

# CONTEMPORARY TV FICTION

MAGAZINE

## VOLUME FOUR OF FOUR AN AMERICAN BOY IN ENGLAND

By C.V.

Editors:

SANDY THOMAS, Renee ,

Special thanks to Alice Trail

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## PART FOUR OF FOUR

### BOOK FOUR

They were silent for a while, after that. Jack wondered what he would grow up to be if Aunt Julia and Donna had their way. . .not to mention Miss Vincent, the new governess.

When they left the movie, he hated to return to the reality of being a boy in skirts who was being trained to look and act like a well bred girl.

He had not heard anything from his mother or sister since the last letter dooming him to four more months as a girl. They were so far away and unreachable, causing him to feel so helpless and defenseless against the scheming women around him. Even Terry's cheerful chatter mentioning his birthday could not change his mood.

At Picadilly Circus, Terry leaned against an old car, parked at the curb for a promotion of some sort, and flirted with some of the boys. Her red and blue knit dress had long sleeves, but a short skirt that really showed off her navy blue stocking covered shapely legs.

Jack felt drab and sedate in his plain dress, standing beside the flamboyantly dressed Terry.

Fortunately, they did not have long to wait. Donna arrived with her arms laden with boxes and packages, which she promptly distributed between Terry and Jack. Jack wondered what might be in them. He sure was not looking forward to his birthday. He was away from home and his friends for the first time on this day. He was also apprehensive about the presents he might receive. After what they had done to him. . .all these things. . .making him suffer and humiliating him. . .he would be perfectly within his rights to refuse presents from them.

He remembered how terrible he had felt that day when Tim had seen him for the first time in that checkered pretty new dress. In his heart, he knew he would not dare to offend them by refusing their gifts. He had become too scared of Aunt Julia and Donna to do or say anything that might seriously displease them. The consequences would be dire and extremely painful. They might even refuse to return

his old clothes when his mother and sister arrived at Christmas. That would be the worst punishment of all. No. . . he would go along with them.

That evening at dinner, Aunt Julia reminded them that the Armstrongs would move in the next day. "You girls go over their rooms tomorrow and see that everything is in order and is still spotless. Make sure the beds are made and the dressers are empty. Jackie, put some flowers in there as well. And Paul, make sure you are available to carry their things up."

Jack remained quiet the remainder of the evening. Aunt Julia, who was watching him, said, "What's the matter Dear?" "You're so quiet. Aren't you feeling well?"

"No. . . I'm alright, I guess. It's just that I was thinking," He stopped talking. He had to be very careful what he said. How could he tell her honestly about his resentment at having to wear dresses and skirts all the time? How could he tell her how worried he was about beginning to feel like a girl, with all these girlish tasks they made him perform, and how they were becoming natural to him? He knew he did not dare to utter a single word of complaint.

"Well?" Aunt Julia asked sharply.

"It's just that. . . I was thinking about school, my friends, and home. I'm getting so old already."

"Oh. . . I understand," Aunt Julia smiled. "Every girl at your age goes through the same thing. She is uncertain and is trying to find her proper place in life and society. Actually. . . you have done very well Dear. You have adjusted nicely to new life in a strange country. I'm really proud of you and the way you act now, like a well bred girl with polite manners and graceful movements. Your whole disposition has changed for the better, and you are now obedient and passive as a girl should be. I just know that you will grow into an accomplished lady, and you will make your mother very proud of you."

Terry giggled, as Jack blushed a deep red.

"But," he started.

"No further word Dear. . . I know what you are about to say, and talking won't help. Just think about what I said and see if I'm not right. But for now, it's bedtime for you girls. Tomorrow will be a busy day."

Obediently Jack and Terry folded their handiwork neatly and kissed everyone good night, as had become the custom.

Jack lay awake for a long time, mulling over what his aunt had said. Had he really changed so much? Was she really proud of him? Did she really expect him to become a pretty young lady? No. . . it could not be. She had to be joshing him. Come Christmas, he would be back in his rightful trousers, and he would go home with his mother and sister. He tried to ignore that gnawing fear that kept bobbing in

his mind, as strong as ever. His mother would put an end to all of this foolishness about masquerading as a girl.

Then, Aunt Julia and Donna would have to go back to dominating poor Paul again. Paul was so independent now and seemed very strong and manly, that they would have a hard time getting him back in skirts, Jack guessed. Anyway. . .they would not dare to have him meet his mother and sister in skirts. . .or would they?

The next morning, Jack dressed in a pink sweater and skirt set with beige nylons and black medium height heels. He put on a thin silver necklace, a matching little bracelet, and brushed his hair into a neat pageboy. His makeup went quickly as he had learned the art perfectly, and his soft attractive skin looked healthy and completely girlish.

At breakfast, Aunt Julia reminded Jack of her order to dust and check Miss Vincent's school room, and Terry was to do the same thing in the Armstrong rooms.

Paul felt sorry for Jack as he saw him in his cute pinafore with a dust cloth in his hand, going about his chores. Paul wondered what Jack felt as he was made to do these silly things in skirts and aprons. All that, while he himself could do everything he wanted without constant supervision, free as a bird, unencumbered by any chores.

At eleven o'clock, the Armstrongs arrived. Hank was dressed in a simple white blouse and the short camel colored skirt he had worn the previous Sunday. His face was red as he entered carrying a big box, trying to blow some stray locks from his eyes. Obviously, he had experienced a very busy morning, finishing packing and loading the car without the help of his brothers.

Anne had departed the night before. When she left, she hugged Hank tightly, with tears in her eyes. "Take good care of yourself Dearie. . .and don't do anything I wouldn't. Try to help your mother so she will get well soon." She also made him promise to call her if he needed help. "I'll send you my new address as soon as I relocate."

Hank had to swallow, wiping a tear from his eyes. He was annoyed that he had become so emotional. . .almost like a real girl.

With Paul doing most of the work, the luggage was soon in their rooms.

Mrs. Armstrong decided they would unpack after lunch. "You had better freshen up and take a rest Hennie, dear. You don't want Paul to see you like that."

Hank blushed deeply as he went to the mirror to comb his hair and touch up his makeup. He also put on some perfume, cursing himself for wondering if Paul would like this scent.

Downstairs, Aunt Julia kissed Hank and his mother and told them to consider themselves at home. . .not as guests. . .but like family. "I

don't want you two staying in your rooms just because you imagine that you are paying boarders, or some such silly thing," she insisted.

Mary Armstrong smiled gratefully. It was wonderful how friendly and hospitable these English friends were, and they hardly knew each other.

Terry and Jack joined Hank on the terrace. "You've no idea how glad I am to be staying here with you. Imagine me having to play girl all the time in some apartment, hotel, or with perfect strangers. Also. . . I feel sort of lonely and lost without my brothers."

"You can consider yourself my cousin. . . just like Jackie," Terry said, touching his arm in an affectionate gesture.

Her statement made Hank feel much better, and he blushed. He tried to overcome his shyness, and he girlishly hooked his arm in hers and walked with her to the dining room, followed by Jack.

Jack was amazed at the changes in Hank. He was every inch a young girl, just like Terry.

The addition of another young girl to the Kerr household changed the atmosphere for the better. Aunt Julia and Donna were, of course, happy to have another boy in skirts to dominate and make more feminine.

Terry appeared to harbor a special feeling for Hank, and enjoyed his presence very much.

Jack felt better because he now had a friend, in the same boat as himself, to be brought up by a governess, as a prim girl in skirts and dresses. He thought of the proverb, "Shared pain is half pain".

So, a happy group gathered for lunch. Mrs. Armstrong, who naturally missed her two boys, had Aunt Julia for company and diversion and soon forgot her deep grief. Noting how nicely Terry and Jackie were helping with the dishes in their pinafores, she instructed Hank to help as well.

As he obediently rose, Mrs Kerr said, "You just sit dear. This is your first day. . . and two helpers are enough just now. I have a feeling Miss Vincent will make sure you girls do your share of domestic chores in the future."

Yes. . . there was a noticeable atmosphere at the Kerr house, marred only by the unexpressed apprehension of the three girls at the arrival and reign of their new governess. Donna and Aunt Julia made sure to mention the fact frequently, while the three discussed the dreaded fact often among themselves

That evening as Terry, Jack, and Hank sat working on their needlepoint, looking so cute and properly feminine in their white aprons, Donna could not help smiling whenever her eye caught this domestic scene. The fact that two of these girls were really boys, added to her amusement. One sure could not tell the difference as they sat so neatly, gabbing amongst themselves.

The next morning when Jack awoke, he had completely forgotten it was his birthday. He was reminded of it soon enough; however, when the entire household trooped into his room singing "Happy Birthday".

Aunt Julia, seeing his surprised and embarrassed face, explained that it was a family ritual to congratulate the celebrant before breakfast, while wearing nightwear and robes.

Jack blushed deeply as he saw Paul looking at his thin green babydoll nightgown. With a crimson face, he turned away from the crowd and wrapped himself in his long sleeved quilted house coat, which had taken the place of his negligee now that the weather had turned colder. He wondered if Paul and the Armstrongs had noticed his corset, which he customarily wore at night in accordance with his aunt's wishes. At any rate, he was now used to its support.

Everyone wished him a happy birthday with a kiss and a present, except for Paul and Hank, who lamely shook hands. Paul was especially concerned and uncertain as what to do in this awkward situation.

Donna grinned and made Hank very uncomfortable by nudging him and asking why he hadn't kissed Jackie also.

Hank, who still thought Jackie was a real girl, was so terribly shy because he himself wore a very sheer nightgown with a see through negligee over it, which clearly showed he was wearing a panty girdle.

Fortunately, the crowd paid no further attention as they tried to find a place to sit, depositing themselves on chairs, dresser bench, and the bed. They all watched Jack open his presents. His face was red, partly because of the earlier embarrassment, and partly because he realized his hair was still in curlers. They had surprised him, and he hadn't had time to tie a scarf over his head as Terry and Hank had done.

Paul felt a little out of place as the only man in pajamas and woolen robe in the group.

Jack first opened a large box that Aunt Julia had given him. He pulled from it a magnificent satin robe, edged and decorated with gold trim and braid.

"Try it on Jackie," Donna said.

Jack, too shy and embarrassed to reveal himself in his nightie again, quickly said, "Alright. . . I'll change in the bathroom."

Donna, anxious to embarrass him, started to object, but he was already out of the room. A few minutes later, he reappeared looking regal, like a real princess. He had quickly taken the curlers out of his hair and combed it to look better, although not perfect. He posed expertly, allowing everyone to admire his luxurious robe, and he was pleased with their admiration. His eyes still reflected a mixture of shame and uncertainty when he wondered what Paul was thinking of

him.

"It's magnificent," Mrs. Armstrong said. "What a beautiful garment."

Terry, with an envious look on her face, excitedly came over to feel the softness of the material.

Hank admired Jack's present from a distance. "Gee, Jackie looks so pretty in it," he thought as he wondered about her half smile. She seemed to want to smile and was ready to, but something bothered her and held her back at the last moment. Her eyes reflected a sort of sadness, the way he himself felt much of the time. "Maybe she is homesick," Hank surmised. "Girls are always funny that way."

In his new robe, he was the center of attention as he opened his other presents. As he had expected, there were nothing but girlish things. This was all so silly and wasteful because, come Christmas, he would have no further use of them. There were pretty slips, panties, a scarf, and several pairs of nylons. Donna gave him a cute pleated, light green miniskirt.

As he held it out before him, Aunt Julia said, "I doubt whether Miss Vincent will let you wear such a revealing skirt. . .but it would certainly look darling on you."

Paul's present was an attractive, simple, little silver bracelet. Jack, in turn, kissed everyone in a gesture of thanks. When he came to Paul, their eyes locked for a moment. Paul knew that Jack had liked his gift, and now, he was in for it. Jack hesitated for a fleeting moment. Then, with a gleam of humor in his eyes, bent down and kissed Paul soundly on the cheek as if to say, "It's alright. . .I'm a girl now, and I'm expected to do this."

Both boys blushed, and Donna couldn't take her eyes off of this significant and sensitive moment. Paul, finally seeing the humor of the situation, smiled and said, "I'm glad you like it Jackie. I chose it myself."

Mrs. Armstrong's present was a beautiful, long dark brown wig of real hair, and was beautifully styled. "This is so you can change into a gypsy when you feel like one," she stated.

Hank's present was a small box of delicate lace handkerchiefs. He and his mother came in for the same thank you treatment as the others. This time, Jack did not hesitate before kissing Hank. After all, this was between two girls, and therefore acceptable.

While the others talked and admired the gifts, Jack sank onto his bed. On the one hand, these feminine gifts did not appeal to him at all, while on the other hand, he was thrilled to receive them. There was always this nagging fretful feeling about what would happen when his mother and sister arrived every time Aunt Julia bought him something new. Still, he was touched by the apparent warm and sincere feelings everyone exhibited toward him. If only Aunt Julia

would give him back his own clothes, he could really be happy here.

“Here’s a letter from your mother, Jackie,” Aunt Julia said, taking it from the pocket of her robe. “It came earlier this week, but I hid it until your birthday. You can read it in private,” she added when he started to open the envelope.

They all stood up to leave, and Jack thanked everyone again with a blush. After the door closed, he stood before the mirror. It was true. . .it was a beautiful robe. . .and the deep red color did go well with his blonde hair.

He took off his robe and hung it neatly and lovingly in his closet. When he dressed, he put on one of his new slips. It fit him very well at the waist and over his bra. The lace was delicious. . .really lovely. The thought occurred to him that it was too bad his outer clothes would hide the pretty new garment, and he crimsoned all over again. What was coming over him that caused him to have such thoughts?

For day wear, he selected a simple white blouse, a checked woolen skirt, a red pullover, a leather belt with a large gold buckle, nude nylons, and shoes that matched the belt. After finishing his makeup, he gave himself a final check in the mirror and pronounced himself perfect. He was the image of a pretty girl in attractive, sporty, yet stylish clothes. He had learned that simplicity in clothes was the hallmark of good taste for a well bred girl, and he liked it that way.

Downstairs at breakfast, he learned, because of his birthday, that he was excused from all chores. Still, he took care of the flower arrangements, as he had come to enjoy this pleasant occupation. He noticed with regret that the end of the flower season was near, and soon they would be gone.

At tea time, he learned that on special occasions, like birthdays, the Kerr family dressed for dinner in evening clothes.

“You have never worn an evening gown, have you,” Donna asked.

“I don’t have one,” Jack said with a hint of relief. He just knew that long skirts would make him feel even more feminine and restricted.

“Well, I have just the dress for you. I’ll give it to you to keep as another birthday present. I’ve worn it only a few times, and it should look lovely on you.”

Jack tried to hide a grimace.

Terry smiled and said, “You’ll like it alright. All girls are excited when they get to wear their first formal.”

