and femininely attractive. "Oh, Pat! I would never have believed you could be made into such a pretty woman!"

I stood there, quaking on my high heels, Dana's actually, as she gasped and exclaimed as she looked at the pictures not just of me but of all the other Ekco officers, and their wives, who had been at *La Boheme*.

"Oh, I wish I had been there to see you, Pat," Dana said enthusiastically. "I'm so looking forward to seeing you at the AIDS Ball. I was just saying that to Al. I

suggested he should invite you to go with him. Oh, look at him there with his arm about you. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Al wasn't a little sweet on you already, as it is, Pat!"

"Please, Dana," I finally had to say to her. "Please. You've had your fun with me. It's been extremely embarrassing for me to be like this in front of you. I never intended that this would be the outcome of saving our jobs."

"Unintended consequences of our actions get us every time, don't they?" said Dana with one of her wry smiles. "If I hadn't found out what a louse my doctor friend was, he's married and has three little girls, I might still be out there in Bora-Bora. Instead, I just had to get out of there, and come back to the safe, comfortable, backstabbing, little world that we all know and love. And look what's been going on all the time behind my back. How many other guys are acting out their fetishes for the steno pool? Ten or twenty men, dressing up as women? A real chorus line, is that what you're part of, pretty Patricia!?"

"If I can just go," I began again, on the verge of shrieking out loud at her, edging once more to the door.

"And speaking of backstabbing, how was Damian Robertson when he saw you," Dana said, ignoring what I was saying. "If I know him, once he saw what a pretty, little chick was resting in my office, he must have been calling in, every few minutes or so."

"No," I said, about to beg her to let me go. A shake of my head set my earrings off so marvellously against my neck, though Dana was smiling at me, still eyeing me all over as if imagining me as a woman in a strapless dress. "Damian Robertson hasn't been near me at

all. He was really angry a-about my report on Technivision."

"That doesn't keep Damian away from a pretty girl," said Dana, changing her smile to a frown. "Roz, you know everything going on in the office. Why hasn't Damian been calling here on Miss Kirk?"

Dana smiled at me, raising her hands to me as I backed away to the door. I guessed that she knew how I would feel inside with her referring to me in the feminine.

"Well, Mr Barnes was in here a lot and he's made it clear that Trish is his protégé," said Roz uncertainly. I wanted to kick her when I saw the look on Dana's face.

"How often was Al Barnes here in this office?" Dana asked sharply. "Ten times? More?"

"Not even four times altogether, Dana," I whispered to her. "Really, he's been out of town the last two weeks. Mostly, it's just phone calls from his secretary, um, executive assistant, wanting clarification on various recommendations that I've made, for you, in your place. Let me get out of here, please. You'll never see me again, like this!"

Dana looked back quickly at Roz, pale at the penetrating look that Dana gave her. Poor Roz. She was going to be quizzed unmercifully about Al Barnes I was sure if I should leave as I so desperately wanted to.

The phone rang again. Roz answered it. "Oh yes, Mr Robertson," she said. "She's back from the South Pacific. She's catching up on office business. I'll ask her if she's ready to take a call from you."

Dana was frowning still at me. She waved to me to stay there, where I was. I could think of trillion reasons why she'd do that. I was, after all, her male secretary, or executive assistant, a personal secretary. She knew

it. She was staring at me as she talked to Damian about a new project that he was apparently promoting.

"Yes, I do think that it would be a good idea to advance your proposals to us after the debacle with Technivision," Dana said, in the sweetest of tones. You would never have known she was speaking to her arch-enemy as she chatted on the phone. "Oh, I would love to go to the AIDS Ball on Saturday.

"Yes, Trish," she looked at me with a question in her voice, "is going to be there with Al Barnes. Oh, she is, is she? How nice to hear that from you! But don't despair, Damian dear. It's a long way to the altar from here and there's many a slip or silly revelation that can upset the apple cart. Yes, eight o'clock on Saturday would be just fine."

Dana's eyes glittered as she looked at me. I felt so afraid as she looked at me so venomously. "Damian says you're Al Barnes' girl friend and the whole company knows it. So, I've been stabbed in the back, haven't I, after all, and by a man, of all things?"

"Dana," I babbled at her wretchedly. "It's not like that at all."

"Al's only back one minute from Los Angeles and who does he phone? Not me," snapped Dana. "He phones you. When he found out I was here, he could have asked me first to the Ball, couldn't he? But he doesn't. He bypasses me and wants to talk to you, Pat-trish-ah. It's you he wants to take out."

"He, he wasn't thinking," I said to her. "Let, let me phone him back and tell him, well, what I have to now."

"Oh no," said Dana Hansen angrily. "You don't get out of wearing my clothes and stealing my boy friend that easily, Miss Prettygirl Kirk. No, this I have to see. I

have to see the two of you, Trisha and Albert, together as lovebirds. That's what Damian called you. He was gloating, of course, that my own secretary has stolen my lover away from me."

Roz tried to intervene. "You have it all wrong, Dana," she said. "It was Barry who made Trish go to the Opera and Karen ..."

"Trish," said Dana with a smirk. "Oh, I see. Pat is male, and Trish is his girl self. Pat-Trisha, two people in one. I wonder if Al will see it that way. What he will think of it when I tell him who he's been cuddling up to."

I could stand no more of it, of the spite and mockery that were coming from my former boss. I fled out of the office, along the hallway to the stairwell, not trusting myself to stand there, in front of the elevators, with the crowd of men and women who now seemed to know me so well.

It hadn't been like that when I was a man. Then, I'd been practically invisible to everyone. Soon, however, they would know all about me, the man in a dress. They would be making jokes about me all over the company. I felt my ears burning, a flush on my face, as I scurried down the stairs, nodding to the few people whom I'd met before. I eventually reached the mezzanine and took that way out of the offices and across to the neighbour of the Ekco Summit Building.

That put me out near the taxi ranks. That was when, looking for money or my credit card, that I realized I'd left my pay slip and the bonus cheque on the desk where I'd been sitting when Dana had come in.

I felt incredibly stupid as I crossed my legs and sat back in the cab, so aware of the cabbie scrutinizing me as so many of them did. What was I going to do with-

out that money, I thought in panic? How could I just disappear and become me again as I had planned to do?

I could feel the cabbie watching me as I went up to the entrance to my apartment building. I had noticed that they did that, watching me wiggle all the way up to the building. I got to the door and looked back. The cabbie smiled and waved to me. I flushed and went in, right into the arms of my least favorite persons, Jack and Dirk, the would-be swingers from the sixth floor.

"Hey, baby," said Dirk, putting his arm about me with a familiarity that made my skin crawl.

"Don't do that," I said to him, pinching his arm to get him to take it away from me.

"Home early," said Jack with a leer at me. "Must be a heavy date, Trish. How come we haven't seen that boss of yours around here lately?"

"He's just back from a business trip today," I told him as he followed me down the hall to the apartment that had 'P Kirk' in the name bar.

"Getting ready for him then," smirked Jack. "Came home early to make yourself pretty for his visit."

"Something like that," I agreed as I shivered and shook inside.

But in the safety of my apartment, I did what I had been promising myself to do for so long. I took off my necklace and bracelet, my rings and my earrings and put them away in the little box that Roz had bought me to keep them in. The phone rang but I ignored it. I struggled and struggled but eventually freed my hair from the extensions and hair weaves that had been put on me. I carefully arranged them as well on the wig block as I was supposed to do.