Hank had listened to this discourse with interest. He had objected when his mother insisted on buying him a formal evening gown also. At the time, he thought, “What the dickens will I ever do with it? Soon Mother will be well, and all the money will be wasted.” Now, tonight, he would wear it after all. Was Terry right? Would he enjoy

wearing it? Just thinking about the gown made him blush. It had a black velvet blouse with long narrow sleeves puffed at the shoulder, and a low round scalloped neck. The ankle length skirt was red and was covered with all kinds of gold figures and designs. It was made of a heavy synthetic material that draped beautifully over his knees.

When his mother made him try it on in the store, he remembered feeling strange and different. . .more feminine than ever. Now he had to wear it in public. He shivered when he found himself wondering what accessories to wear with it. He knew he would have to wear something around his neck to divert attention from that shamefully low neckline.

After tea, everyone soon disappeared upstairs to dress for dinner. Jack and Hank reluctantly followed the others.

While Jack was taking a leisurely scented bath, hoping that something would happen to prevent his wearing a long formal gown, Donna barged into the bathroom. Her complete lack of consideration for his privacy always annoyed him no end, but he was so afraid of her and so totally under her control, that he did not dare to protest.

"I put my dress and the taffeta petticoats that go underneath it in your room Jackie. I also brought you the smaller corset that I had to wear with it because the dress has a very small waist. That's why it won't fit me anymore. When we get you into it, you will be the Belle of the Ball. It was one of my favorites, and I almost hate to lose it."

"Why don't you keep it then?" Jack replied abruptly.

"I told you. . .it won't fit me anymore. It's only suitable for a young slender girl. . .like you."

She closed the door with a harsh laugh, leaving Jack thinking, "Why in heavens name didn't she give the dress to her sister Terry." He remembered to check himself carefully for any superfluous hair before returning to his room.

Jack put on his new robe and went to his room. Upon entering, he saw his new dress, the petticoats, and the waist cincher neatly laid out on his bed. He could not resist picking up and examining the lovely dress. It was a long, narrow sleeved, soft garment with a low scooped neck. The gown was made of an expensive silk like material and was printed with red flowers on a black background. The waist was accentuated by a belt that fastened femininely in front by a red silk cord. Against his will, he was intrigued by this gorgeous garment and was most anxious to see how he would look in it.

He sank onto his bed in despair. What was the matter with him? Here he was. . .a young man. . .about to dress in this terribly feminine evening gown, and worst of all, he wanted to see how he would look. His cheeks burned again. For a moment, the thought flashed through his mind to refuse to wear it, but he quickly discarded it. To refuse would only mean a severe punishment, and he would end up wearing

the dress anyway.

He swallowed away the lump in his throat, and knowing he had no alternative, he began dressing. First, he put on a black bra and a beautiful black nylon combination panty slip that fit tightly around his figure and over his breasts. Next came the short cincher corset, and he soon found that Donna was right. It was smaller than anything he had ever worn. He became stubborn about lacing it and decided to do complete the task without asking for help. He struggled and struggled, holding his breath, pulling himself in more and more until he had it completely closed. He quickly found how tight his constriction was when he let his muscles relax. As uncomfortable as he was now, he wondered how he would feel in a couple of hours and after he had eaten dinner.

The long dark red taffeta petticoat felt strange about his knees and ankles. He found that it really limited his stride even though he was now used to taking small steps. All in all though, it was not too bad.

As he did his makeup, he decided to wear Mrs. Armstrong's gift, as no doubt that would please her. His feminine instinct told him that the wig would go well with this dark dress. For the same reason, he decided to wear Paul's present, and he slipped the bracelet over his narrow wrist. In his dark colored lingerie, he could see that he would need a vivid red lipstick. While putting it on, he saw again how the brilliant color and a slight widening of the lip line made his mouth sensuously seductive. He also knew that he would need darker eye shadow and mascara.

He quieted his conscious by thinking it was alright to try to look his best on his birthday. Surely, such a special occasion was worth a little more effort.

Then came his dress. Carefully, he put his hands through the narrow sleeves, then pulled it over his head and down into place over his slinky lingerie. He had a very difficult time closing the long zipper in the back because of the extremely tight fit that Donna had mentioned. Finally, it was closed. He was well aware that that he could never have worn this dress without the tighter corset. He laced the belt tightly in front and let the red knotted cord hang loosely over his skirt.

Lastly came the dark wig. He brushed the long tresses into a loose casual style, knowing that a ponytail would not go with a formal.

As he studied himself in the mirror, strong feminine emotions overwhelmed him, and he felt tears well up in his eyes. Again, he asked himself, "How is it possible that I... a boy... can look this way, the epitome of femininity? How could it be? I'm supposedly built like a man, but I fill this evening gown to perfection, as if it were made for me."

He started to shiver. How humiliating it was for a young man to

look so completely like a girl. "Was Aunt Julia right after all? Should I have been born a girl?? Did nature make a mistake in giving me the wrong equipment to go with this feminine face and body?" He could not remove his eyes from his reflection. Why. . .he was actually beautiful. There was no denying it! He blushed anew as he turned and posed before the full length mirror, lifting his skirt to reveal his trim ankles and his patent leather three inch heels.

Unannounced, Terry and Hank, both wearing evening gowns, barged into his room. "Jackie. . .we are waiting for you. What's taking you so long?" They both stopped in their tracks, when they saw this gorgeous, sultry, blushing girl.

"You're an absolute knockout!" Hank said, with too much boy in his voice. He said it with such sincere conviction, that Jack turned quickly to hide a little smile of pleasure.

Terry would not let him turn away. Grabbing his arm, she said, "Let's have a good look at you."

With three elegant steps, like an accomplished model, Jack turned once. . .then twice. In doing so, he lost his inhibitions, and he knew he would be alright for the evening, judging by the admiration of his friends. As he stood there in sort of a daze, Terry and Hank each grabbed him by a hand and pulled him from the room.

"I can't wait to hear what Mother says when she sees her beautiful niece. . .our birthday girl."

Reluctantly, he allowed himself be pulled along. Fortunately, Terry and Hank were hampered by their long skirts as well, and they had to release him to lift their own to avoid tripping on the stairs.

When he entered the living room, he saw everyone's eyes on him. He lowered his head and stood there, unwilling to look anyone in the eyes.

Both Mrs. Armstrong and Aunt Julia stared at him in happy surprise.

Donna clapped her hands in excitement. "You're so divinely elegant and shapely!" she said, meaning every word.

Jack remained where he was, blushing furiously with pleasure and humiliation that everyone actually found him beautiful. But worse yet, no one could see any of the young man that he really was.

Donna walked around him, and said, "This is absolutely marvelous! You look better in this dress than I ever did."

That gave Jack a small sense of triumph. At least he had the satisfaction that he, by his long tormentor's own admission, looked better than her in this pretty dress. A hint of a smile softened his shy face.

"That's better Jackie," Paul said. "You should be happy on your birthday."

Terry pulled him toward the couch, his taffeta petticoats rustling

with every step for all to hear. He sat down, carefully handling his long skirt. As he sat there, he felt so imprisoned in this tight fitting dress, having lost the freedom around his knees while the tight corset imprisoned his waist.

When he saw Paul staring at him, he became annoyed, and said, "Hennie looks at least as pretty as I. Why don't you stare at her for a while?" At once, he was sorry to have said it. He had admitted that he knew he was pretty and, at the same time, embarrassed Paul.

Everyone, not just the girls, was dressed festively for the occasion.

"I told Sarah to break out a bottle of our best sherry for this celebration," Aunt Julia announced.

Donna proposed a toast to Jack's health.

Jack lowered his eyes and toyed with the strings of his belt and blushed for all he was worth. He was, to say the least, ill at ease, being the center of attention while wearing this long evening gown.

Sarah brought in a beautiful birthday cake with brightly burning candles and the words "Happy Birthday Jackie".

Aunt Julia had even arranged for a bottle of champagne, "to top off the celebration,".

Everyone was cheerful, except the birthday girl. However, after the second glass of champagne, even he loosened up and was caught up in the good spirits of the others. His face relaxed as he slowly gave in to the femininity that this dress so vividly brought out in him. His eyes sparkled as Mary Armstrong proposed a toast "to the everlasting beauty of Jackie". He actually managed a pleasant smile. Every girl enjoys hearing that she is beautiful, and he was certainly no exception.

Later in the evening, after they had played some games, the sobering thought came to Jack that his governess would arrive the next day. He became morose and apprehensive again, with the idea that he, a boy, was to have a governess. When he mentioned this sad fact to Hennie, she lost her good cheer as well.

Aunt Julia attributed their mood change to the wine, and sent them to bed.

The pleasant evening over, Jack found himself in a meditative mood as he prepared for bed. As he neatly hung the long dress in his closet, he knew he would not soon forget this birthday, his first ever in skirts. Would it be his last? Why had he felt so different and strange all evening? Was it because he finally realized that he was really very pretty, beautiful even? Yes, he was much too pretty to be a boy. Aunt Julia and Donna must be right, after all. Why had he been so slow to admit these shameful facts to himself? He could not make any sense of his feelings and emotions. His brain tried to comprehend, to explain, to rationalize, but his head was trapped in a silken daze. He fervently wished he were home where he knew what he was, what he

had always been, and what he was expected to be. Now, he was all mixed up, confused, and uncertain about himself, his identity, and his gender.

When he turned over his bedcovers, he discovered the unopened and forgotten birthday letter from his mother. He put it aside until he had on his nightgown. It was one he had inherited from Donna, and its femininity always gave him a nasty feeling in the pit of his stomach. It was a blue soft nylon gown with a low neckline, offset by a white ribbon. He studied himself in the mirror. He was so completely girlish with his long hair flowing over his shoulders. Gosh. . . why did he like what he saw in the mirror?

Slowly, he went back to bed and opened the letter. There were two notes inside. First, he read the one from his mother. She wished him a happy birthday and went on to tell him of her trip, sights, and adventures. She ended the letter saying that she enjoyed traveling so much that she might delay her plans to visit England at Christmas. "Aunt Julia writes me that you are happy and well adjusted in her home. So much so that I feel sure that you won't mind staying there a while longer. Perhaps you might finish your school year there and come home when summer vacation begins. Or if it works out better, you would like to stay the summer and come home when school begins next September. Anyway. . . we still intend to come to Europe, and I will write you when our plans are more definite."

His head dropped. How could she leave him here without even considering his wishes? She did not seem to care! Of course, she didn't know what they were doing to him and how unhappy he was, and he couldn't tell her about it. NEVER!!!! His sister would tease him to death.

His face flushed red when he unfolded his sister's note and read the heading, "Dear Jackie". Reading beyond the customary birthday wishes, he became even more irritated and ashamed. She wrote, "Donna tells me that you are busy embroidering a tablecloth as a surprise present for Mother and that you are very good at it. Why, my darling little brother, I didn't know that you went in for that sort of thing. Donna writes that you are always neatly dressed for this work also. What does she mean by that? I am dying to hear more from you about this. I just can't picture you doing fancy work like a girl. Maybe the English climate has had a good influence on you. On the other hand, could this be Aunt Julia's doing? She always was domineering and willful according to Mom. Uncle Ronald was very hen pecked by Auntie, Mother says. Anyway, please write soon darling brother. I can't wait to hear more about what Donna wrote and why she calls you Jackie. But don't worry, I haven't told Mom anything about this or your 'surprise'." It was signed, "Your Loving Sister, Jo."

The note dropped from his hand. He had not known that Donna

and Jo had corresponded. What terrible things had Donna written about him? He banged his fist into his pillow, trying to give expression to his anger. . .yes, almost hate. . .that welled up in him, filling his being.

“Damnation. . .why did Donna have to be so mean and hateful? Why did she have to spill the beans about his dressing to his sister? She must have written and hinted plenty, he surmised from the letter. Suddenly, he decided to do something about this. He would talk with Aunt Julia and complain, no matter what Donna would do to him. She had gone too far this time!

A long time passed before Jack’s anger reduced enough for him to relax and finally fall asleep.

The next morning, he awoke feeling refreshed and relaxed until he remembered his sister’s note. The fact that his governess would begin that day made things even worse, as he was very nervous about her.

He dressed in his usual simple light blue sweater and skirt set. After completing his toilette, he went slowly down to breakfast, mentally preparing what he was going to say to Aunt Julia.

Jack avoided Donna’s eyes as she looked questioningly at him. She had noticed his unusual coolness toward her, and no doubt, was wondering why. To break the silence, she asked, “Have you girls agreed on a school uniform yet?”

Jack ignored her remark completely, but Terry said, “Oh no. . .we forgot all about that. I don’t see why we can’t wear sweaters and skirts like Jackie and I have on. It’s neat enough, it would comfortable, and they could all be the same color.”

“That’s not like a school uniform for children at all,” Donna replied, looking directly at Jack and accentuating the word children. “Well anyway, you girls shouldn’t worry about it. I’m sure Miss Vincent knows exactly what she wants you to wear. It’ll probably be something like the pupils in her school had to wear.”

No one replied. The girls were already convinced that Miss Vincent got exactly what she wanted, when she wanted it, and without compromise.

Soon, they were busy with their daily chores, making their beds and cleaning their rooms, and as usual, wearing their identical frilly pinafores.

Aunt Julia warned them, “You had better make sure your quarters are perfectly clean and neat. Miss Vincent is sure to inspect drawers, closets, and everything else.”

The dreaded moment finally arrived. Miss Vincent’s taxi drove up on the dot of ten o’clock. Aunt Julia welcomed her and sent Sarah to fetch the girls. Apprehensively, they appeared before their new teacher, all three still in their pinafores, clean and starched. Hank still

had a dust cloth in his hand.

They curtsied politely, and Miss Vincent gave them an approving look. "Good morning girls. Are you ready for school to begin?"

In unison, they replied, "Yes, Miss Vincent."

"Good! Be in the classroom in thirty minutes. I know it is Saturday, but I don't believe in girls idly loafing around the house on weekends."

Jim, the gardner's son still dressed in his kilt, came in and lugged the heavy suitcases up the stairs. When he saw Jack in his skirts, makeup, and frilly pinafore, he smirked scornfully.

"You girls had better check your appearance instead of giggling," Donna admonished them, then added, "Your hair needs attention, Hennie."

Obediently, Hank, like the other two, went to his room. He was wearing a blue, long sleeved dress with a medium low round neckline and a bangle on his right wrist. His mother had made him wear this dress rather than something more casual. She said that he should make a good first impression on his teacher on this initial day of school. He styled his hair into an acceptable pageboy with a fringe of bangs over his forehead, which he had become quite adept at doing. Lately, he had found himself wishing his hair were longer and curlier. Finally, he was finished. He hoped Miss Vincent would be satisfied.

The three girls met downstairs in the living room where, after talking it over, Terry and Jack doffed their aprons. "Take off that silly pinafore Hennie," Terry said. "I have never worn one in school, and I'm certainly not about to start now."

"Gee. . .I don't know," Hank replied. "Mother says she wants me to wear it always in the house, like you two always do."

"Oh, go ahead!" Terry said firmly untying the strings. "The governess is in charge now, and I'm sure she won't insist on such a silly thing for grown up girls."

How wrong Terry was! The first words Miss Vincent said, when the three shyly entered the classroom and curtsied to her was, "Where are your pinafores girls? I don't want to see any of you children without one in the house or in class, except maybe on special dress up occasions or when guests are present. Go and fetch them right away!!!"

Jack looked resignedly at Terry, while Hank's face had that "I told you so" look. Sheepishly and feeling very foolish, they entered again, wearing the hated childish garment.

"That's better," Miss Vincent said. "Now, you may take your seats, and we can get acquainted."

When Jack slid in his seat, slumping with a round back, she criticised sharply. "I expect full and constant attention in class. One token of lagging interest is your posture, so I insist that you girls sit

correctly and nicely with a straight back, chin up, and with your eyes on me. Your legs must be nicely together and perfectly still. A girl must learn to control her every movement carefully and be always aware of making the most elegant and attractive appearance. That, with good clothes, grooming, and a well trained figure gives the impression of beauty. . .real beauty that men immediately sense and appreciate. There will be no unnecessary shuffling of feet, and no useless gestures with your hands. They should be neatly folded in front on your desk, unless we are reading, writing, or sewing.”

“Now, when that is understood, I want to inform you that you will have a very full schedule, especially you two American girls. You will have to work very hard to catch up with the educational level of education in this country and on the continent. I will demand nothing short of your best efforts, so you ‘backward girls’ will quickly reach the educational level of your age group here. I expect complete and immediate obedience.

Hank and Jack arranged themselves as ordered, their fingers intertwined on top of their desks, but Terry could not contain herself, saying, “We never had any of this at Langley School!”

“I don’t care one whit what happens at other girl’s schools,” Miss Vincent replied sharply. “I have my own methods to make young children into well educated, well behaved young ladies. One of my rules is that you never speak in class unless you are spoken to. As this rule is apparently new to you, I will not punish you now Terry, but the next time, you will not be so fortunate.” As she ended her admonition, she pulled a mean looking paddle and a strong cane from her desk.

There was a light silence for that to sink in. Her three pupils had paled on hearing her threats and seeing these implements of doom.

“The roster of subjects will be hung in the classroom the next few days,” she continued. “You will then know the outline of your studies and activities this grade year. School will begin at eight o’clock in the morning, with a five minute break after each fifty five minutes. Lunch time is at twelve, lessons begin again at one thirty, and last until half past four.”

Jack and Hank both gasped, not being used to such long school hours.

Miss Vincent, noting their reaction, smiled and said, “Yes, things will be quite different for you American girls. Believe me, I have thirty years of experience teaching young ladies, and I know that in a reasonable amount of time, you will be accustomed to using your brains all the time. In addition to your work in the classroom, you will have one or two hours of homework that you can do in your rooms, if you wish. Either way, I will watch the three of you closely most of the time. Your behavior, your dress, your grooming, and every other

detail of your personal appearance will come under my scrutiny. I will insist that you meet my high standards in every way, and I will not tolerate any lapse. You will be LADIES every moment of every day. You had better make sure that I approve of your every action, because you will be severely punished for all infractions, no matter how small nor what time of day it occurs. I have found that this is the only way children will learn. Now. . . is that understood?" she ended with a harsh tone of voice.

The three girls, overcome by the severity of the program, barely managed to whisper, "Yes, Miss Vincent."

This; however, was not all!!! She went on and on, laying down rules and regulations in behavior, lessons, and duties until the heads of her pupils whirled. After a fifty five minute lecture on these and other subjects, she abruptly left the room saying, "You have a five minute rest period."

Terry, Jack, and Hank just sat there for a moment like a hurricane had hit them, and indeed it had. "This will be terrible," Hank said in a very quiet voice.

"She can't do that to us!" Terry said. "We're not little girls. I'll talk to Mother about this!"

"You know it won't do any good," Jack warned her. "Remember the last time you complained to her?"

"Miss Vincent sure means business, I can tell," Hank said, smoothing the skirt of his pinafore. "How will we ever be able to learn that much?"

"Only a child has to sit still in class," Terry argued further. "It's almost like we were praying or something."

"And, those long hours," Jack wailed. "How can we stand it?"

"Really. . . there's nothing we can do about it," Hank said quietly, "absolutely nothing. We have to do whatever she orders. I sure don't want a caning. . . or worse. I can't risk upsetting Mother either," he ended with a deep sigh, remembering Robert's warning.

Completely demoralized, they discussed their dire situation. No one could find a ray of hope, or even a lighter side to their predicament. They agreed that they had landed on very hard times.

In exactly five minutes, Miss Vincent came back into the room. She remained at the door, as if waiting for something. Jack caught on first. He nudged Terry and Hank, whispering, "Stand up. you fools."

Hank and Terry quickly followed Jack's example, stood, and curtsied for their strict teacher.

"Very good, Jackie," Miss Vincent said. "You have the correct feeling for good manners. I can see that it was bred into you. Children should always stand and curtsy whenever an adult enters or leaves their presence. Always remain standing until I give you permission to sit again."

“Straighten out your skirts,” she said to Hank, whose pinafore skirt was askew due to his quickly rising.

“Now, I’ll distribute the books.”

The pile of books was unbelievable! There was no end to them! There was English Grammar, French, even History of the British Isles, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, several books of poems, Art, Lives of Famous Composers, Famous Women in History, several cookbooks, Sewing for Young Women, Female Physiology and Hygiene, and a large Atlas. She told each girl to write her name in the left cover and warned them that from now on they were responsible for keeping them neat and spotless.

Hank bit his tongue when he found himself writing “Hennie Armstrong”. He felt strange, as he had never written his girls name before.

Miss Vincent left little time for meditation, as she continued. “I will assign required reading after each class.” She then had the girls write a list of the classes and courses and the books to be used with them. There were twelve study courses, each to be repeated every other day.

She waited patiently until her pupils were finished and sat in the posture as ordered, which she enforced with a sharp demanding stare. “Now for some personal notes,” she said with a sour smile, trying to break through her sober businesslike facade. “I want to be your friend and confidante, as well as your teacher and governess. If you have any personal problems, feel free to speak with me any time after class. I want to involve myself in your personal lives as well. This is necessary so I can make sure you learn to become proper ladies in your mind and thoughts. A happy, well adjusted girl makes a good student.”

“This afternoon, I will inspect your rooms. Terry, I will be in yours at two o’clock, Jackie’s at two thirty, and Hennie’s at three. I will look your quarters over carefully, and I will inspect you personally as well. This will help me to give you helpful hints in regard to your person, your appearance, your posture, your skin, and your figure. As you can see, I am interested in everything concerning my pupils. My school in Switzerland had a reputation for turning out ravishing young ladies with excellent manners and exceedingly modest, lady like behavior. We had such a good reputation that parents, brothers, and boyfriends were always telling me how delighted they were with the changes we brought about in our girls. Now. . .what have you girls to propose for your school uniforms?”

There was dead silence for a long moment.

“Well. . .did you give it some thought as I asked you to?” she added impatiently. . .almost accusingly.

“We talked about it a little, Miss Vincent,” Hank said softly, “but

we did not reach a decision.”

Terry added, “We would really like to wear skirts and sweaters, like Jackie and I have on.”

“I think that’s most unsuitable. It’s just too much like ordinary street wear. Okay, in this case, I will make the decision. I have a good idea what your school dresses should be like. Now. . .in as much as this is our first day. . .and a Saturday. . .class is dismissed until Monday morning at eight o’clock sharp. However, during lunch, we will make plans for the afternoon.”

She continued, “After the inspections, we will visit a corset maker and a seamstress. Mrs. Thornsby has recommended some excellent shops. You will have to be measured for your school uniforms, because I demand that all your clothes be a proper and exact fit to enhance your nice young feminine figures. To put your best foot forward, as it were. You’ll all be proud to show yourselves. During my personal inspection this afternoon, we will learn what your best points are and how to accentuate them, to bring them out,. . .for the boys to appreciate,” she ended with an oily smirk.

“It is, of course, understood that all your clothes are always in perfect order and that you personally take good care of every garment. I will not tolerate torn seams or hems, skirts that are too long or too short, runs in stockings, or soiled aprons, collars, or cuffs. We will also visit a beauty shop this afternoon to have your hair and face done by experts. After that, I expect you to look like you just came from there every minute of the day. I insist you three look your very best at all times. It is my responsibility as your governess to see that any carelessness or negligence is punished severely. Is that clearly understood?”

The girls could barely nod their heads. . .so stunned by her strict

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regimen.

"I want a reply. . .not head nodding like dummies," she said harshly.

"Yes, Miss Vincent," the girls murmured. Only Terry's eyes reflected obstinacy.

"Alright then. . .I'll see you at lunch."

Again, only Jack had the presence of mind to rise politely. The other two hastily followed his example with a rustling of skirts.

When the door closed behind Miss Vincent, Terry exclaimed most unlady like, "I'll be damned! She can't do this to us! Who does she think she is?"

"Shush. . .quiet," Hank said softly. "She'll hear you."

"I don't care whether she does or not! I'm going to talk to Mother right now." Her cute figure was a mountain of indignity as she left the room, slamming the door behind her.

Hank looked at Jack with a helpless expression on his face. "What will we do?"

"What CAN we do," Jack replied. "I thought Aunt Julia was tough. . .and Mrs. Thornsby. . .but this Vincent woman has them beat by a mile. I didn't know people like her still existed this day and age."

"I can't complain to my mother," Hank said. "She is still not well."

"I know," Jack replied, his eyes softening in commiseration. "With your brothers gone, you are alone and a stranger here, just like me. We will just have to help each other carry on as best we can. I sure wish I were home in Greenwich."

"You can say that again," Hank replied with great conviction and feeling. "We had better put our books away in our desks. I'll do it for Terry also."

"I've never had so many books in my life," Jack remarked as he tried to fit them all neatly in his desk. "I'll have eye strain by the time I've read them all. . .and who the devil cares about eighteenth century art?"

"And that beauty shop this afternoon," Hank wailed. "I've never been to such a place. I'll be embarrassed to death."

Jack just nodded.

"For you, it's no problem," Hank continued. "You're a girl. What will they do to me? Suppose they find out. . .my hair is so short!"

Jack thoughtfully looked at his companion. Hank looked so girlish in his light blue dress and pinafore. "Nobody can tell you're not a girl. . .so, don't worry about anything. You'll be really beautiful when they finish with you."

"Will they do anything permanent. . .I mean that lasts a long time?" Hank asked with desperation in his voice. "Suppose Mom comes to her senses tomorrow?"

Jack considered this for a moment. "No. . . they won't do anything permanent. Maybe it would take a couple of months for your eyebrows to grow out again. While they are growing, you can learn to forget all about your girlish posture, walk, and gestures."

"You mean. . . I do all that now. . . like a girl???"

Jack nodded. "That's only natural. That's why you got away with posing as your mother's daughter so well and so long. You're getting better every day, and I keep forgetting that you're really a boy." Hank looked anguished, and Jack felt sorry for him, wishing that he could help him. "Maybe. . . I should tell you something," He started. . . and stopped."

"Tell me what?" Hank asked curiously.

"I. . . I," Jack hesitated and blushed deeply. "You probably wouldn't believe me anyway. It's all so silly. . . and embarrassing."

"Yes. . . I'll believe you. Please, what were you about to say?" Hank insisted.

"I can't. . . I'll tell you some other time," Jack replied, quickly turning his back. His weak moment had passed. He just could not shame himself and divulge his terrible secret. Heaven only knew what strange things were going to happen now that he was under the control of Miss Vincent. He was just too uncertain of himself. . . too mixed up to explain his forced transformation to Hank.

Hank's eyes darkened. He was very fond of Jackie, and he hoped they would soon be close friends. How was it that always at the last moment, she threw up some kind of a barrier? Was something the matter with her? He felt a strong sense of disappointment that Jackie wouldn't confide in him, but he decided against pressing the matter further.

He slumped down at his school desk and tried to restore his hurt feelings after his friend's hesitance to confide in him. He leafed through his history book, as he had always been interested in the subject. He became lost in a story about the Bismarck and forgot his troubles for a moment.

Jack still stood half turned away from Hank, looking out the window with his hand in the pocket of his apron. He did not realize how completely girlish his stance and appearance was. The weather was cold, windy and depressing. The flowers were all gone, and the lawn had lost its lush color. The shock from the events of the last few hours, along with the fact that he almost told Hank his secret, worried him even more. Still, Hank was bound to find out sooner or later. . . living in the same house. . . and being almost constant companions. He was really surprised that Hank had not suspected anything before now.

"I really must look and act like a girl now," Jack thought. "Could it be true, what Aunt Julia had said so many times? Am I actually

becoming more girl than boy? How can it be possible? Only a few months ago, I was all boy. . .and now I'm so completely changed. I have successfully adopted the character, mannerisms, and appearance of a pretty girl."

He had to admit to himself that he was pretty. That image of himself in his evening dress on his birthday came vividly to his mind. He had seen it in the eyes of all the others. . .the open, honest admiration was flattering, but at the same time, very disturbing to him. He knew his appearance was not the only thing that had changed. His figure. . .his skin. . .the way he walked and stood. . .and worst of all. . .the way he thought and acted. . .said "girl" not "boy".

He thought of Paul's strange questioning look when he had seen him in the classroom dusting and cleaning. Paul's mouth had dropped open when he straightened out his pinafore skirt. . .like he had always worn them and done this sort of work. He realized that, as a boy, such activities as house work, dusting, and cleaning should be completely unnatural, awkward, and foreign to him. Still, he had been doing it every day. . .for weeks. . .without question. . .as if it were the most natural and proper thing for him to do. Just like the embroidery, flower arranging, and hundreds of other little household chores that were now expected of him. HE was doing it for his mother.

"I have no such excuse," he had to admit to himself. "They just gradually. . .day by day. . .changed me. . .through threats, punishment, and praise. . .encouragement and unrelenting pressure. I have no excuse other than the fact that I had no defense against their feminine wiles."

He turned toward Hank and studied him as he sat at his desk engrossed in his reading, the soft ruffles of his pinafore covering his slight, softly padded figure. He was sitting exactly a girl. . .knees and ankles neatly together. . .his soft hairless arms leaning elegantly on his desk. He had a warm feeling toward this boy in skirts, a warmth brought on by the fact that they were suffering the same fate, like prisoners sharing a cell.