The person in the mirror who looked back at me was grotesque to my eyes. I ruffled my fingers through my hair, the red fingernails so shiny and feminine. My hair had grown a little, but it was still a man's hair. I guess with my blouse, skirt and with earrings at my ears, I would have looked like a girl with short hair, but I wasn't going ever to chance such a thing. Surely someone would then look at me and know that I was Pat Kirk, for sure, in a dress.

I took off the pretty, shaped jacket and the skirt that I had worn to the office and carefully hung them up with the clothing that Roz and I had brought to my apartment from Dana's dressing room. I kicked off my high heels and stood them neatly with the others that had crowded out my male oxfords and runners.

I hung up my soft blouse and took off the slip that I wore and tossed it into the laundry basket. There was my laundry basket with only female clothing in it, panties, stockings, garter belts and slips mixed in with bras and corsets that would be taken to the cleaners for me, if I now let them do that.

I trembled as I undid my stockings from my Merry Widow corset and then opened it so that I could breathe more deeply. The constant pressure on my diaphragm reminded me all the time to talk like a girl, in light, breathy tones. I was so used to doing it now that I felt it a strain to talk in my own, real voice as Pat Kirk.

I unstrapped my chest and removed the pads that gripped me so tightly and bounced on occasion like a real woman's breasts. I had to knead my chest then, so bare of hair, to get my muscles to lie flat. Sometimes after wearing a corset and pressing my chest muscles together, they seemed to want to stay as they wear, shaped like a woman's breasts. I massaged my chest back to a semblance of masculinity.



My face still made up and, with my panties in place, it was only a vague semblance of masculinity that confronted me. I took down my panties and then the tape from my genitals that 'tucked' me so neatly into place. I had to grimace as my testicles descended. I sat for a moment and then took makeup remover to my face. It took me a while to scrub my eyes free from the mascara on my curved lashes and to remove the eyeliner that made my eyes so vivid.

There. I was a man again, but such an odd-looking man. I'd told Roz that she'd taken too much of my eyebrows away. The little arcs above my eyes showed that that was quite true. I still looked girlish with all the makeup off my face, at last. I pulled faces and it didn't help.

I got out some of my man's clothes and put them on. I had definitely lost weight. Everything felt so awful on me. I hadn't worn men's socks in an age. They seemed all itchy on my shaven legs. My trousers were so rough that I hated to have them against me. Even my shirt seemed to be huger than I remembered.

I looked at the man I'd become in the mirror. The way that I moved wasn't masculine at all. I put my hand to my face. There were my fingernails, so red and so female. I would have to get them off me. I looked so, so delicate in the mirror. I shivered with disgust as I painted my nails with nail polish remover and waited for it to work. Then, I had the job of removing the acrylic nail tips that covered my own. I couldn't believe how much mine had grown while being covered for such a long time with fake nails.

This was me, I thought with an intense shudder. This is what I would look like from now on. I shivered. Not with eyebrows like that, I thought. I couldn't go out past Jack and Dirk with eyebrows like I had.

I had time to think, too, now that I was alone, now that I was 'myself'. I had just destroyed myself, I knew. By now, Dana was on the phone. My dressing up as a woman, me being a girl named Trish was probably now on every e-mail leaving the Ecko building. I was finished as a business person. The only thing I could do now, I realized, was to change my name and disappear to some other city. Gods, and whatever was I going to do for money, for cash!

I was thoroughly miserable as I moved, my pants too baggy and too rough. My shirt seemed to have too much material in it. I just had to stop walking in the womanly way I'd forced myself to. I was definitely walking in a way that identified me to others as a queer, or a woman.

My doorbell rang. I looked out the eyehole. Roz was there. Worse, she was there with her daughter, Abigail, who knew all about me, as Trish, but didn't know me as Patrick at all. I was tempted to open the door and let the pair of them in, but I couldn't do that to Rosemary's daughter. She'd never seen me as anything but a woman even though she knew that I was a man.

My phone was ringing again. There were six messages waiting for me to react to them, three at least from Roz. I shuddered and didn't answer any. Then, I heard Dana's voice from my machine. "Trish?" she asked. "Yes, I'll call you that as you seem to like being called by an obvious woman's name. I'm sorry I was so bitchy to you. I was very spiteful, wasn't I? Look, we have to talk and get things straight between us before we go to the Ball on Saturday."

Go to the Ball? My hair stood on end, even more when I realized that Dana Hansen was apologizing to me! To me! It couldn't be so!

"Karen Barnes called to tell you," came Dana's voice from my phone, "that she has appointments for you both for hair and the beauty works on Saturday morning. I feel so envious! Now you be there, my girl. No, don't start changing and being someone else. I want to see you that night at your very best as a girl.

"Please call me back as I have a proposal for you that you are going to love. I want you to keep all the clothing of mine that Roz stole for you. I needed to find room for some new stuff, anyway. But enjoy it all, girl. And please do call me back. We must talk, woman to woman!"

My doorbell started ringing again but I couldn't answer it. I was trembling so hard as I tried to stride about the apartment. But I found it so difficult. I felt so out of sorts. And why wouldn't Roz go away? I finally got so annoyed that I went over to the door and opened it.

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Dana Hansen with a knowing smile at me. "Is Trish Kirk in? She is living here, isn't she?"

## XVII. ULTIMATUM

"I thought it was Roz out there," I told Dana, trembling in fright all over, trying to lower my voice.

"I don't know why I didn't notice before how feminine your voice is," said Dana with a smile. "Really, even in those ridiculous clothes, you sound like a woman, Trish. Do you always buy clothes that are two sizes too large for you? That won't make you more of a man, you know."

"Dana," I told her desperately. "I don't want to have this conversation. I have sent in my resignation

from Ekco. I don't work for you any more. I don't have to take any more abuse. I did things that I shouldn't have which I'll make amends for, all of it."

"Oh, you will, my girl," said Dana softly, sitting so prettily on my sofa, and smiling up at me as I indicated the door and that I would show her out. "And we will start tomorrow. I came here to make a deal with you. I want you to carry on being Trish Kirk."

I was stunned at her words. I couldn't believe it. I began to shudder as my attractive female boss looked at me and told me that she wanted me to be a woman just like her. "And there's another string to that request. If you don't come back to the firm as Trish Kirk each day, I will out you. That's what you trannies say, isn't it, that you've been outed when you've been discovered for what you are."

"I, I don't care," I said. At that moment in time, I actually meant it. I didn't care what she said or did. I just wanted to be out of all of this confusion about who and what sex I was. I didn't want to dream again at night about Al Barnes kissing me. I didn't want any more to imagine myself in every lovely, feminine outfit that I saw on television or in a boutique. I didn't want to play any more.

"What about Rosemary Henning, the woman whom you've dragged into all your fantasies?" asked Dana smugly as if that would seal the deal with me.

Dana didn't know, I thought angrily, how much all of this mess had been Roz's fault. Roz had been the one, each time, to suggest that I disguise myself as a woman or the one to tell me that I had to do more to make the disguise more complete. No, I wasn't going to protect Roz and her job any more.

"There's a question of money," said Dana, with a slow smile. "Interesting checks that you left on the desk in your hurry to get away in that pretty skirt and top. What did you do with them, Pat? They suited you so much more than those, what would you call them, pieces of oversized garbage that you're trying to wear."

"That money is mine," I told her grimly. "I earned it with the tech reports I've written and the money I've saved the firm."

"I can save the firm the same amount by just tearing them up and exposing Al Barnes' darling to ridicule, can't I?" asked Dana smugly. "What will you use to pay for this apartment then, particularly if I have the police come and visit. You'll be the prime suspect in the robberies that have taken place from my dressing room!"

"You wouldn't do that," I gasped, feeling insanity creeping over me. It was as if I was being slowly strangled. I panicked as I thought of myself with no money, not even my regular pay, to meet the bills that had to be paid on the last day of the month. Some wouldn't be met, couldn't be met. I might have everything in the apartment seized if I didn't pay my rent.

The threat of the police frightened me as well. It was all very well to think of the exposure I'd suffer at Ekco, but I wouldn't be going back there again anyway. And Al Barnes. Oh, that hurt deeply as I thought about what he'd think of me, the deep hurt he'd suffer when he was ridiculed by all his friends, especially the tart-tongued wife of his brother. I could almost hear Karen teasing him now and knew how he'd feel.

"I imagine that all your drag queen friends would be so jealous of you, Pat, if they had such a deal pre-

sented to them, wouldn't they?" Dana went on. "They'd love to be accepted as women and fill a high-ranking job among so many attractive men. Did you know that drag queens will be part of the cabaret at the AIDS Ball? Well, you'd expect that, wouldn't you? You must come and compare yourself to other men in women's clothes, Pat. You really must. We always have men like you in dresses at these sorts of Aids things."

I couldn't believe what Dana was saying to me. "I'm not," I began slowly.

"Yes, you are," said Dana with her cool smile. "But no-one will learn from me what you really are. If you submit to the conditions that I've just made. I expect you to wear that dress that Roz is trying to deliver to you."

"Dana," I told her shakily. "I am never, ever, never again, going to dress like a woman. I am through with all of that."

"Well, that's a pity," said Dana crossly, tossing back her hair and standing up so gracefully, doing so easily what I had practised so long to get right. "When I have shredded those checks of yours that you left in my office, I shall be on the phone to security to let them take it from there. I don't think I'll have to say anything at all about you, will I? When the police arrest you for stealing my clothes and find out that you've been impersonating a woman in the office, well, then, Al Barnes and everyone else in the office will know."

"I, I can't do it," I said, trembling as I stood in front of the door as she gathered up her purse to leave. Dana smirked at me. I didn't doubt that she was going to do just as she had said. "Even if I did what you wanted

me to do, you'd just expose me when it was most profitable to you."

"But of course, darling Pat," said Dana with a wicked smile. "You know me so well. So, you'll have to make sure I don't have any reason to do such a terrible thing, won't you? I'll let you think it over." She looked at me in my male clothes and the evidence of feminization on my face. I could feel the sneer that seemed about to appear on her lips. I was sneering inside, like that, at myself.

"If I meet you at the AIDS Ball tomorrow in your pretty gown on the arm of a handsome man," Dana went on, "then I'll know that you'll be starting to make amends to me for what you've done to my dressing room. I'll have a few other things that I really want you to do for me as well; and I'll show you how much I value, you, my darling girl, by rewarding you with the checks that you should have."

"I need my pay check before the Ball," I told her, quivering inside, as Dana smiled triumphantly at me.

"Certainly," Dana said, reaching past me and opening my door. Roz stood there, frozen, the dress in its plastic bag over her arm, posing as if she had just been about to ring my doorbell again. There was no sign of Abigail with her.

"Well," said Dana wickedly, standing to one side so that Roz could see me. "How do you like Pat now, Rosemary? Not as pretty as earlier in the night? Ah, but he'll be so adorable back at his post on Monday, won't he, with your help and my directions?"

Dana Hansen swept away, leaving me to invite a shocked, staring Rosemary Henning into my apartment. I felt the same way, I'm sure, as she looked. "Oh, this can't be you," said Roz, her eyebrows almost

touching her hairline as she looked at me in my male clothes. "Pat, you can't be doing this to yourself. You can't."

"This is me, Roz," I told her. I did try to force my voice lower. "This is how the scheme was supposed to end, remember? Only I forgot my checks. I forgot to take the money with me. Now, Dana has my pay check and our bonus to hold over me."

"Oh no!" gasped Roz. "How are you going to pay for this place if you don't have a pay check this month? Oh, you must have a huge raise as well as you were promoted to Acting Head of the Contracts section! She can't keep those from you."

"Worse," I told Roz, beginning to feel really distressed. "She's promising to have the police arrest me for stealing her clothes from her dressing room."

"But I took them out for you," objected Roz.

"Say that to the police and they will be arresting you as well as my accomplice," I told her panicked face. "Speaking of accomplices, where is Abigail? She was with you before, wasn't she? I couldn't let her in to see me as I really am."

"No," agreed Roz slowly, staring at me. "Oh, Trish, I can't believe what I'm seeing. I, I've got so used to you being Trish and not dorky, little Pat Kirk. You were so pretty and feminine and even if you didn't want to sleep with me any more ..."

"Whoa," I said in alarm. "How did that idea ever become attached to anything?"

"Well," said Roz, with a shrug, but I sensed that was put on to disguise deeper feelings. "I'm a lot older than you, Trish. I'm not the most attractive of women. I really have to lose some of the weight I put on when I had David. You didn't come around to stay this last

weekend, even though I asked you, and Al Barnes wasn't in town. Well, I know that you have a thing for him."

"Whoa!" I shrieked again as if I really was Trish and not me, Pat, Patrick Kirk. "You've got it all wrong, Roz. I had to go to that little party of Karen Barnes's last weekend. It was all women there. Well, except for me."

"Abigail was more upset than me," said Roz. I was astounded to see that she looked pinkish and a little flustered. "You quite fascinate her, you know."

Since her daughter knew that her mother's girl friend was really a man, I didn't doubt that she was. "Where is she?" I asked her.

"Actually, she's swimming in your swimming pool with some guys who live above you," said Roz wrinkling her nose in distaste at the way I appeared to her as a man. "You know, the ones who were checking us out in the elevator when we first came here. She's entertaining them with stories about you, most of which she's making up. You've never been a model in a New York fashion show, have you?"

"Oh no," I gasped, thinking of all the teasing and trash talking I would get now from Dirk and Jack. But that was only if they saw me as Trish. When they saw me again as Pat and put two and two together, my life in this building wouldn't be worth living.

"Are you coming back to Ekco as a man on Monday?" asked Roz.

"I'll have to, in order to get duplicate checks from Payroll," I told her miserably, having thought a little about what I must do to get around Dana Hansen and the grip that she had on me. "But the word should be

out on me by then from Dana. The least I can do is try to get your half of the bonus for you."

"What did Dana say that she was going to do to you?" asked Roz, her face a picture of distress.

I told Roz all that Dana had said and what she wanted me to do. "But you know Dana," I told her. "You know it's not as simple as her accepting Trish for a little while. She's going to be hatching plots all over the place and, if it means embarrassing her opponents with her knowledge of me, she's going to do it. I think it's only a matter of time till she outs me to Al Barnes."