Someday, he would tell Hank everything. . .but not now. Jack realized he was postponing the inevitable, but he lacked the courage to tell his friend here and now. He just couldn't! Admitting that he wasn't really a girl would be terribly humiliating, especially since he had been playing the role so convincingly and for so long. He had done everything so well, that he had fooled the whole Armstrong family.

The gong in the downstairs hall awoke him from his meditations, as it announced that lunch was ready.

"We had better check our face and hair," Hank said, putting a stray lock in place. "Old Vincent is bound to look us over carefully."

"You're right," sighed Jack. "I wonder how Terry made out with

her mother.”

They soon found out!

As they entered the dining room, there was Terry. She was dressed in a very short little girl dress that she had long since outgrown, and a childish bow in her hair. Her eyes were red from crying, and she had a little dinner bib tied over her pinafore.

While everyone stared at Terry, Aunt Julia said, “Terry has acted like a small spoiled brat. She will be dressed this way for the next week, and her bed time will be seven o’clock.”

Miss Vincent came in, chatting with Mrs. Armstrong and caught the last remark. She frowned at Terry and said, “You misbehaved? What have you done to earn your mother’s displeasure? Hardly are you out of my eyes, and you’re in trouble already?”

Aunt Julia answered for Terry. “She questioned my authority and judgment! She brazenly claimed that she would not obey the rules of this house! She also had the audacity to criticise your methods and school plan.” Aunt Julia was obviously very annoyed and upset.

Feeling everyone’s eyes on her, Terry lost whatever composure she had been able to maintain, began to sob. . . her face in her hands.

Jack knew Terry had been given a good dose of the cane to be in such a sorrowful state as this.

Donna looked on as if she was sorry for her sister. She really would have preferred that Jack or Hank be the object of the punishment.

“Sit up straight and take your hands off your face this instant!!!” Miss Vincent said in a tone of voice that even scared the two boys.

Terry jumped and obeyed instantly.

“I’ll talk to you later about this in your room,” Miss Vincent continued. “In the meantime, you will spend tomorrow writing neatly five hundred times, A CHILD MUST ALWAYS RESPECT AND OBEY HER ELDERS.”

Eyes downcast, Terry wiggled painfully in her chair, a deep blush covering her cheeks showing her shame. From past experience, Jack knew exactly how she felt. He was sorry for her even though he remembered how many times she had been mean to him in the past. During the meal, he cast her a couple of encouraging sympathetic glances to show his compassion for her. Since they were treated alike, their friendship had deepened. They were all three in the same boat now; all for one and one for all. He frowned at this thought. A fine trio of Musketeers they made. . . in skirts and girlish aprons.

During lunch, Miss Vincent announced that she had made appointments at the dress maker’s, the corset salon, and the beauty parlor. “We can just do all this before dinner. The beauty shop has an excellent French hair stylist, who is most accomplished and quite famous.”

She then told Aunt Julia she had decided on the school uniforms. "They will be simple, stylish, very feminine, close fitting dresses. The girls will look and feel very pretty in them, and you will be very proud of our pupils. Their costume will remind them that they are school children and must obey their elders. In a very short time they will be three well mannered, beautiful young ladies with a broad education, which will enable them to hold their own in the best of society."

Mrs. Armstrong and Aunt Julia both nodded, looking very pleased.

Afterward, Jack went to his room thinking that all day, he had never had a chance to talk to Aunt Julia about Donna's letter to his sister Jo. That was a mean trick, and he was not going to stand for it this time.

In his room, he checked his appearance out of pure habit. He brushed his hair, repaired his lipstick, and smoothed his nylons. Looking at the clock, he saw that there was twenty minutes remaining before Miss Vincent would come. He sank on his bed, thinking about the developments of the morning. Would he ever be able to meet Miss Vincent's standards in regard to femininity and study? At Greenwich High, he had never taken a language course, even though they were offered. Now, he would have to learn French and German at the same time. It just wasn't fair! He couldn't care less what those people spoke. Miss Vincent had no right to expect them to learn the same as the girls in her Swiss school.

Suddenly, he stopped daydreaming. With a start, he noted that he had only two minutes remaining before the dreaded visit. Quickly, he straightened out the satin bed cover. Noticing some dust on his night table, he took his girlish hanky from the sleeve of his sweater and wiped it away. The clock read exactly two thirty when his governess entered his room without knocking.

Embarrassed and nervous at the same time, Jack performed his curtsy and remained standing with his hands folded in front over his pinafore skirt. Miss Vincent sat down on the one easy chair and studied him from top to toe. His face turned a deep carmine, as she took in every detail, not missing a spot on his body.

"Turn around for me dear," she commanded. As he shamefully obeyed, she said, "We have good material to work with. You have good legs, slim ankles, clear complexion, and narrow shoulders."

Jack blushed even deeper as she went on talking about him like he was an animal or a pet up for sale.

"...AND you have a nice curve to your hips already," she ended.

Leaving him standing there to compose himself, she went about the room, giving it the "white glove" treatment. Then, she opened various drawers, fishing out some of his lingerie, bras and

panties, and inspecting them.

"You must fold your underthings neater dear. See that it is done by Monday, as I will inspect again. Next, she went to his closet to inspect his dresses, taking some of them out to check whether they were clean, neatly ironed, and in good repair. "You have good taste in clothes Jacqueline," she praised him, holding his evening gown out in front of her.

"Most of these are Terry's or Donna's cast offs," he said. "But. . . Aunt Julia did buy me some of my own." He blushed again, as he realized that he had just admitted to having dresses of his OWN.

"I'll bet you don't like wearing hand-me-downs any better than other girls," Miss Vincent said smilingly in a sugar coated tone of voice. "No girl does."

Weeks of pent up emotions of disgust and frustration came charging to the surface. He spat, "I don't like any dresses or skirts. . . NEW OR OLD." Then, after a short pause, "I think it is terrible that they are forcing me to become a girl! I am so ashamed. . . it's just horrible!" He burst into tears and added, barely above a whisper, "One of my school friends came over and saw me like this. . . how can I go back to school? If Tim or his sister ever speak out of turn? I would rather be dead!"

"Now. . . now Dear," Miss Vincent said, taking him by the arm and leading him to the bed. She sat beside him and put her arm around his slender shoulders. "Don't cry Jackie. . . it won't help you know. Still, a girl always feels better after a good cry, doesn't she?" She stroked his hair and his back as if she were petting a dog, causing every nerve in his body to tingle.

After a bit, Jack calmed down and dried his eyes with his hanky.

Miss Vincent saw it and said in a tone of voice as if the world had ended, "What is that filthy rag? It looks like you used it for a dust rag. Now, you must know that a girl must always have dainty and clean things! You should be ashamed of yourself."

"But. . . but I'm not a girl. . . I'm NOT. . . I don't WANT to be one! NEVER. . .!" Jack shouted, starting to cry all over again.

"Now. . . now. . . Dear. Calm down. . . I understand. It is always very hard for a young person to understand himself and to accept his true nature. Particularly, if he has thought for a long time along different lines. Then it is especially hard to accept the iron hand of fate. It is real hard to change one's image, I know!"

Jack just stared uncomprehensively at her.

"I don't have time to explain it all to you now. We will talk more about it in the days to come. Just remember clearly that it is obvious that you should have been born a girl. Think about these things carefully for a few days until we talk again. After all. . . a female is the most all around creature on earth. God clearly favored women

over men, making them responsible for continuing the race. Women are much more desirable than mere men. You should be pleased that your body has so much femininity in it that you can look and act like an adorable girl. Your Aunt Julia, who is a very brilliant woman, immediately saw through your boyish masquerade and recognized your true and superior gender. You should be very thankful to her for helping bring out your true self by putting you in dresses and skirts. Only by being true to your own self can you become really happy, useful, well adjusted, and a credit to the female sex. As such, you will be able to help others understand themselves and bring out the best in those who surround you.

She stopped to let her long tirade sink in. Jack looked like he was having a bad dream. . . a nightmare. His eyes were in a foggy daze.

To bring him out of it, Miss Vincent said, "Tell me something about yourself and your life so far."

Jack sat silent. What did she want to know? Where should he begin?

"Tell me about your family. . . your home. . . your friends. . . school," she encouraged him when she saw his hesitation.

Then, Jack started to talk. He told her that his father had died when he was very young, and he hardly remembered him. Drawing him out with clever questions and pretending a smiling kind looking face, Miss Vincent managed to keep him talking about many subjects. She let him go on and on. . . nodding her head every now and then. Jack began to experience some relief from his tension. As his nerves calmed down, he talked and talked. His emotions surfaced again; however, when he talked about his arrival in England and being put in kilts. . . then petticoats and slips. . . and finally, dresses and skirts all the time.

Miss Vincent, seeing that he was getting worked up again, cut him off. "I can imagine the rest dear. We will have plenty of opportunity to talk about these things more in the months to come. Still. . . I must repeat that your Aunt Julia made the right decision for you. . . without question. You are just too slight and too pretty. . . too elegant and too soft to wear trousers. Anyway. . . I think you yourself know that by now. It's just a matter of learning to accept yourself for what you really are. . . a natural attractive girl. I am here to see that you do, and that you become a well bred, seductive young woman. . . with all the female graces. . . to be admired by everyone who meets you. By the way, that's a very attractive way to wear your hair."

"It's a hairpiece," Jack said sourly.

"Well. . . we must plan to do your own hair this same way, when it has grown long enough. Now, undress Dear,"

"Undress?. . . now?. . . while you are still here?" Jack asked in stupefied, embarrassed surprise.

"Yes. . .of course Dear. . .I always want to see my pupils body to observe her good points and where she needs improvement. Now. . .hurry up!" she said, looking at the clock. "I'm due in Hennie's quarters very shortly."

With a show of great reluctance, but not daring to disobey, Jack pulled the sweater over his head, placed it on his bed, and unzipped his skirt in the back. Stepping out of the skirt, he neatly folded it and placed it on the bed along with his sweater.

Miss Vincent looked his slender body over as he stood there in his slip. She approached him and put a finger under his corset. "You are long overdue for a smaller corset. This one is almost loose." Then compressing his waist between her hands, she added, "We can give you a much neater waist." Taking a tape measure from her purse and wrapping it around his waist, she read, "twenty six inches. . .very good." His bust measured thirty five and his hips thirty four.

"Your waist will have to come down to the same size as Terry's," she said in a tone that brooked no arguments. "She is twenty four inches now, and before next summer, we will have you both down to twenty one. We will order your new corsets this afternoon."

She unlaced his corset for him and helped him out of his slip, lifting it carefully over his long hair. After unhooking his bra, and, without so much as a by your leave, lowered his panty girdle. Jack's face was a fiery red again, as he stood before her in nothing but his modesty patch.

"Face me dear," she ordered.

Eyes lowered, Jack obeyed as if he were a puppet on a string. In his present state, he seemed to have no will of his own.

She palmed his breasts, and the coldness of her hands made goose flesh appear and his nipples harden. Smiling, she said, "You still need some improvement here." She felt his waist again and still lower, his buttocks. "Yes. . .you have a nice shapely figure for a girl. You can take pride in it. With some help here and there. . .mostly here," she grinned, fondling his pectoral muscles, "you will be as shapely as Terry. Bet you'd like that!"

"I don't want any. . .you know, enlargement there!" Jack objected. "How can I go back to high school in Greenwich, . . .if they grow bigger. . .and with such a panty waist?" He moaned, "How can I ever face my friends?"

"In a nice tight fitting sweater, I would imagine your former buddies will be only too glad to face you," she said, as if it were a big joke.

Her answer made Jack angry enough to say, "I'm serious! Don't joke about this! It's getting so bad that I may not want to go home at all anymore."

Miss Vincent's face became hard, and her eyes flashed fiery

determination. "Young girls wants and don't wants do not matter! You will do as your aunt and your superiors tell you, and that is that! So, in the future, spare me your desires and your arguments. As your governess, I will decide what is best for you and what you can and cannot do."

Jack was overwhelmed by her harsh, strict attitude. He simply blushed, as he just did not have the guts to respond.

When she asked, "Is that clear?", he merely whispered in a very small voice, "Yes, Miss Vincent."

She sat down again and looked at the harmless, defenseless creature before her. He looked so innocent and so vulnerable. The silk patch, which Donna had told him to wear at all times, barely covered his bushy triangle. There was hardly a sign of whatever that delicate piece of cloth was supposed to hide. Due to the strong and constant pressure and constriction of the modesty patch, it seemed to him that his maleness had shrunk into almost nothingness.

"Always keep your body nice, soft, and dainty dear. Make sure to use the depilatory cream regularly. Now, let me have a look at your own hair."

Still blushing, Jack lifted his wig, quickly and automatically patting and fluffing his own hair with his hands.

"Oh, it's already so nicely long. What thick and beautiful hair you have. This afternoon, we will see what the hairdresser can do with it. That blonde shade goes perfectly with your appearance."

Jack nodded, and before he could stop himself, he admitted, "I like my long haired wig best. It seems to soften my face." He crimsoned again, thinking how embarrassing it was for him, a boy, to say such a thing. . . even though it was true.

Miss Vincent smiled with satisfaction when she heard this remark. Looking like the cat who had just swallowed the canary, she said, "Yes dear. . . a girl's hair is her crowning glory. That is why you should always take good care of it and brush it often. But, don't worry. . . your own locks will be long enough in a few more months. Now dear. . . tell me what you know about feminine hygiene."

Jack faced her with shock in his eyes. "Feminine hygiene. . .," he repeated, feeling that terribly obvious blush again creeping up his cheeks. "I. . . I know. . . eh. . . just that girls wear. . . eh. . . those things. . . every month. . . because. . . I don't know." This was ridiculous! He refused to say more.

"Yes," Miss Vincent replied smoothly, "that is correct. Girls wear sanitary napkins, and it helps to absorb the menstruation which appears for a few days every four weeks. Do you know what menstruation is?" She was determined to make this near naked boy as uncomfortable as possible.

Jack wished he could sink through the floor. All he knew was that

the girls in school had acted very secretive and smiled at each other when they said they couldn't go swimming because "Aunt Betty was visiting". He continued to blush under her stare, but he remained silent. She was not going to get him to talk about such a delicate subject. It was absolutely indecent!

Seeing Jack's determination, Miss Vincent gave up for the time being. "Well, it's late now. I will instruct you about it in class, as you will be required to wear sanitary napkins in your panties several days a month, just like other girls."

"But. . ."

Miss Vincent gave him no chance. She looked at her delicate gold watch, she cut him off. "Oh dear. . . I have only a minute. Hennie and her mother will be waiting for my visit. You can get dressed now. That sweater and skirt is good enough for our shopping trip. Wear your own hair, and make sure it looks decent. I'll see you downstairs at thirty eight minutes after three."