"But if she's blackmailing you," said Roz slowly, "she would be the one who would be in the biggest trouble if the police were ever called in to investigate you. Look, Trish, if you go through this scheme of hers this weekend, and get your pay check back, that's to the good, right? And on Monday, when you have time, you can dance down to payroll and get a new bonus check. What will Dana have to hold over you, then? Yes, on Tuesday, it can be liberation for you. You can dress like this again," she pulled a face, "and take off with your bonus money."

"But I have to dress as a woman again," I said, not telling her that I had kind of admitted to Dana that I'd be doing that anyway the next day.

"What's so wrong with that?" said Roz with a huge smile. "You look ten times as good as me in a dress and you know it, Trish. Why don't I hang this dress up in your wardrobe with all Dana's little treasures and you can change. We can pick up Abigail and have a girls' night out while David's off with his father. Maybe you can come back to my place. We can go out after Abby goes to bed. We haven't been back to Danny's since, well, since Tim and Mike."

Roz was quite pink again about that. Well, the two pool players who had brought us home after my night at the bar, who'd kissed us good night at the door, had been, yes, I have to admit, fun. But I could imagine what they would think that we were, as women, if we went back into Danny's Bar, looking for them, as Roz seemed to intend.

"If I do go to this Ball tomorrow," I told Roz, "I'd have to meet Karen Barnes at Edward's and Menoncino's. She wants me to get the works, like her, before we go out with the Barnes men."

"I wish I could afford to go to those places some time," said Roz dreamily.

"After I cash that bonus check," I told her grimly, "I'll treat you to a session or two."

"You'd have to come with me," said Roz. With a tremble at what I was doing, I agreed to take Roz with me into a women's hairdressers and beauty spa where I was known as a woman and she was not.

Without really protesting about it, at least a little, I'd agreed to dress up as a woman again. "So, let's get you dressed in your proper clothes," said Roz. "I can help you with your makeup if you need me to."

I shivered as I accepted her offer. Yes, I wanted to be dressed in my 'proper' clothes. Actually, I probably didn't need Roz's help as much as I had when we'd started this stupid masquerade. I was getting to be quite adept with the makeup brushes, or I so thought, until one of the professional women in Menoncino's got to working on Karen and me.

"I love the hair extensions you have," said Roz brightly as I went in trepidation back to my bedroom and the closet full of women's clothing. "They go so



well with the streaks that Edward has put in your hair. They must be so much lighter than a full wig."

"They are," I told her, feeling a little embarrassed as I started to take off my male clothes in front of Roz.

Of course, the embarrassment didn't last too long. It couldn't, not with the delight that began to come over me. I got back into my padded, female underwear, attached stockings to my corset, put on a pretty burgundy-colored dress and started on my makeup.

I loved the false eyelashes and how they made my eyes look so dark and so feminine. I hardly needed Roz's help as I did my eyes and my eyebrows, rouged my cheeks lightly, put on my lipstick as Abigail had taught me and powdered my face. I didn't want to fight with the hair weaving and the extensions. I accepted Roz's help in putting on one of Dana's most beautiful and luxurious wigs.

I loved the cascade of long hair about my back and my earrings.

"Your nails look awful," said Roz. I agreed with her.

"I'll let Menoncino's resurrect them," I told her, "before I go to the ball."

But Roz wouldn't hear of that. I had to have feminine nails to go out or Abigail would be most disappointed, she said. So, Roz worked most diligently to rework my nail tips for me, to attach them and to paint them.

Roz laughed then, put her hands about me and made me waltz with her, my skirts floating so wonderfully about my stockings, while I couldn't touch anything at all with my hands. I couldn't hold my skirt down or help putting my garter belt and panties on display. "That's what we should do," said Roz with a

sudden, brilliant smile. "We should go out with Jane Vernon from Customer Service and her significant other."

I knew Jane Vernon, a smartly-dressed, older woman who seemed to take no guff from anyone, male or female. "Why should we go out with Jane Vernon?" I asked Roz, mystified.

"Because she's a lesbian," said Roz. I looked at her in astonishment. "Everybody knows it. Jane doesn't make any secret of it. She even brings Kathy to the summer picnics we have. Anyway, Jane was telling me she loves dancing. She and Kate go to lesbian clubs downtown where they can dance all night long. She was telling me of one where one of the couple has to wear pants and the other a dress. Some of the women in pants look just like men. They call the ones in skirts 'femmes' while the others are 'butches'. Jane is a butch, she was telling me. If we were to go, Trish, you would have to be the femme, as I look much better in pants than you do."

"I'm not going to any lesbian club," I told her with a half-hearted laugh.

"No, you've a reputation to keep up," said Roz with an answering shrug and smile. "But it would be nice to dance with each other, wouldn't it, not just at home, in my apartment."

Well, we had done that once. I shivered as I arranged my skirts about my legs and applied my cologne to myself. I knew what dancing with Roz had led to the last time and I knew that dancing with her again would lead me to going to bed with her.

"Let's, let's go and get Abigail," I said to her, hoping to change the direction of my thoughts about Roz. She

nodded and smiled confidently at me now that I was a pretty, dark-haired image of a woman again.

"Sure," Roz said, squeezing my arm as she took it. "But after I get Abby from the teen girls' night out, let's go out as well. I love going out with my girl friend. I get a better class of man interested in me when my pretty girl friend is with me!"

## XVIII. ANOTHER GIRLISH NIGHT OUT

Danny's Bar was crowded, much more than it had been when Roz and I went in there, a couple of weeks before. The women's pool table was taken over by several, loud, bossy, peroxide blonde types I immediately classified as 'biker chicks'.

"Let's just have a Pink Lady and go," said Roz, disappointed that Mike wasn't in the bar, I think.

We ordered. As soon as we did, a couple of bikers came over and sat at the table with us. "We'll pay for those," said a heavily mustached man, with thick, dark hair. He had long sideburns and didn't look like he'd shaved for a week.

"No," I lilted to the waitress, who was smiling at me. "We'll pay for our own."

The older, balder man smiled at Roz. "Who's your hoity-toity friend, Roz?" he asked.

"Trish," said Roz uneasily. "And she's right, Walt. We didn't come in here tonight for a pickup."

Walt grinned at Roz. "You shouldn't come here on your own on a Friday night," he growled.

"We're not on our own," said Roz, waving to someone whom I couldn't see.

The bikers reluctantly went off as Tony Parker came out of the crowd with a pitcher of beer in his hand and joined us at our table. "Roz, Roz!" he said delightedly over the noise all about us. "Long time! You've been avoiding me!"

"After Gord's party, I should think so," said Roz, smiling and all girlish at the attention she was getting from a guy who had treated her quite badly, I thought. Soon two others, big men, overweight like Tony, joined us in the overcrowded bar and began to take from Tony's pitcher, I was pleased to see. I didn't want to see Tony drunk again and making Roz so miserable. She had inveigled me to go to bed with her, after the last time she'd been drinking with Tony.

Marty wanted to play pool. There was a sign-up list on the wall. Jim and Tony demurred. "Don't like the look of those guys," said Jim of the bikers. "Wouldn't want to win over them."

Marty tried to entice Tony to play but Tony Parker didn't want to do anything else but whisper into a flustered Rosemary Henning's ear. Roz looked at me and, a little flushed, suggested to Marty that I could play. Marty looked at me doubtfully. I shook my long hair, trembling as I thought about what had happened last time. I didn't want to be the belle of the bar as I had sort of been, then. Oh yes, and Mike and Tim had insisted on walking us home. I had kissed a man for the first time in my life!

"You can play pool?" Marty asked. It was on the tip of my tongue to say I'd beaten Andy, the champion of the tables, the last time I was in Danny's with Roz.

"A little bit," I said. Marty scowled and signed for us to play. He grinned at me and asked me what I was doing in a place like Danny's. I was much too classy a

lady, I think he was going to say 'dame' but didn't, to be in such a place.

"I like to play pool," I said, batting my eyelashes at him. Marty grinned and stroked my arm which made me shiver. This was a different kind of bar from the one I'd been to with the Barnes' brothers. A different kind of woman was expected here. Marty clearly thought that he was getting on the inside track with me.

We finally got up to play a rough-looking pair who immediately offered to up the stakes when Marty said I was his partner. Marty was going to decline when I slid the hundred-dollar bill over into his hand.

The bikers laughed to each other. "Like taking candy from babies," one said to Walt who'd come with his buddy to watch the game. "We break."

I was across the table as the break artist prepared to run the five-ball. I don't know why I did it. Maybe because he was laughing at me. I shivered and checked the buttons on the front of my burgundy dress. The five-ball hung over the hole and didn't drop. Marty had four relatively easy shots and we won the game.

"Best of three," snarled the guy who'd missed the easy shot. He glared at Walt and his partner who were the next names on the list to play.

Walt grinned at me. "Okay with me," he said.

Marty lifted his eyebrows and said to me. "Is it all right?"

"Let it run," I said to him. "It's our break first, right?"

I took a sip of my Pink Lady first as Marty gallantly gave way to me to break for him. I think that he was getting a little nervous and didn't know what he had wandered into here in Danny's Bar on a Saturday

night. I overdid my feminine wiggle as I took my place at the table.

I did my usual power break and caught three balls down though not the eight ball. I had to work for the frame but there was only one difficult shot. I cut that just right and cleared the table.

"We get the break now," said one of the bikers angrily as Walt and his partner began to give them some hassling.

"Is that the rule of this table?" I asked him with a smile. As a woman, I could do that. I didn't even feel nervous at all in challenging this rougher guy about what he was doing, changing the rules as I knew them. I wouldn't be so brave as Pat Kirk. The look the man gave me terrified me, however. I felt both Marty and Walt stepping forward as if to protect me. I shivered and felt my dress about me, the earrings at my ears and the tight grip of the Merry Widow corset I was wearing for my girls' night out with Roz.

"Come on, Larry," said Walt. "Play right."

Larry picked up the white ball and broke before we had a chance to argue any more. He missed his first shot on the two-ball and Marty followed him. Marty was too nervous to go on as he had before and so the good shooter in the other pair finished the table.

The good shooter took the white ball and smiled at me. "Fluff your boobs again on this one, baby," he said to me. Biker women who'd turned around to watch laughed at me. One wiggled her hands under her breasts as the biker shot again. He couldn't believe the result of his break. Not a single ball fell. But the two-ball lay behind the eight close to the rail and the only way that I could see to get at it was to go over the eight.

I rarely make such shots, but I usually attempt them. "Fifty she can't make that shot," said Larry, grinning at me. My hair fell down across my face as I leaned over and studied the shot. Larry and his friend grinned at me, their eyes definitely on my chest.

"I'll take that bet," said someone in the little crowd behind us.

The safe play was a snooker. I looked to Marty who shrugged at me. "Go for it," he said.

I did. I put my bright fingernails down on the felt and bridged a little higher perhaps than I normally did. I think it was my fingernails that did the trick for I made the shot and came out perfectly on the three. The bikers got glummer and glummer as I ran the table then, potting the eight ball on a ricochet off the six.

It was Andy, the old man and bar champion, who took his fifty and rubbed salt in the first bikers' wounds. "Don't feel bad, boys," he sniggered at them, making them madder, I think. "She did it to me last time she was in. We got a real pool shark here."

"I'm not," I protested, my earrings shaking nervously as Andy and several other guys who were in the bar when I'd played before were all applauding me.

"We're just going to play for table stakes," Walt said to me as the bikers were jeered at by their girl friends for losing to a girl. "Ten bucks for a best of three. And yes, champions break."

I let Marty do it. We went through a ragged series but beat Walt and his partner. It was a relief to lose to Andy and his friend after a while and get away from the bikers, even though we had a lot of their money.

"Sign up again," said Andy but I didn't want to. Marty seemed more than a little afraid of playing the bikers again.

"Let me get you another Pink Lady," said Marty. He'd hardly made a shot in our run after that first time. It's amazing what the pressure of being a man had put on him with all the bikers glowering at him. Being a pretty woman, I'd just smiled at all their harassment and played as I knew how to.

"Their bark is worse than their bite," said Tony Parker with a frown when Marty confided in him that he'd been really scared not to let me try the fancy shot as we rejoined Tony and Roz. "If they were really trouble, Danny wouldn't let them in here."

"Do you have your car here?" Roz asked Marty then, who nodded in puzzlement. "Take Trish back to my place, Marty. I wouldn't want her walking back at night even with an escort. That Teddy and Larry scare me."

I didn't understand why I had to go home with Marty. Tony and Roz could have found room for me in his car. But then Roz got up and went off with Tony. I had to stay as a new drink was just delivered to me.

"Geez, that was really smooth on their part, wasn't it?" said Marty with a nervous smile. "But I'd be really glad to see you home safely, Trish."

"Thank you," I said to him, shivering femininely as I felt the eyes of the bikers on me. I crossed my legs and arranged my dress about me while the roughest of them all, Teddy, I think he was called, watched me and smirked.

"I think that guy wants his money back," said Marty nervously. He'd drained the last of his beer and wasn't drinking again.

"So, let's go," I said to him, picking up my purse. Marty put his arm about me and escorted me through the crowd and out into the parking lot. Marty had a big car with lots of room for me to stretch out my long legs. I noticed that Marty was looking at how feminine my stockinged legs were as I crossed and re-crossed them on the very short trip to Roz's apartment.

I didn't know how I was going to get in as Marty insisted on accompanying up the stairs to Roz's apartment. He seemed to know the way better than I did. I didn't expect the door to open at a simple turn of the handle, but it did. Roz's bedroom door was firmly closed. A man's jacket, the same as Tony had worn, was on the back of a kitchen chair.

"So, we know where they are," whispered Marty as I set my purse on the table and turned to thank him for driving me home.

As I expected, Marty wanted a reward from the pretty woman he'd driven home, saving her from the goons at the bar. He was much braver now that he was in a dark room with someone he perceived to be a woman. He had his hands about me, my tush being worked over, my panties in motion often, as Marty had me down on the sofa in a very short time, slobbering all over me with his kisses.

"Marty, you have to go," I whispered to him as I tried to stop his hands from wandering up my legs and onto my garter belt.

His weight held me down on the sofa as he murmured, "Just one little kiss." We went on for over an hour as he got more and more worked up. I had to defend my breasts, my tush and my panties from his attempted fondlings. Finally, we heard Roz's bedroom door open as Tony Parker came stumbling out.

"All right, you two, break it up," said Tony loudly, as a dishevelled Roz came behind him, hastily closing the negligee she was putting on.