With that, she closed the door, leaving Jack in a heap of terrified confusion and mystified consternation. His mind boggled at what she had said. He did not need to wear those. . . those. . . things. Why should he? He wouldn't do it! Not in a million years. He made a firm resolve that he was not going to put up with such nonsense. This was ridiculous! He would have to draw the line somewhere. No matter what!

When Miss Vincent knocked on the Armstrong's door, she found Hennie sewing on the couch and his mother reading in an easy chair. He still wore his pretty blue dress and immaculate white pinafore. They both rose, and Hank politely curtsied, remaining standing while his mother and his governess sat on the couch and started some small talk.

Mary Armstrong said, "My daughter tells me you really have a tough school program laid out for her and the other girls. I think this is a wonderful opportunity for Hennie to reap the benefit of a thorough continental education."

"Yes," Miss Vincent replied. "In your country, they seem to concentrate merely on the three R's, as they call it. Here, we go much further and give the girls a good education, as well as the culture and manners to finish them into gracious young women. I do hope that your daughter will do her best to catch up with Terry. Now. . . I would like to speak with Hennie and inspect her room. Will you excuse us please?"

Mary Armstrong was more than a little disconcerted by this abrupt ending to their conversation. Naturally, she was most interested in what this governess person was planning for her Hennie. However, she saw no alternative but to agree, so she remained discretely in the living room while Hank politely opened the door to

his bedroom for Miss Vincent.

"Well Hennie dear. . . I hear that you really want to become a girl, so your mother can enjoy having a daughter as well as two sons."

Hank blushed. "It's not that I WANT to. . . but Mother was so upset after Father's death. . . and Robert. . . my older brother, said that I should try to cheer her up and keep her company while he and Peter were away."

"That's very nice. . . and I think you are doing a good job. You look so natural and attractive in your skirts. Certainly, you are aware by now that you make a much better girl than boy. Your mother should have put you in dresses long ago, I think."

"But Miss Vincent. . . I. . .," Hank started.

Giving him no opportunity to finish his complaint, she cut him off with, "It is very obvious to everyone that you should have been born a girl. Just look at the way you walk, your soft skin, your nice figure, and your beautiful hair. You must feel much better now! I'm sure you don't mind at all being a pretty girl. . . do you?"

"Eh. . . I. . . eh. . . am sort of getting used to it," Hank replied with a blush. His face was a picture of embarrassment and disbelief at her statements. "I feel so. . . different now. . . not at all like my brothers," he added, his eyes dull with the humiliating admission.

"Of course you feel different dear. . . THEY are BOYS!"

"But I. . . I'm a boy too. . . I always was," Hank insisted in an urgent voice. "Mother will soon feel better. . . and then I'll be off to a boy's school."

"You can't really mean that!" Miss Vincent replied. "You wouldn't want to leave your mother all alone in a strange country. And imagine. . . how you would feel in an English boy's school dressed like that!"

"But, I'll wear trousers, and. . ."

"No. . . that's out of the question! Get that idea out of your head promptly and accustom yourself to your pretty dresses and skirts. I have no doubt that you will be wearing them for a long time to come, and for all the good too."

She then went to work on her inspection. She made Hank turn around and studied him critically, saying very little. Next, she went through his lingerie drawers, his closet, and even his cosmetics in the bathroom. "Hmmm. . .," she said. "I see that you are a very neat girl Hennie. Very good. . . make sure that you keep everything this way. I am very pleased with your quarters."

Then, like Jack, she made him undress. She got, as she expected, the same humiliated, shameful reaction, which she utterly ignored. Hank; however, had never worn a modesty patch, and when he lowered his panty girdle, he stood naked before her, like the day he was born. Red down to his navel, he lowered his eyes in shame. He

tried to cover, with his hands, what should not be exposed.

"We have a lot of improving to do here," she said, pinching a nipple painfully. "Don't you agree?"

"Yes. . . I mean NO! That would be awful! I can't have bulges there when I get home and go back to school!"

"You are a long way from home, my dear. You may not go back to your former school for quite some time, so don't worry about those little details. You just concentrate on what I have to teach you."

She deliberately let him stand there. . . in the nude, knowing full well that nothing will make a young man more humiliated, submissive, and defenseless than standing naked in front of a critical female. After a bit, she gave him the same talk about feminine hygiene that she had given Jack, and she received the same surprised, uncomprehensive, and disbelieving reaction. "Now, while you get dressed, Hennie dear, I'll go talk with your mother.

Worried that she might make a mistake, Hank warned, "Please, Miss Vincent. . . she does not. . . know. . . realize that I'm a. . ."

"I know. . . Don't worry your pretty little head. It's very easy for me to act like you are her daughter, since you make such a fine and neat girl and really should have been one all along. Be downstairs in ten minutes. That pretty blue dress is fine for our trip to the city—and wear your own hair."

"Yes Miss Vincent," Hank replied politely. He almost made a motion to curtsy, but he caught himself. His face reddened, as he realized how silly he would look doing this without clothes.

Hank dressed quickly, as he was anxious to hear what was going on in the next room and what they were talking about. But, by the time he dressed, brushed his hair, and repaired his makeup, Miss Vincent was already gone.

"What did she say Mom?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing special dear. . . just a few things about you." His mother looked at him as he adjusted his belt around his middle. "I agree with her about your hair. Why, in heaven's name I let you cut it so short, I'll never know. Why, it looks almost like a boy's hair grown too long."

Ignoring her remark, he asked again, "What else did she say?"

"Well. . . she said you should continue your ballet lessons and exercises, and also. . . that you were a little under developed for your age. She said not to worry about that as she would do something about it. She also said that I shouldn't worry, as she will watch you very closely and help you all she can. She promised to come to me whenever you have a problem. Also, she said that your periods were long overdue, but she expects 'Aunt Betty' to visit you soon."

"What is that about Aunt Betty? I have no Aunt Betty."

"Oh dear. . . I really must have failed to enlighten you darling. It's

just an expression girls use when they have their four days. . .you know. . .like all young women.”

Hank blushed fiercely as his mother smiled knowingly at him. His eyes grew wide with consternation. Such a thing could not happen, not to him. It was impossible! He calmed down a bit as he realized that it was physically impossible. No. . .he would not have to worry about that! Still, when he went downstairs at the appointed time, he was just as confused and full of consternation as Jack. His heart was still in his throat with the scare of it all. What unthinkable humiliation was in store for him now?

Miss Vincent was waiting for them in the downstairs hall, along with a very subdued and ashamed Terry, who was dressed as a twelve year old in a short dress with a ribbon in her hair.

The car was waiting, with Jim, the gardener's son, driving. Jack saw he was wearing kilts again.

Their first stop was at the dress makers. She measured all three girls in their slips, much to the embarrassment of Hank and Jack, who were scared to death that their falsies would be noticed. The lady took her time, as Miss Vincent stressed repeatedly that the uniforms fit perfectly.

While the girls dressed, Miss Vincent gave the dress maker a sketch, and added her instructions in regard to color, material, and the like. All three were dying to see the sketch so they would know what they would be wearing on future school days. However, Miss Vincent ignored their girlish curiosity and smiled at their obvious interest and impatience.

As they walked the busy streets, Jack and Hank were completely at ease in their skirts. They seemed to have forgotten that they were really boys. At Miss Vincent's insistence, they wore wrist length white gloves and carried their purses. Miss Vincent noted, with pleasure, how naturally femininely they walked and carried themselves. Of course, their two inch heels forced them to walk with short mincing steps.

They seemed oblivious to the world around them until Miss Vincent stopped them in front of a Pharmacy. She gave them each a ten shilling note, and said, "I want each of you to buy your own sanitary napkins and the belt."

Hank and Jack stood rooted to the spot, both blushing for all they were worth.

Terry, who had been forced to walk with Miss Vincent who held her hand like a child, giggled when she realized the import of Miss Vincent's instructions to the boys.

"But," Hank objected.

"No arguments from either of you," Miss Vincent cut them off. "It is quite common for a girl to buy her necessities here. Hurry up!

We have much to do yet this afternoon." She pushed Jack toward the counter, holding Hank back for the moment. Embarrassed like he had never been before, Jack asked the man for a box of sanitary napkins and a belt.

"What size do you need Miss?" he asked politely.

"Eh. . .medium, I guess." Jack replied, his tongue barely able to move in his dry mouth.

As the clerk packed the boxes in a neutral bag, Jack looked around at Miss Vincent who nodded encouragingly to him.

Terry could hardly stifle a laugh. She was obviously enjoying the discomfort of the two boys on their unusual errand.

When Jack rejoined the group carrying the all too obvious package, Miss Vincent pushed Hank toward the counter and made him go through the same terrible experience.

As they left the store and headed to the beauty parlor, both Jack and Hank silently carried their packages of shame. They were shaken to the core and hoped for all they were worth that nobody would guess what the bags concealed. They both wondered when the day they would have to wear them would come. How could they wear such things? They both realized now that their governess was not kidding when she told them something.

"What's the matter Hennie? Do your shoes hurt?" Miss Vincent asked, looking at his neat blue two inch pumps.

"No. . .no Miss Vincent. It's. . .it's just that I'm afraid to get my hair done in the beauty parlor. I am sure that they will find out about me, and that would be terrible! Everyone would laugh at me." He drooped and his shoulders sagged as he begged her to let him wait in the car.

"Nonsense!" his governess said. "Nobody would guess. You look too much like the real thing. . .just like Terry and Jackie. You just leave everything to me."

Soon, they arrived at the hairdresser's. As they filed into the beauty shop, Miss Vincent was greeted very courteously by a slight man with a heavy French accent. "Miss Vensant," he said, pronouncing her name in French, "we are all ready for your pupils."

In no time at all, the three girls sat with a taffeta cape around their necks having their hair washed. Miss Vincent, after giving her instructions about the girl's hair to the manager, had her hair done as well.

Both Jack and Hank were silent, trying to minimize their replies to the rather talkative shop girls.

All of the girls were ready almost simultaneously. They had been given the works, a beauty treatment including a mask, and their eyebrows had been tended. All three appeared very pretty and radiant. Even Hank's face showed pleasure. He had calmed down soon after

realizing from the employee's attitude that she did not suspect anything at all. As he let them have their way with his hair and face, he even managed a few short responses to their constant chatter.

"You should really let your hair grow out Miss. These days, with the boys having such long hair, it's hard to tell them apart."

Hank replied dryly, "They can tell by my skirts, can't they?" He blushed at his confident tone. If the girl only knew! Anyway, his curt remark shut her up for a while.

Hank was as bored as Jack at having to sit under the hair drier for so long with nothing to do but read a fashion magazine. Finally, they were ready. As they were being released from their capes, they stared at each other.

Jack thought, "It sure makes a difference to have a professional tend your appearance."

Terry had her long brown hair set in a beautiful permanent wave that softened her face and was most becoming. Jack's locks had been bleached again in the same color as the day before Tim had visited. He sure would never forget that day! Now, in addition, it was arranged in a pageboy style that was young looking and very attractive. Hank's shiny, healthy looking hair was done in in a crown of curls all around his head, which made him appear years younger.

Miss Vincent, who also had her hair washed and set in her usual prim bun, smiled with satisfaction when she saw her charges looking so perfectly made up and their hair prettily styled. "I think you three look very nice," she said. "It is good to develop an individual style, and with experience, you will learn which looks best with your facial features. Still, we will let your hair grow out much longer. Men always like girls with a mass of hair."

As they were leaving the shop, she continued to instruct her charges. "You girls must quickly learn how to keep your hair neat, pretty, and well tended. I expect your hair to look like this at all times, from now on. Of course, we will go often to the hairdresser's, as there is always room for improvement by a professional."

In the car, Jack saw Jim, the chauffeur, looking at him in the rear view mirror, with a sarcastic smile, and he lowered his eyes and blushed in shame and anger.

When they arrived at the Kerr residence, Sarah told them that dinner would be ready in fifteen minutes.



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As the group entered the living room, where Mary Armstrong and Aunt Julia were enjoying a glass of sherry, the girls received many compliments on their attractive, well groomed appearance. Hank received an extra hug from his mother when he kissed her.

Miss Vincent stood by beaming, as if sharing in the praise her pupils received.

"You have ten minutes to get ready for dinner," Miss Vincent said to her pupils. "Put on a nice afternoon dress. . .and for dinner, you can leave off your pinafores. That is except for Jacqueline. . .who will help Sarah this evening."

Jack looked to Aunt Julia as if to ask for confirmation and possibly, help. Why did she pick on him? Other evenings, they had all done it together.

Aunt Julia just nodded. "Yea Dear. . .from now on, your governess is in charge of you girls, and she will decide what chores each of you will perform."

As the three girls filed out of the room, Hank grabbed Jack's arm. "You know I would be glad to help you, Jackie, if only Miss Vincent would allow me."

Jack said softly, "I know. . .I know." He entered his room with a blank expression on his face. Going to his closet, he fingered the many dresses, trying to decide what to wear. Finally, he chose the black and white checked dress with the demure white collar. The words of the sales clerk, who had sold him the dress, still rang in his ears. "If I had a daughter, that is how I would want her to look." It sure reminded him of that awful day when he was confronted by his friend while wearing this pretty dress. That brought his thoughts back to Cathy. The thought that she had liked him, even in skirts, made him feel a little better.

He checked his appearance in the mirror and shivered at his reflection. Staring back at him was this lovely girl with a perfectly made up face, freshly dressed hair, and a tight form fitting dress with tell tale bulges in front. He now looked more than ever like a real natural girl. If this had happened to him in just three months, what would the rest of the year do to him, dressed and forced to act like this? Wondering and worrying about that, he tied on a fresh crispy starched pinafore and reported to Sarah in the kitchen, where he was promptly put to work.

During the meal, Jack felt funny and out of place, as the only one wearing an apron. He was required to get up after each course, collect the dirty dishes, and carry them to the kitchen. Aunt Julia had long since seen to it that he could wait on tables quietly and correctly, like a well trained waitress.

Miss Vincent dominated the conversation, as usual. Donna became bored and showed annoyance in her face. Prior to Miss Vin-

cent's arrival, she had been the one with the upper hand at the table.

Hank had been silent, but finally said, "What will we do on Sundays?"

"On Sundays, we have fewer chores to do," Miss Vincent answered. "This will allow us more time for our hobbies and recreation, embroidery, reading and so forth. Maybe we will even have time for an occasional game."

"A game?" Paul asked. "What kind of games will you allow the girls to play?"

"They won't play football or cricket, of course," she answered. "In a couple of weeks, we will be playing Scrabble or other word games in French or German, so we can learn while we play."

Mrs. Armstrong spoke up. "Why that's marvelous, isn't it Hennie? Imagine being able to play in a foreign language!"

Hennie did not answer. He was not quite convinced of the joys of working while playing. . . or was it playing while working?