"Shush, shush," pleaded Roz but it was too late. Abigail came down the hallway. She turned on the light and grimaced at her mother. Then she saw me on the sofa, my dress hiked up, Marty all over me, his hand caressing my stocking and exposed garter while I tried to fight him off.

"Ugh," said Abby as Roz hastily turned out the light. "Both of you brought men home? And Trish is making out with a guy on the sofa? Mom, how could you?"

Abigail shuddered and went back to her room as Roz was whispering about Abby having to understand that Mommy was a woman with needs. "I guess Trish has the same needs for a guy, does she?" asked Abigail, before firmly closing her door.

"Come on, Marty," said Tony. Reluctantly, Marty got off me, finally caressing the flat front of my panties as I clutched the sofa to prevent from falling.

Of course, Marty, like Tony, had to have a good night kiss at the door, which meant more slobber on me. I tried to kiss him properly, but Marty seemed to be more into trying to devour my face than into pleasuring me.

Roz turned to me, the men gone. I could see the guilty look on her face, her eyes shifting in the dim light. "Well," she said defensively. "Tony is a real man."

"And I'm not?" I asked her. "I'm a lesbian?"

Roz sort of nodded. "It's different with you," she said sheepishly. "I was going to get Mike and Tim walk us home but, when I saw Tony, those plans went

out the window. Tony really knows how to make love to me."

Roz wanted to know all about me and Marty then. "You were going at it pretty well," she said with a smile. "Did you make him come in his pants?"

I grimaced at the idea of doing such a thing to a man.

"That's what happens if you just touch his man-thing," giggled Roz, taking my hand and leading me into her familiar bedroom and the messed-up bed. I'd thought it was going to be me making love there to Roz that night. I really didn't want to be in the same room as her, not one where she had just entertained another lover.

"I wasn't getting it on with Marty," I told her defensively. "I was trying to fend him off, but he weighs a ton. He doesn't know how to kiss. I thought he was going to knock my wig off at any moment. I didn't enjoy him at all." Wow, I was sounding as if I was really a girl like Roz, wasn't I, criticizing a man for the way he was trying to make love to me.

"He's very rich," said Roz suddenly, shaking the bed sheets into some kind of order. She sighed. "But you're right. He doesn't know how to kiss, does he? And he comes so quickly. Nothing you can do, not even going down on him, can wake him up once he's come." She shivered.

I hadn't felt at all womanly when I was with Marty. I thought of Al Barnes, how he'd kissed me, which made me begin to tingle all over. Roz draped a nightie over my shoulder. "I don't feel like making love again tonight," she whispered to me. "But if you want to just cuddle, it's all right with me."

What could I say to that? The woman who'd helped me to dress so much like a girl didn't want to make love to me now because she preferred a real man in her bed. So much for the girl's night out I'd been psyching myself for, I thought miserably. My last, it was going to be, with Dana back. Oh, I'd no idea now how that was all going to work out! I was an idiot. I should be running, not thinking about the money I'd try to get back. But I had to have it, I thought, trembling femininely as I prepped myself for bed, keeping on my sexy, girlish panties, along with the frilly nightie Roz had given me. Oh yes, I dreamed of Al Barnes again and how wonderful it was going to be dancing with him, me in a long, strapless gown, my fake boobies bouncing, at the Ball, the following night.

## **XIX. THE BELLE OF THE BALL**

I met an excited Karen Barnes at Menoncino's where she and I had the works. I was getting used to the pampering and primping that the girls gave me, teaching me to use different lotions on myself in the bath and on my legs to make them smoother and more girlish.

We went first to Edward as Karen had planned. I had my hair totally re-done in hair weaves and ties that completely concealed the fact I didn't have hair just like a woman. "Now, you can wear it like that during the day," Edward said to me thoughtfully. I was sure that he knew I was a man. It was the third time he'd taken away my wig and worked on my hair, altering it totally.

Now when I looked at myself, I had bangs across my forehead and wavy, blonde-streaked hair, thick about my neck and shoulders. "But for tonight," Ed-

ward said when he came back after our spa treatments, makeup in place, glancing at Karen and smiling at her, "this is how you will wear it, Tricia, a little differently. I'll do the same for you, Karen, in just a moment."

I don't know how he did it, but my false hair was swirled up onto the top of my head, pinned there and a cap of hair, that's all I could think to call it, was added to the pinned hair as a long tail of blonde and brown hair fell from it over my back.

"Oh, that's so gorgeous!" said Karen Barnes excitedly. "Oh, I want my hair just like that, Edward!"

Edward smiled as the woman beside me had her hair pinned up and capped with a long tail of hair just like mine. Edward was careful to explain to me how I was to undo the additions he'd made and yet keep the hair weaves in place. "The ties won't come loose. If they do," he said with a smile, "call me on Sunday or Monday and I'll open up and re-do your hair for you, Tricia, so that it lasts you the week."

"How come I've been coming here for years," said Karen Barnes impishly as she moved her head from side to side, admiring her wonderful hair, "and I've never been given your phone number, Mr Edward?"

Edward grinned and touched her affectionately on her arm before doing the same thing to me. I felt shivers run through me as his soft hand touched me. "Oh, but Karen," he said with a smile to me in the mirror, "you're a married woman and Trish isn't. Even if you're hoping to make her your sister-in-law, I can still dream about her, can't I, but you, darling Karen, are off limits."

I colored and shuddered as I looked at the attractive girl I'd been made into by the beauty experts, who

were working on more beautiful women all around us, many talking of nothing else but the ball we were all going to later that night.

I had to step out of the beauty shop with Karen to go to lunch with her, my insides shaking at the attentions we got from waiters, other people in the restaurant, everyone, especially men. "I love coming out with you," said Karen, smiling at me. "It reminds me so much of when I wasn't married to Barry. I flirted with any man who'd look at me. You and I may look alike but you're much more refined, more girlish, than I am, Trish."

"Not me," I gasped, thinking of the way I'd behaved in the bar the night before and with Marty afterwards. No, I wasn't a refined girl at all, not like Karen Barnes. I was surprised when she did flirt with the maitre d', or other people whom she knew, who came into *Prospects* for lunch.

Karen insisted we do our makeup together after lunch. She called for her chauffeur to come and pick us up. It was so incredibly fine to stand with her, in high heels like her, our hair and makeup the same, our tight skirts alike, our figures like models, being whistled at and ogled, as we got gracefully, femininely, into the car.

Karen laughed as I hastened to pull my skirt down. "Don't worry about showing off more than you should," she said as she held my smooth hand in hers, just as smooth. "I don't mind giving the men of the city a cheap thrill. But it's Barry who gets privileges that no-one else gets. When you're married, you'll see. It's so nice to be treated as a desirable girl again."

I struggled with my thoughts as Karen took me back to my apartment where I lived as 'P Kirk'. "I'm

just dieing to see your dress," Karen said with a giggle. "You wait till you see mine. It's strapless. I have to wear this tight bodice, or it would be slipping down on me all the time. Barry's eyes are going to pop. He's not going to want to dance with any other girl but me. But I will let you have him. Barry will love dancing with you but, at the same time, he hates me dancing with anyone else."

Karen always made out that Barry Barnes was jealous of her. I hadn't seen it in the few times I'd seen the two of them together. It seemed to me that Barry loved his beautiful wife intensely and spoiled her immensely. He even put up with her calling him 'Bonzo'. She wouldn't tell me yet how he had come by such a nickname.

I retreated in my apartment, shuddering as I moved or sat so femininely till early evening arrived and getting ready finally for the ball. The taping I did, my strapless Merry Widow clasping me so tightly, worked incredibly well, the inserts under my chest muscles.

I trembled and shook with delight at all sorts of conflicting emotions as I eventually put on the greyish blue, strapless gown and looked at the incredible girl in the mirror. She was me. I couldn't help myself. I had to twirl about on my high heels and watch how my skirts swirled and swished about me, even my chest in motion.

I loved the touch of the pony tail, as it swung about me, in motion that I could feel all down my back, the huge earrings at my ears dancing away as well. It was a thrill to watch my newly painted fingernails attach my necklace about my throat. Dana's bracelet on my arm, matching a fake diamond ring on my finger, looked so wonderful. Roz had left me an evening

purse to take with me, the perfume, *Seduction*, there for me to use.

I thought it was heavenly when I put some on my wrist, worrying about other places I'd dabbed it. Well, I had to put some on my shoulders, on my other wrist and, shaking all the time, in the false cleavage I had created. Yes, I did so look like a woman, I told myself nervously. Listen to me. I was even using girlish words like 'heavenly' for a fragrance that a man was supposed to gag at.

My doorbell chimes rang. I looked out at the limousine in front of the apartment building. Yes, the Misses Foster from the second floor were out there on their balcony, watching who was going out in such style. I whirled and danced over to the building lock and let Al into the building to pick me up.

I found my silvery, evening coat, well, it was Dana's coat, and put it on. I checked my look in the mirror and sighed as I saw how womanly I looked. I should try to enjoy this last time going out as a girl, 'she' shaking with nervousness in the mirror. I'd be with Karen, Barry and Al. I'd be in a state of delight all night, no matter if Dana chose the ball to out me. I'd deny that I was anyone else but Trish. Tonight, I was Trish Kirk. I swirled again to enjoy the feel of my dress and my stockings and high heels. Then, I opened the door to greet Al with a tremulous but happy smile.

But it wasn't Al Barnes in the doorway. It was Damian Robertson, tall and dark, a weird smile on his mouth, looking down at me. "Hello, Trish," he said apologetically. "I know you were expecting Al to pick you up but there's been a little change in plans. Dana called me and told me that Al wanted to go with her. Would I do her this great favor and pick you up? I did-

n't have to tell her how delighted I'd be to be doing this."

I was totally flustered as Damian took me by the hand and pulled my apartment door shut behind me. "I, I don't understand," I said as he put his arm under mine, as if I was a woman, and began to walk me to the elevator.

Damian grimaced. "You haven't worked with Dana for long, have you, Trish?" he said to me as I swished into the elevator, an older couple going down, smiling at us. It was amazing how many people were gathered outside to watch the man in the dark tuxedo, and the 'man' in the strapless evening gown, if they only knew, get into the limousine for the short ride to the Convention Center where the ball would take place, where 'the man' would become the glamorous woman that 'she' appeared to be.

"Dana's had a thing for Al Barnes for years," Damian told me as I sat stiffly beside him for the brief car ride. "I think she called Al and told him you'd already committed to going with me to this Ball. I guess you were pretty curt with him on the phone yesterday. Dana says you were. She told Al it was because you wanted to go with me. Then, since Al was going stag, Dana would love to go with him. Yes, she more or less invited herself to go with Al."

Al was much too nice a guy not to go along with what Dana had told him, I thought miserably. I sat beside Damian and trembled. I was being used but I didn't know for what.

"We're going to see them there," I said anxiously as the car slid into a line of ten or twenty others. We were swept along to a uniformed man, who opened the door, assisting me out of the car. He smiled all the time

as I heard my dress swishing about me and felt so awfully, desperately wrong, my strapless dress showing off my startling cleavage, startling to me, that is, that I was so 'voluptuous'.

Damian came and took my arm, leading me up the steps to the hall festooned with banners about AIDS. "Don't worry about Dana and Al," murmured Damian into my jewelled ear. "If Dana starts her catty remarks, I'll tell her where to go. I'll let Al know what's going on, as well."

I shuddered. "He'll think this is part of the feud you have going with Dana," I whispered miserably, looking about at all the gorgeous women and black suited men, smiling and laughing, unlike Damian and me. I didn't see anyone I knew.

"What feud is that?" asked Damian. I didn't answer as he took my woman's coat as we entered the enormous bowl of the Center, a hundred couples already on the dance floor, the full Symphony Orchestra in, full flight as they played Viennese waltzes.

Damian persisted in asking me about his feud with Dana. "You two are in a power struggle, aren't you?" I asked him nervously as I sat decorously, like a woman, at a table far away from where the head tables had been set up.

"Dana and me?" Damian asked me, in astonishment. "Nothing could be further from the truth, Trish. Dana and I are the best of friends."

"Technivision?" I asked him, crossing my legs and yes, feeling the urge to pull up the front, at my chest, of my strapless dress, an urge Karen said was one awful thing about wearing a strapless gown. I must fight it, as she did.

"Well, that was Dana's baby," said Damian, shocking me to the core. "She okayed the contracts verbally. I just sailed right along with that project. Then, I heard that you'd written a negative report on the whole deal. Man, did you ever do a number on us all in that presentation you made. Well, I knew why Dana was off to the South Seas when that one hit the fan. I'd have been embarrassed to have been in her shoes as well. She was most apologetic about it when she talked to me today."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. What I'd heard from Dana repeatedly was that Damian Robertson was her great enemy. She and he were engaged in some sort of death struggle in Ekco for power and influence. Oh, and who was Damian Robertson escorting to the ball. Yes, I thought with a quiver. Me, the transvestite, the drag queen. I shuddered as I thought of the other horrible names she'd called me.

"Let's dance," said Damian, standing beside me. I had no option but to go with him to the dance floor.

"I hope Dana hasn't been teasing you about me," said Damian, swirling me easily. I swished daintily, feeling girlishly graceful and protected as I floated around the floor, in a man's arms, me a woman, trying to smile at the heavenly music all about us. "She was warning you about me, I guess," Damian said, pulling a face. "I do have a reputation with women that isn't the best. Dana knows I would want to romance someone as lovely as you, Tricia. If you believe her, then all her secrets would be safe."

I looked up at him in surprise. "Wow," Damian said, smiling down at me. "You are so beautiful, Trish Kirk. Let's not talk about Dana any more tonight. Nor our business, either. Let's just enjoy ourselves."

Damian's idea of enjoyment was to dance and dance with me. I must have danced a dozen waltzes of all kinds in his arms before he relented and escorted me from the floor. I'd kept my eyes open but hadn't seen a sign of Al, nor Dana, on the dance floor.

Other people had joined our table, people from Ekco, Len Fisher and his wife, and others I only knew as names. "I knew it wouldn't take Damian long before he was with you," said a smiling Len Fisher. I sat and trembled in my dress and wished I dared to pull up my frontage as Len's wife was pulling on hers.

I had to dance with him and each of the other men at our table while Damian did turns with all the women. Damian almost squeezed me right out of my dress in the last dance before the cabaret. "You look so delicious," he told me, "and you dance so marvellously. I don't think Roberta or Jenny knows her left foot from her right. Really!"