All three girls remained silent with the shocking realization that even their play and game time would be supervised. Did Jack imagine a gleam of sympathy in Donna's eyes? That sentiment was very obvious on Paul's face. One could almost read his mind, "Am I ever glad I'm not one of the girls." Donna was just as glad to be considered an adult and no longer subject to the iron rule of a governess.

After dinner, Jack had to clear the table and help Sarah in the kitchen.

The maid had developed a feeling of sympathy for the boys in skirts. While she knew that they were forced to help her with the many kitchen chores, she very much appreciated their assistance. However, she always insisted that the work be done perfectly. She was now very friendly and kind to her helpers, and chatted away with them.

As Jack dried the dishes, pots, and pans, he told Sarah about their shopping trip that afternoon.

"I like your hair that way Dearie. It's very becoming. By the way, I saw two large packages of sanitary napkins in the hall. What in heaven's name did she get those for? We have a good supply in the house, and Terry know it."

"They are not for them. . . they're for. . .," Jack stopped abruptly, his face beet red.

Sarah noticed his hesitation and suddenly understood. She broke into a hysterical laugh, shook her head, and said, "Now, I've seen everything. . . how silly. . ."

"I think it's just horrible of her," Jack said with tears of embarrassment forming in his eyes.

Sarah noticed his discomfort and tried to console him. Patting him on his pretty shiny hair, she said, "Now. . . come on dearie. . . don't take a little thing like that so hard. We all have to wear them. 'The

curse of womanhood', they call it. So, don't worry your pretty head about it. You will get used to them soon enough, and it does go with the skirts and dresses."

"But why," Jack moaned.

"Doesn't it make you feel more grown up?"

Jack remained silent. It was easy for Sarah to say that and for her to take it so lightly. It was normal and natural for her. On the other hand, Terry and Donna had to wear them too, and they didn't seem to mind. All of a sudden, it hit him that he was discussing an intimate feminine subject, with another female, like he was a girl himself.

Sarah would not have mentioned the subject, if she had thought of him as a boy. Again, tears formed in his eyes with the realization that Sarah had completely accepted him as one of the weaker sex. He was finally dismissed by Sarah, with the kitchen spic and span. He left the kitchen deeply disturbed by the depressing thought that everyone now considered him a girl.

When he entered the parlor, Miss Vincent said, "Come in dear and join us. We have been waiting for you."

Hank and Terry were sitting in straight chairs, looking terribly domestic in their white pinafores, working on a new fancy work project.

"I'm teaching you girls some different embroidery stitches that we can use in our handy work." She handed him a large square of yellow waffle cloth and pointed to another straight chair she had pulled up. "This is what the girls called a sampler, in the old days. We are going to do each word in a different stitch. You can start with the ordinary cross stitch that you have been using on your mother's tablecloth."

She gave Jack a string of red silk. He took the cloth from her and saw the words stenciled on it. He blushed as he read them.

LIFE'S RICHES OTHER ROOMS ADORN BUT IN THE KITCHEN HOME IS BORN ALL FUTURE WIVES ARE DUTY BOUND TO PLEASE THE MAN HER HEART HAS FOUND.

He looked at Miss Vincent who eyed him with a significant smile. With a shock, he realized that this was another of the weapons in her arsenal of psychological warfare. She had chosen a poem like this to impress the meaning of those words in her pupil's mind. Working on this day after day, his mind would not be able to resist absorbing the meaning of the poem. "She lets no opportunity pass," he thought.

Terry grinned at Jack's pale shocked face. Her eyes seemed to say, "Welcome to the club of future housewives."

Jack lowered his eyes. He decided that this did not apply to him at all. He certainly would never have to worry about pleasing any man. He threaded his needle and diligently started to work. From time to time, Miss Vincent checked the work of her charges and scolded

them if their work was not perfect. She was a hard, precise task mistress. She did; however, let the girls chat while working. She listened to them, and occasionally added a few words of wisdom. Her purpose was the training and bending their minds to think as well educated girls should.

Terry asked her mother whether they were going to church the next day.

"Of course, we are going to church," Miss Vincent interposed. "It is proper for a school girl, and I insist upon it. Religion teaches a girl that modesty and chastity are important standards from which she should never deviate."

Jack saw Hank blush, and thought, "Imagine connecting a virtue like chastity with healthy boys. . .even if they are petticoated!"

When the clock struck ten, Miss Vincent closed the book she was reading and stood up. "You may put away your work girls. Until eleven o'clock, you may do whatever you wish, and then go to bed. . .not a minute later. I'll be in my room if you need me."

"We need her like a hole in the head," Terry heard Jack whisper to Hank. Fortunately, their teacher did not hear him, as she bade good night to the adults in the room and left.

Jack wondered why she had not said good night to the three of them. He found out soon enough. At five minutes after eleven o'clock, Miss Vincent entered his room unannounced. He had just finished putting on his pink nylon pajamas and was arranging his hair over his shoulders in a typically feminine fashion.

"That's a pretty pajama set dear. It really becomes you," she said touching the soft fabric on his back. "I came to check your room. A girl can't sleep in an untidy bedroom, of course."

Fortunately, Jack had put his dress neatly away in his closet, but his nylons, slip, and panties still hung carelessly over the chair. His shoes stood in the middle of the floor where he had taken them off.

Seeing this disarray, Miss Vincent frowned.

"I wasn't ready yet. . .honest I wasn't," Jack said defensively.

She nodded, and under her supervision, he tripped around the room on his mules, putting things away and straightening out his room, until everything was shipshape.

"Here Dear, I'll brush your hair for you," Miss Vincent said, picking up the hairbrush and pushing him gently onto the bench before his vanity mirror.

He was soothed as she gently and carefully brushed his hair, doing her best to keep his new professional hairdo intact. It was strange, but Miss Vincent's motherly actions made him feel somehow content. He actually felt a sense of companionship with his stern governess. After all, he thought, she had a busy day also, and she really did seem to care about him and his appearance.

"Now to bed, Dear," she said. "You're the last one to tuck in."

As he slipped between the soft sheets, he smiled at her and heard himself say, "Thank you for brushing my hair."

She returned his smile and gently kissed him on his forehead. "Sleep well, my girl," she said tenderly and left the room.

Jack was left with confused emotions and thoughts. She had been very nice just then. . . almost like a mother. "However, it really is not nice to teach a boy to be a girl and make him act like one all day. Why did she do it?" he wondered. He lay awake for a long time thinking this over, but he couldn't find an acceptable answer. Finally, he fell asleep with the realization that he would have no privacy in the months to come. He would be under the watchful eye of his governess from dawn till bedtime, and there was nothing he could do about it.

At seven o'clock, he was awoken by Terry who was dressed in her skimpy leotards. Groggily, he lifted himself on one arm, as she shook him and said, "Wake up sleepy head. . . Old Vincent wants us in the classroom in fifteen minutes."

"But school doesn't start until eight o'clock," Jack objected.

"Silly. . . it's Sunday today. There is no school."

"Then why do we have to get up now?" he asked. "I'm still very sleepy."

"I know. . . but you are lucky. She woke me at six o'clock and made me work on those silly punishment lines," Terry said with a grimace.

Slowly, Jack managed to get up and sat on the edge of the bed, ignoring Terry's smile at his girlish pink pajamas. "What does she want us up so early for?" he said with a yawn. "On Sunday, yet!"

"For our daily exercises, she said," Terry answered. "And you have to wear these," she said pointing at her leotards, which, with the tights, showed her voluptuous figure to the point where there was little left to guess.

Jack; however, was not in a mood to appreciate feminine beauty at the moment. "Exercises? On Sunday morning?" he asked, straightening his hair with his hands.

Terry sat beside him. "Yep. . . exercises, seven days a week, to keep our bodies healthy and our figures trim, as our school marm informed me. She is already dressed and looks like she has been up for hours. Wait until you get a load of her gym outfit."

"Oh boy," Jack sighed. "Doesn't she ever relax?"

"I guess not," Terry replied. "She even made me do an extra hundred lines because some were not neat enough, in her opinion. Now, I've only half done. She is terrible! What are we going to do about her?"

"I don't know," Jack replied. "Oh. . . How I wish I were back home."

"Don't say that Jackie," Terry said, putting her arm around his thinly clad figure. "I have enjoyed your stay with us so much. We're good friends now, aren't we?"

"You were awfully nasty to me in the beginning," Jack said curtly.

"I know. . .but I haven't teased you lately, have I?"

"No," Jack said reluctantly.

"I have enjoyed this summer with you very much," Terry said, her arm still embracing him.

"I haven't. . .not in these clothes," he said, lifting the hem of his pajama top.

"I understand," Terry said after a moments hesitation. "But, I don't see why skirts should spoil your summer. Donna and I have always worn them."

"But I'm. . .," Jack started.

"Oh stop it!" Terry interrupted, tickling him in his side. "I know what you're trying to say, but you're all mixed up. Just look at you. . .you're as much girl as I am. Prettier too. Now you better not waste any more time. You know how strict Old Vincent is about time. I still must wake Hennie."

When she left the room, Jack took off his pajamas and washed his face. Then, he put on his panties and over them, the white tights and black leotards he had always worn to Mrs. Thornsby's. Remembering Miss Vincent's orders about grooming, he carefully combed his hair, putting in a black ribbon to keep it in place. He felt silly doing his makeup before a gym session, but he knew his governess would eye him critically. He put on his tennis sneakers as they would be better for gym. After a last quick inspection, he went to the classroom where he found Miss Vincent waiting. Terry was at her desk working on her lines.

"Good morning Jacqueline," Miss Vincent said in response to Jack's greeting and curtsy. As expected, she studied him with that critical, impersonal stare of hers, making him blush uncomfortably. After a bit, she nodded and said, "You really have a promising figure Dear, but in the future, see to it that your gum shoes have no spots on them. I will not tolerate dirty shoes."

"Yes, Miss Vincent," Jack replied obediently, just as Hank entered the room. He was dressed identically to Jack except he had tied his hair together on each side with a red ribbon.

After a half hour of very strenuous exercises and dance steps, Miss Vincent said, "You are now dismissed." She grinned when she saw Hank rubbing his strained stomach muscles. "I'll bet you didn't know you had muscles there Girlie, but you will soon see how much they help to make you more attractive and slim. Now, all three of you can take a long leisurely relaxing bath and get dressed for church. I

will see you downstairs at eight thirty. At that time, we will plan the rest of our day together. So, hurry up!"

As soon as they were out of earshot, Hank said, "We will be in good enough shape for football, if she keeps this up."

Terry laughed. "If I were you, I wouldn't count too much on playing football this coming season."

Jack nodded at Hank, his eyes filled with concern. "I don't think she is exactly trying to develop our muscles. Not the ones that are used for sport anyway. I think she is concerned only with our figures."

"Whatever she is doing. . .it hurts all over," Terry complained, as she walked toward her room.

Hank's mother was still asleep, so silently, he put his gym outfit in the laundry hamper and took a leisurely soak in the tub. He saw his mother's bath salts, and on an impulse decided to try some to see how it felt. The warm water, and the pleasant but penetrating odor soon relaxed him. For a while, at least, he forgot his transformation problems and gave in to this feminine sense of luxurious contentment.

Jack, on the other hand decided to take a shower. Then, seeing that he had plenty of time, slowly got dressed. Stepping into his soft lacy panties and hooking his bra had become such an everyday routine, that he no longer gave it any thought. They were now his normal attire. After a beautiful lacy nylon slip, he laced his corset, easily getting it closed.

Miss Vincent had been right. This formerly constricting garment now felt comfortable, almost loose, but how he had hated the pain and discomfort in the beginning! He wondered whether the corset had stretched or whether his body was changing. He hoped it was the former.

Finally, he picked up the black and white checked dress he had worn the night before. It was still very neat and without a wrinkle, and it did not need pressing. The long sleeves were comfortable in this cool weather. Still in his slip and corset, he sat before his vanity mirror to brush his hair, trying to recapture the style and set it had the day before after his visit to the hairdresser's. He sat for a moment and studied his reflection. He had come to appreciate the beauty of a soft lacy slip and the way it clung to his figure and smoothed over his bra. Then, he carefully made up his face, plucked his eyebrows a bit, and checked his entire body for extraneous or unsightly hair. All this had become routine, and he did it every day without a second thought.

When he finally zipped his dress up in the back, he took another long look in the mirror, posing unconsciously like a girl. He had to admit to himself that he was really pretty. Everything was so natural and so normal. . .as if this was the way he should look. These were the garments of choice for his body, and this confession, even to himself, irritated him.

How could it possibly be? He must be going crazy! That same old thought kept hammering inside his head. Were Aunt Julia and Miss Vincent really correct? Should he really have been a girl, or did he feel that way because he was beginning to accept himself as a girl. . . mentally? He had been obliged to live, dress, and act as a girl. Was he now automatically becoming one? Was he fated for femininity?

He sank into his easy chair, neatly straightening his skirt under him and keeping his knees and ankles correctly together. He sat there for a long while, thinking about his situation. His hands lay loosely in his lap. He was truly the picture of a relaxed beautiful girl.

He quietly mulled over his strange situation. His mind was turning in circles with a problem he could not solve. He was unable to find a way out of his predicament. He thought of his mother and sister. They were having a good time, no doubt. He really had to write his mother and thank her for the birthday wishes. Had the time come to admit to her what they had done to him?

That brought to mind that sarcastic note from his sister Jo. If he confessed the whole crazy set up and asked for help, Jo would laugh her head off. She would never let him live it down. No, she must never learn about him being dressed and educated as a girl by a governess. And anyway. . . would his mother actually stop her travels just because he was unhappy here? Did he have the right to ask that of her? As he sat there wondering about that and daydreaming about going home, he was brought back to reality by a knock on the door. "Come in," he said.

Hank opened the door. He was dressed in the stylish black dress he had worn to his father's funeral. It was dressed up a bit with a colorful silk scarf draped attractively around his neck and shoulder. "It's almost eight thirty. . . and I did not find you downstairs. I thought you might have forgotten the time Jackie," he said.

Jack stood up and forced a smile. "Thank you Hen. . . I was sort of thinking. I'm glad you reminded me."

Together, they went downstairs where they found Paul dressed in slacks and a sport shirt. "Good morning girls," he smiled airily. "You two are certainly dressed to kill this morning. Are you going somewhere?"

"Miss Vincent told us to get ready for church," Hank explained.

"How is the new teacher?" Paul inquired.

Jack replied with gusto. "She is terrible! She won't leave us alone for a minute. This morning, she had us up before seven doing gym exercises."

"Holy Moses," Paul exclaimed. "Am I ever glad I'm not a GIRL!" He blushed as he said that, instantly realizing his mistake. He knew all too well that both of them were boys like himself, but in drastically different circumstances. He also knew that except for the

grace of God, and a lot of luck, he could be one of them.