I was twirled more tightly and quickly than ever. I shivered as I thought about what I really was, and how much I was enjoying dancing as a woman with him, after lumbering about the floor with Len and Grant. I felt light and feminine as Damian kept his full attention on me, swirling me so that my skirts spun delightfully about me.

"That was fun," Damian said as we came off. I was smiling at him, leaning into his arm about my waist, when, up a balcony from us, I saw Al and looking down on us. Dana waved, smiling broadly, while Al just glowered at me.

"Let's find our table for the cabaret," said Damian.

I knew there'd be a female impersonator revue as part of the cabaret. Actually, it was all of the cabaret. I sat there, as a woman in the audience, and was deeply

embarrassed by the whole spectacle but I didn't really know why. So I told myself, but, me, a man, in my long, evening gown, my hair and makeup styled like a woman's, my underwear so feminine, yes, no matter what I was trying to convince myself of in my mind, I was deeply embarrassed by the chorus line of 'female' dancers, as much women, as I was.

The chorus line, in blonde wigs, black bows, huge earrings and red, vivid lipstick, pouted to us as they did a performance with fans that was as girlie and enticing to men as any show done by the Rockettes, I was sure. They were all tall, their headdresses and high heels making them seem taller and thinner. They all had curvy, female bodies and breasts. Well, I suppose some might have been taped like me, but I don't think so. They loved jiggling their breasts in several numbers they did, fanning out and sitting on men's laps in the lower bowl, leaving lipstick marks on many a man's forehead and cheek and, one time, on the lips of a tall guy who stood up and almost bent one 'girl' over a table to kiss her avariciously, to which she soon began to respond.

Everyone seemed to think it hilarious. I just watched and quivered. I'd never be as brave as those girls, I thought. I could never go out there and let everyone know that I was a man and be applauded for the way I'd made myself look so womanly.

"You didn't like that too much," said Damian, as several impersonators did lip-synching to women's records.

"No," I agreed, sipping on the Pink Lady Damian had obtained for me.

"They're not at all what you're thinking," said Damian then, with a smile. "I used to know a girl who

could've fitted right into that chorus line. Yes, I dated a transsexual for a while. Even when I knew about her, I went back and took her out again and again."

"I, I don't believe you," I chattered nervously, wondering if this was the way that he was going to lead into what I was and tell me that he knew all about me. I sat stiffly and tried to watch the new dancers, 'girls', looking so pretty, all introduced with boys' names, no matter their feminine hair and girlish bodies and pretty dresses.

"Angela actually worked at Ekco," Damian went on with a smile. "She had the cut while she was here. You can ask Barry Barnes all about Angela Morton. She chased all the executives once she had the change. I was too junior for her. I shouldn't tell you this, but she is married to one of Ekco's board members."

I shuddered as Damian nodded and signalled to a waiter to bring us more drinks. "Yes," Damian went on, not seeing my flushes, I'm sure. "She married a widower with three little kids. I had a great time at their wedding. And I've never told anyone that story and definitely not that name. See how much I'm trying to impress you, Trish, even on a subject as absurd as that."

Not so absurd if you know all about me, I thought, swivelling my dress about me. My long hair sent chills through me as it swung over my back.

"They're really happy together," said Damian, taking my hand and looking at me earnestly. "I did try to get her to go out with me again. You know, I wanted to find out how different it was for her since she'd had the cut. But she wouldn't. She won't even give me a proper kiss at socials we all attend. She's just totally wrapped up in her husband and their children. Yes,

they've adopted a little girl and are up for another in the fall, or so Gr-, her husband told me."

"I think you're telling me a fairy story," I told him.

That startled Damian. He grinned at me. "Yes, that's what it is, isn't it?" he said. "But seriously, Trish, don't use those formidable research skills of yours and start looking into the girl I named. Don't ask Barry about her. Just leave it be. That's the way she wants it and I promised her I'd never tell. But see, I didn't know I'd meet a girl as beautiful as you, a girl I just had to impress, even as we sit here watching so much female fakery up there on the stage, with how much I know about the firm."

I danced again with Damian. No, I didn't feel as wonderfully feminine as I would have felt if it had been Al dancing with me, I was sure. I was glad when he finally suggested he take me home. I hadn't see Dana or Al again or even Karen or Barry. I really missed Karen. Yes, I did feel so female, I admit it, in her company.

I held onto Damian's arm as our car arrived, me sighing girlishly as the car took off. "Mission over?" asked Damian lightly.

"Sort of," I agreed, feeling his arm stealing behind my back to hold me to him, my dress rustling as I moved, girlishly again, to let him caress my body as he wished. Well, I was a woman, wasn't I? I should get used to men doing this to me, preparing themselves for getting closer to me.

"Sorry that I'm not Al Barnes," said Damian, hugging me closer to him.

Oh, what the heck, I thought. I looked up at him. As I expected, he took advantage of the opening, bent over and kissed me. Damian knew how to kiss a

woman. I loved the way he kissed me and made me feel.

Damian caressed my tiny waist as he gently took possession of my lips. It took no time at all. I responded thrillingly to his firm, active lips. He put his arms about me tightly and pulled me to him in a rustle of feminine skirts and dress. I think the chauffeur must have got lost on the way back to my apartment because it took forever before we pulled up outside the Empire Apartments. I had no lipstick left on me and was tingling everywhere from where Damian's solicitous mouth had kissed me.

Yes, he'd kissed my bare chest as well as my stockinged legs, some parts of me easily accessible to him. If he was able to kiss my legs, it was because, of course, that I let him. I let him lift my dress and petticoats, stroke me and awaken the woman in me.

The chauffeur was to wait as Damian helped me to sit back normally and then took me to my apartment. "I won't make this a scandal by having the car wait for hours," Damian said as I clung to him in my doorway, my skirts billowing about us. Damian almost lifted me right off my feet as he hugged me so tightly and kissed me so wonderfully.

If he knew I was a man, as was the Angela Morton he had told me about, he didn't let on. He caressed my garters as I squirmed and pulled on him to come into my apartment. Well, he'd said he'd gone out with a transsexual before. He'd implied that he'd had sex with her. I was shivering as he kissed me, as all I could think of was that I was a type of girl he knew about. I could please and pleasure Damian as a girl.

"I must take you out again," whispered Damian. I nodded, my earrings dancing.

"I'd love that," I said. Me, I realized in surprise. That was me saying that to Damian Robertson. I was asking him to date me as a woman. We kissed again. Oh, I knew why I wanted to go out with him again and again. It was this wonderful way he made me feel. Oh, I had a feminine side, I really did, and I desperately wanted to explore that side of me with Damian.

"I must go," he murmured after several more torrid kisses in which I surrendered my mouth for his exploration as well as thrusting my womanish body firmly into him.

Damian Robertson kissed me, promised to call the next day and limped off down the hall. Poor guy, I thought smugly. I could have taken care of that for you. I stood outside my room, twirling and swishing in my lovely dress, as a grimacing, laughing Damian pressed the elevator buttons before disappearing from me.

I swirled and danced into my apartment, looking at myself in the mirror, the redness on my face startling. I twirled and swayed for a very long time until the energy inside me diminished. I was finally able to strip and go to bed in a lovely, soft nightie. But funnily enough, when I tried to femininely dream of Damian, all I could see in my girlish dreams that night was Al Barnes scowling at me.

\*\*\*\*\*end of part two\*\*\*\*\*