Hank and Jack blushed also. Hank, because of the shame of it, having to dress, act, and look like a real girl.

Jack; however, was angry. "You don't know how lucky you are! You should be in my place!"

Paul almost divulged Jack's secret as he started to reply, but at the last moment, he caught himself. "Oh. . .I. . .I'm really sorry for you two," he finally stammered. Then, as an afterthought, he tried to smooth things over by saying, "It is awfully nice of you to do this for your mother Hennie, and you're doing an awfully good job." With a thin smile towards Jack, he added, "You look as much a girl as Jackie."

Jack bit his tongue, realizing that Paul was making fun of him, but he could not respond as he would like without revealing his secret to Hank. "Hennie is very pretty and nice," he defended Hank hotly. "No one can tell she is not a real girl!"

"True," Paul admitted. "You really do look awfully good Hennie."

Just then, Miss Vincent and Terry entered the room. Terry was dressed in a pretty short sleeved flower print dress. It was much too short for her age, but it was not as bad as the one the day before.

Miss Vincent carefully looked over her charges as they politely rose and curtsied for her. She inspected their nails, shoes, hair, and everything in between. "Good girls. . .you look very neat. Now. . .let's see. Breakfast is at nine and church is at ten o'clock. Terry, you work on your punishment lines, and you other two girls can write a letter to your family."

Jack nodded. Funny. . .that's just what he had been thinking a few minutes before. He found a pen and pad and sat down at the dining room table.

Hank argued, "But, I have no one to write to!"

"Oh yes you do! How about your older brother. . .Robert, I believe? Remember, it is always the women in a family who keeps up the contact with their loved ones. Men are usually terrible correspondents. They just don't care enough. Although boys hate to write home, they; nevertheless, love to receive letters. You just go ahead and write a note to Robert. You three had better put on your pinafores. We don't want to smudge those nice dresses with ink, do we?"

In short order, the three girls were writing. Terry worked as fast as she could, but Hank was chewing on his pen trying to think of something to write. He had a strong feeling of envy. His two brothers were in school with their friends pursuing their manly pleasures and participating in sports, while he was stuck at home with his mother and a governess who treated him like a girl and forced him to wear dresses. He wrote:

"Dear Robert,"

Even that gave him food for thought. Was that what a girl wrote to her brother? He saw that Jackie had already written half a page. The only way to get something done is to start, so he wrote:

*Miss Vincent, my governess, has ordered me to write to you before breakfast. You have not been away very long, so there is nothing much to tell you, except that I am still forced to play girl and wear dresses. Mother seems very happy and well, but she is still confused about me. She does not appear to get any better in this regard. How are you? Do you like Oxford? Is your course of study difficult? I am sure envious of your freedom. Miss Vincent supervises us every waking moment, from dawn to bedtime.*

*It's suffocating! This morning, Sunday, she had us up at a quarter to seven doing gymnastics. She said we should love to do it as it will help our figures. Notwithstanding all that, I am beginning to feel at home here. Jackie and Terry are nice girls, and we three are all in the same boat. I am treated just as much a girl as they are. I think everyone has forgotten that I am really a boy, except me, and even I have moments when I forget. It seems that skirts are very easy to get used to. For schooling, we have to learn an awful lot about art and things. We also have to learn French and German. Miss Vincent expects us to study all the time. We are not wearing our school uniforms yet, but we have been measured, and they are on order. I have never had any made to measure clothes before, and I will write to you later to tell you what they are like. I am sort of curious about that myself.*

*My governess said that boys don't like to write, but I hope you will take a moment to let me know how you are doing. Have you heard from Peter yet? Sometimes, at night, I feel sort of lonely. During the day, Miss Vincent leaves us no time to think or feel anything except what she wants us to learn and think. She keeps us busy, busy, busy all the time.*

*I have to close now as Miss Vincent just told me to help Sarah set the breakfast table.*

*Your Loving ~~Sister~~ Brother, Hank*

Darn it! He had automatically signed as a sister. He crossed it out and substituted "brother". It gave him a certain amount of satisfaction to sign his name as HANK. Why had he not thought of it before signing off? Would Robert now think that he subconsciously felt like a sister now? Too bad there was no time to write it over, so he was obliged to let it go as it was. He sealed the letter in an envelop so his mother could not read it and went about his assigned task. He was very angry at himself for having written "sister" without thinking. What did it really mean?

Jack had started his letter with small talk. At least that was easy

while he made up his mind what to write and how to write it. The letter began:

*Dear Mother,*

*Thank you for your birthday wishes. I hope you are having a good time seeing the world, but I wish you were back home so I could return also. Aunt Julia is nice enough, but she is very strict, and everything has to be done her way. Of all things, I am now being taught by Terry's governess together with Terry and another boy who has come to live here. With all my studies, I hardly have a free moment for myself. She even told me to write this letter to you.*

He paused here for a long time. Writing home had somehow made him feel closer to her mother. He felt a deeper attachment to her. . . after all, he was her only son. Should he divulge to her what they were doing to him, and ask her to let him come home at once? If he told her everything, Jo would find out that he was wearing skirts and in training to become a girl. She would laugh her head off and never let him live it down. He knew her! No, he could never let her find out about his situation. She must NEVER know.

Still. . . at that moment, he felt a strong need to tell his troubles to someone. . . anyone. Who was better to confide in than his own mother? He thought about this for a long while before continuing.

*Mother, I feel I must tell you of some difficulties I have here, but I don't want Jo to know about them. If I write you about them, will you promise to burn my letter and not tell Jo about my problem? This is extremely important to me. I hope you will understand and support me in this. Please write soon.*

*Your Loving Son,*

*Jack*

He sighed with relief. At last! It was off his chest. His mother would know that he was wrong and that he needed help. He wondered why he had written "your loving son". It sounded too sweet and smoochie, now that he re-read it. In the past, he had just signed his name. Was that what wearing girl's clothes was doing to him? Were these clothes making him act more affectionately and emotional. . . like a female? He could not very well cross it out now. His mother would think he did not care for her, so, with a shrug, he folded the letter and sealed it securely in the envelope.

As he sat at the table for breakfast, he wondered what his mother's reaction to his letter would be.

During breakfast, the girls were mostly silent. Paul and Miss Vincent were the only ones eating with them. The others were no doubt still fast asleep.

Paul was obviously not going with them to church, as he had changed into his cricket uniform and was telling Terry about the scheduled game.

Jack blushed with anger and envy. Paul, as a boy, was free as a bird and could plan his day however he wished, while he, Terry, and Hennie had to go to church with their governess and be demure girls. It just was not fair!

He looked at Hank, who did not seem to share this spiteful emotion. He sat, daintily eating his eggs as if everything in the world was alright with him. How could he be so even tempered about his transformation, Jack wondered? Didn't HE feel imposed upon at all? He certainly did not show at the moment that he resented having to be a girl.

When they were finished eating, his thoughts were interrupted by Miss Vincent. "As long as you three are still wearing your aprons, you can help Sarah with the clean up. It is Sunday for her too, you know. When that chore is done, get your hats, gloves, and purse, as it will be time to go to church then. So hurry up girls!"

"Hurry up. . .hurry up. . .do this. . .do that," Terry whispered under her breath. That made Jack grin, especially since she looked so young in her short dress.

Half an hour later, three demure young ladies, looking sweet and pretty, alighted from the Rolls Royce in front of the church.

Jack wore a small black hat, off the face, with black gloves and purse, all a perfect match to his heels.

Terry grabbed Jack's arm when she spotted Jane, one of her school friends. She hoped to escape her friend's notice, but it was too late. Jane pulled her mother toward them, and Terry had no alternative but to introduce them to Miss Vincent and the two boys.

Jane's eyes were as big as saucers when Hank and Jack curtsied politely to her mother. She asked, "Why are you wearing that little girl's dress? You look so funny."

Miss Vincent answered for Terry. "She is being punished for failing to act like a mature young lady."

Jane could only say, "Oh. . .I see," while exchanging a very significant glance with Terry.

There was no chance to explain further, as Miss Vincent ushered her pupils onto one of the front pews.

During the service, Jack sat quietly with his hands resting in the lap of his skirt. He mysteriously felt himself relax, as the words of the sermon flowed over him like a warm shower, without reaching his consciousness. His thoughts went back to his letter, and he wondered when his mother would get it. He had addressed it to their home, knowing that she had made arrangements to have the mail and the bills to be forwarded. Still, he could not expect a reply for at least three weeks. Then. . .what would she decide? Would she stop her travels and let him come home? He doubted it, but his mind refused to consider the alternative.

During lunch, Miss Vincent saw that Hank was obviously enjoying his lunch, having eyes only for his plate. While his manners were very acceptable as he handled his knife and fork daintily enough, she frowned at the large portion he had taken. "If you keep this up Hennie, you will have trouble with your new corsets. Always watch your figure dear. Remember what Socrates said, 'Beware of those foods that tempt you when you're not hungry'. Tonight, at bedtime, I plan to put you girls on the scale, and we will keep a chart of your weights. All three of you could be a lot more neat and trim. When I am finished with you, you will look like perfect models. I will settle for nothing less than feminine perfection."

Hank blushed sharply. Could he no longer eat? Would there be nothing left to enjoy? How was she ever going to make him into a model of feminine perfection?

Little did he know the constant power of a well made corset, combined with proper exercises.

Terry had managed to finish her punishment lines before lunch.

After checking her for neatness, Miss Vincent asked in the presence of the others, "Has this taught you a lesson dear?"

Terry, who had cramps in her fingers, blushed at being spoken to like a child, but she wisely and courteously said, "Yes, Miss Vincent.

"Good! Then, I will give you dispensation of your little girl dresses. You may change into one of your regular dresses. After lunch, we are going for a walk together."

Terry smiled happily, as if she had been given a diamond. Jack realized just how clever Miss Vincent's methods of manipulation were. Merely by shortening some punishment, she could make her pupil feel grateful, induce cooperation, and instill a willing attitude.

When Terry returned in a pretty afternoon dress, Miss Vincent said, "Now girls. . .before we go on our afternoon stroll, get your hats and gloves."

Terry started to object. "Do we have to?" she swallowed the rest quickly.

Miss Vincent smiled in triumph. "Of course! Ladies always wear gloves and hats outside. You don't want to be taken for a scullery maid, do you?"

Miss Vincent herself set a perfect example. She was impeccably groomed with black gloves, a small hat, and a matching black coat. The foursome made quite an attractive picture as they walked the sunny, windy street, two by two. "You show us the area Terry. Figure on a two hour walk."

Hank was stuck with his governess, while Jack and Terry walked ahead of them. Terry had a habit of walking at a fairly good pace, enjoying the fresh air.

Jack had to complain. "Slow down a little, would you? I can't

walk that fast in these heels, and I don't see how you can."

"Oh. . .alright then. . .you sissy! Go ahead and walk daintily, if that's what you want."

"That's not what I meant, and you know it. Do you have to be catty all the time?" Jack asked with more than a little annoyance in his voice.

"You only tease the ones you love," Terry grinned.

"Well, I can do nicely without your teasing. . .and your love. . .thank you," he added as an afterthought.

Terry and Jack had gone quite a bit faster than the other two and were far ahead. This gave them a chance to talk confidentially, and of course, their governess was automatically the subject of their conversation.

"She's not so bad. . .she let me wear my regular clothes," Terry said, smoothing out her sporty walking skirt.

"She didn't this morning. . .when you had to go to church," Jack objected. "I saw how amused your girlfriend was by your short outfit."

"I don't care," Terry sniffed, her nose high in the air.

"This morning, you weren't too happy," Jack reminded her. "I think she's mean. . .to us boys anyway."

"You can't call her mean just because she treats you as girls," Terry argued.

"Well. . .whatever. . .I wrote Mom this morning asking her to let me come home. I hope she stops her travels so I can get back in Greenwich High. . .in trousers!" he added, wanting to make that point extra clear.

"That's not very nice of you," Terry replied. "Not after Mom bought you all those nice clothes."

"I did not ask for them," Jack rebutted. "She can have them back," he added after an uncomfortable moment caused by several boys his own age passing by, who gave both girls a thorough and approving going over.

"I sure hope you will stay with us. I know Mom has been writing to your mother regularly. I saw a letter go out only last week."

"You mean they have been corresponding back and forth all this time?" Jack asked in an anxious voice.

"Sure," Terry answered. "Why not? They are sisters, you know."

Jack fell silent, wondering what his aunt might have been writing about him. She had promised not to tell his mother about making him wear dresses and live as a girl. Still, she could have dropped hints or suggestions, and the way she was forcing him to be increasingly feminine showed she didn't care about his feelings. When Tim and Cathy Daynor had met him in the very dress he was wearing now,

Aunt Julia had not once apologized, or said she realized how badly he must feel by having to meet his friends as a girl. She obviously could not care less about what she was doing to him, so how much could he count on her promises?

The blood raced through his veins. He became even more agitated when he realized that Donna might have written the whole nasty story to his sister Jo. Maybe Jo had only hinted that she knew very little, while actually being aware of the whole sorry mess, in complete detail. Jack felt sick to his stomach at that possibility.

Hank, in the meantime, was walking sedately with Miss Vincent. At first, they were silent, but soon, she began asking questions about his brothers and his home in Bedford, New York. She succeeded only too well, as Hank began to feel at ease. He ignored all passers by and talked freely about his past, their house, and his friends in the United States.

Of course, Miss Vincent could not resist a pin prick here and there. "Tell me," she asked, "why were you picked to play the girl instead of Peter, your younger brother?"

Hank blushed. The words of Anne, their former maid, came into his mind. "You are the quiet one. You should have been born a girl. You're so well behaved and so delicate." He could not tell his governess that for all the world, so, after a too obvious hesitation, he replied, "It just happened that way."

"You must have behaved and looked more like a girl," Miss Vincent remarked dryly. "Even though no one in your family mentioned it before then. Well. . . anyway. . . it has all been for the good. Imagine. . . if this had not happened to your mother, you probably would have had to masquerade as a boy much longer, and no one can be truly happy trying to be someone she is not."

"But. . . I'm a male. I always have been. That is my real gender."

"Nature makes mistakes sometimes ear. You must have read about some of these mistakes in the animal kingdom from time to time. There have been lambs with five legs, two headed frogs, and even roosters who layed eggs. You may be one of these mistakes, but you are much better off than the poor animals. You have a brain to help you realize that a mistake was made, and you can adjust to it and become the girl nature intended you to be. That will bring you true happiness, and of course, you will be helping your mother in the bargain. You will be helping your brothers as well, because every boy should have a sister to familiarize himself with the female of the species. This will enable him to learn and observe the physical, emotional, and emotional differences that prevail in the opposite sex. These things help them feel and act more aggressive and more confident in their role in life."

"But. . . but. . . what about me?" Hank asked in consternation.

"I'm all mixed up now, and so. . .er. . .uncertain."

"Well. . .for you, it works the other way around. Observing your manly brothers and their strong friends will help you get the insight that you are really not like them at all. You know, you are. . .much more delicate, softer, more passive, and prettier. In short, you are more female, and I can tell by your behavior that you already realize you are very different from your brothers. Can you picture Robert in a sweet dress and pinafore. . .sitting quietly doing embroidery. . .or washing dishes?"

After a long silence, Hank had to admit, "No. . .not Robert. . .nor Peter either."

"There. . .you see!" Miss Vincent said triumphantly. "You are well on your way to proper readjustment, and you can count on my help to make the change complete. . .every step of the way."

Hank walked quietly, and Miss Vincent let her lesson sink in. At first, Hank almost laughed, as he tried to picture Robert in a dress and pinafore, sewing away. He would look totally ridiculous! Then he experienced quite a shock when he realized that he really should look just as ridiculous and out of place in skirts. Yet, here he was walking the streets, looking and acting completely like a real girl. Was Miss Vincent right? Was he the result of one of nature's mistakes? Was he really intended to be a girl?

When an hour had passed, Terry and Jack waited for the other two to catch up. "Do you want to go still further," Terry asked her governess, "or do you want to go back toward home?"

"Let's go home, but along a different route. I like this area very much. The lawns are so nicely kept, and the houses are very beautiful. Just make sure we get there before tea time."

That evening, Miss Vincent sent them to bed without giving them time for any unsupervised recreation. "We have been busy today, and we have very busy weeks ahead. You girls will need your rest and your beauty sleep. I will be in your rooms later to tuck you in."

Miss Vincent came into Jack's room, as usual without knocking, just as he finished cleansing his face. He had made sure that all of his clothes were neatly put away, and everything was in apple pie order. She kissed him good night saying, "Sleep tight, my girl."

The next few months proved to be such a busy time, that none of the three girls was ever a moment without something to do. They rarely ever had a quiet moment for reflection.

On the first Monday morning of their schooling, Miss Vincent awoke Jack at six o'clock. With his eyes barely in focus, he lazily got out of bed. "Hurry up, and wake Terry and Hennie as well. I want the three of you in the classroom in fifteen minutes," she demanded.

Seeing her wait impatiently to make sure he got up without delay, he slowly sat up and reached for his robe.

"There is no need for that! Everyone else is asleep. . . your pink pajamas are sufficiently decent for just waking your friends. We can't waste any time."

At Terry's door, he hesitated for a few moments, as he had never been in her room. He checked his pajama pants to make sure nothing showed. He knocked. . . once. . . twice. . . not getting any reply, he carefully opened the door and went to her bed. He had to shake her firmly to get her to open her eyes. "Miss Vincent wants us in class at six fifteen for gym. Wear your leotards."

When Terry stretched herself leisurely and showed no signs of urgency, he added, "You had better hurry!" In a flash of boldness, he pulled her blankets off.

Terry became mad. "What do you think you are doing???"

Jack blushed, as he had never seen Terry in her bed clothes without a robe. She wore an adorable, but skimpy, baby doll gown of brown nylon that did not hide very much of her figure, especially, since her skirt had worked up and clearly showed her matching panties.

Knowing that Jack had a very good look, Terry blushed brightly, causing Jack to grin. "There is no one here but us girls," he said, unable to keep his mirth in check. How good it felt to be able to use that darn phrase against one of his former tormentors. He turned away saying, "Hurry up now! I have to wake up Hennie."

At the door, he turned to see whether Terry was getting out of bed. There she was, sitting on the edge of the bed, sticking out her tongue at him. Her short nightgown was deliberately askew to show one of her nicely developed feminine breasts. The gesture was all too obvious, meaning, "I have something you still lack, my girlish cousin."

For a moment, that disturbed Jack, but by the time he reached Hennie's room, he had completely forgotten the incident and knocked gently on the door.

"Come in," he heard Hennie's voice.

Amazed that Hennie was already awake, he stuck his head in the door, and said, "Miss Vincent says gym in ten. . ." He stopped in mid sentence when he saw Hank in a long nylon nightgown. His hair was already combed and his face made up.

Smiling, Hank said, "Good morning Jackie." Seeing the admiration in Jack's eyes, he adopted a shy pose, but after a short moment, he began to blush and reached for his robe whispering, "I'm sorry. I forgot to put it on."

Jack realized that he had embarrassed this boy who now looked so feminine, but he could not help it. Hank looked so appealingly girlish that the words just stuck in his throat. "Are you up so early? Always, I mean?"

"No, not always," Hank replied, "but last night she sent us to bed so early."

"Well, I'll see you in ten minutes in class," Jack said while withdrawing. "I have to get dressed in my leotard." As he left, he saw Hank looking at his pink pajamas and felt sorry that he hadn't put on his robe. Now, why was that? Was it because he knew that Hank was a boy that made him feel immodest in this thin girlish garment, or was it because he was a boy wearing girl's pajamas? No. . .that could not be. . .after all, Hank thought he was really a girl. Could he be admiring or criticising the way he looked? Maybe it was just because he now felt like a girl, to whom modesty was considered a virtue. He shook his head in confusion. After all, Hank was considered a girl now too. Why did he always feel so confused and uncertain lately????

Miss Vincent entered the classroom exactly on time and found her three pupils waiting for her. They went through the same routine as the day before, and after half an hour, she said, ""There is no time for a leisurely bath now girls. Take a quick shower, dress in your school clothes, and put your rooms in order. I will be in your rooms around seven for inspection. After that, we will have breakfast together."

Terry was rubbing her sore muscles, and sighed deeply, "I don't think I can survive much more of this."

"Don't be silly Terry," Hank replied. "This is nothing like the football training we have at school."

"Well. . .I'm no football player. . .and neither are you. . .not this year," she said testily. "In fact you look much more like a cheerleader."

Hank blushed at the obvious implication of that remark and shamefully kept his mouth shut. Hanging his head, he walked to his room.

Jack, his mind busy with that mean remark of Terry's, quietly showered. He was no longer aware of the perfumed soap, and he automatically put on his shower cap to protect his hairdo. After his shower, he decided to wear his white nylon sweater and cardigan set with a dark blue straight skirt. Beige nylons and medium high slippers completed his outfit.

As he checked himself in the mirror, he admired his face and his newly styled hair. He could not resist a puzzling smile at his reflection. There she was. . .Jackie. . .the complete girl. . .pretty. . .and showing no signs that a boy was underneath. . .none whatsoever.

Just then, Miss Vincent entered his room. "Good morning Jacqueline," she said studying him carefully from top to toe. "You look very nice Dear."

She gave his room the white glove treatment and was soon

satisfied. Approaching Jack, she produced a bottle of pills and said, "Dear, this is going to be a busy season for you girls, so I want you to take one of these vitamin pills each morning and at bedtime. This will insure that your body gets the required nutrients."

After he had swallowed the pill under her watchful eye, she said, "Now, we must set the time for your periods Dear."

Jack blushed crimson and lowered his eyes.

"Tomorrow is the day of the new moon and the day of your first menstrual period. Starting tomorrow, you will wear your napkin for four days, and you will do so every month on the anniversary of the new moon. You must watch the calendar and keep up with this date yourself, like all girls. Just make sure you wear it. I will check to make sure you don't forget. At my girl's school in Geneva, the boys were made to wear a large bright red patch of cloth on their skirts in front and back, all day, for everyone to see and wonder about, if they forgot to wear their sanitary napkin. As you can well imagine, they soon learned never to forget. . .," she added with a happy smile, savoring the memory of her deathly embarrassed former pupils. Here, I'll show you how to put it on. Hold up your skirt and slip."

Red to the navel, Jack obeyed. He felt Miss Vincent peel down his panties, fasten the belt around his middle, and fasten the pad between his legs. It was very bulky and awkward. When it was in place, she told him to raise his panties and adjust his skirts himself.

Before he could object, she said, "You might as well wear it today also, now that you have it on. I want you to change your pad when you arise in the mornings, after lunch, before dinner, and at bedtime. You may now go down and help Sarah with breakfast, while I check on Hennie and Terry."

Fifteen minutes later, the governess and her three charges were having breakfast. Jack was feeling awfully conscious about the new object in his panties. He wondered if any of the others were wearing one also. He guessed that this was something no one ever discussed, not even among girls, or did they? He just did not know.

Miss Vincent made the girls clean up the breakfast dishes, including Paul's who had left even earlier for his school.

On the dot of eight, Miss Vincent entered the classroom, where she found Hank and Jack waiting with a polite curtsy. Ten seconds later, a red faced Terry rushed into the room and to her desk under the frown of Miss Vincent.

This strict school mistress may or may not have heard of subliminal influences, but she sure knew how to practice them. She would always combine one or more disciplines with the regularly scheduled lessons, hour after hour, day after day, week after week.

For instance, when she asked one of them to read aloud from Shakespeare, she made them read the part of the female characters in

a higher pitched girlish voice. In the beginning, this gave the boys a lot of trouble, but before long, being intent on reading the passage correctly, they forgot all about the voice they were using. After a while, Miss Vincent insisted that they use their new voices constantly, so they could get used to it and "feel the part more".

She was, of course very strict on the right pronunciation, enunciation, and voice inflections, which made the boys concentrate so hard, and for so long, that they were no longer aware of their new girlish voice. Terry was amazed at how quickly this was accomplished. However, she was kept so busy herself, that she was soon accustomed to the new voices of the boys.

In the beginning, Donna had smiled significantly at her mother when Jack talked in their presence, but he never noticed.

In writing, the same method was used. When Miss Vincent dictated notes, or when she gave out assignments or homework, she always warned that their writing must be very neat and very small. When their efforts did not meet her strict standards, she would say, "You will just have to do that over dear. That's not nearly as neat as a girl should write."

After that happened a few times, Jack made sure to write the way she desired, and this soon became his normal way of writing.

She made them learn whole passages of books or poems by heart, and when they had their gym or deportment lessons, she made them recite while criticizing and correcting their posture and movements. They were so intent on getting the recitation right, that they soon forgot their perfect girlishly stance and movements. Helped by the frequently used and painfully correcting cane, and after many long hours of practice, their feminine deportment, moving, and walking became an automatic and unchangeable habit.

Miss Vincent was a rigid disciplinarian and a perfectionist. She would let absolutely nothing pass, until it had her full approval and satisfaction. Her pupils became used to striving to meet the perfection she demanded.

Both Mrs. Armstrong and Aunt Julia were very pleased with the governess and the results she obtained so quickly.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon, they had an hour of singing lessons, with Miss Vincent insisting that all three sing soprano. It was very hard in the beginning for the boys and Terry, who was a natural alto, as well. No matter! Miss Vincent would accept nothing less, and eventually, their voices were trained to sing the higher notes and no longer broke in the high octaves.

While it is true that all of these exercises altered only the voices and physical appearances of the two boys, there was no doubt that this constant feminine training and activities dulled their interest in, and their feelings for their decreasing masculinity and former boyish

activities. Their completely girlish mode of living, learning, walking, talking, and dressing was strongly influencing their personalities and their way of thinking at a much greater rate of acceleration than in the past. They were now under constant pressure and supervision to perform femininely every minute of every day.

For instance, when Paul had friends over, the three girls would frequently giggle amongst themselves and talk about the boy visitors. They would discuss the ones they liked or disliked and which ones were the cutest, just like real girls would be expected to do.

Paul was especially amazed and confused as, day by day, he saw the rapid results of Miss Vincent's training. He was amazed how this strong willed woman was converting the boys, Jack and Hank, into real girls.

Beauty treatments made their skin softer, and the hormone pills made their faces rounder, and their figures more feminine and graceful. Their hands were soft with long, well tended, polished nails. They fluttered their arms more as they tried to make a point in conversation, or while telling a story.

Of the two, Hank had changed the most, although he had been in skirts for a shorter period of time. His whole nature and personality had been somehow altered so that he now was almost an extrovert. He talked animatedly with a smile always near his ruby red lips, his hands gesticulating with gusto, and his eyes shining whenever he noticed a certain response or interest from the person or group with whom he was talking. The change in his demeanor was especially remarkable, because he had been so very shy and quiet before he was changed into a girl.

Jack, of course, was to all appearances a teenage girl, but his temperament did not change like Hank's. He remained more reflective and deeper. . . thinking more about things. He lacked the capacity, which Hank had so quickly developed, to enjoy things as they came, or if they were unpleasant, to accept them as inevitable.

Often. . . when Jack was engaged in some girlish activity and his eye would meet another's, he would lower his lashes and blush for all he was worth. He still thought that the other person must be aware of his masquerade. He apparently did not understand how completely he moved, acted, and looked like a girl. His deepest self could not accept the fact that no one. . . not even his own mother or sister. . . would believe he was once their son and brother.

There was no one to reassure him, and no one in the household was aware of his doubts and fears. He was accepted and treated as a girl, and everyone accepted the fact that he now was a girl. His subconscious mind fought this regimen to change him into a girl harder than his conscious mind, if that is possible. This was a long and hard struggle in his mind, and he retreated in this battle to strip

him of his masculinity, only when he had no alternative. He reluctantly accepted the fact that this was really a one way street into girlhood. As he stood before his mirror and saw his figure slowly shaped and developed, thanks to the strong hormone therapy, he gradually learned that no one meant for him to turn back on the road from boyhood to complete femininity.

His only hope was to hold fast to the idea that his mother would heed his cry for help in his letter and rescue him from these female tyrants. However, those hopes lasted only until Aunt Julia handed him a letter from his mother on a Saturday during lunch. His heart jumped with joy when he saw it. Still, he managed to discipline himself, knowing that a proper young lady does not read a letter at the dining table. He put it in the pocket of his pinafore to read later in the privacy of his room.

It was late afternoon before he had a chance to open the letter as Miss Vincent kept him busy with chores and afternoon classes. All the while, he could not concentrate, thinking about what his mother might have written and hoping she would let him go home. Miss Vincent noticed his lack of attention and reprimanded him several times.

At last, the afternoon classes were over. He rushed to his room, knowing that he had very little time to change for dinner and refresh his makeup. With nervous hands, he tore open the envelope. He turned red and sank onto his bed as he read:

*Dear Jacqueline,*

*I received your last letter, just when we returned from a pleasant cruise through the Caribbean on a wonderful Dutch liner. The food and service were out of this world. We are leaving again next week on another cruise, and I am using a free moment to send you this note. Why are you being so dramatic? There is no reason for you to ask me to burn your letter and keep secrets from your sister. What has gotten into you? I don't know what difficulties you are referring to, but I can guess! It is probably your stubbornness in wanting to protest the fact that your Aunt Julia found it better all around to dress you in a skirt and teach you to become a nice, well behaved, well mannered young lady. Oh yes, I have known for quite some time. When Donna first hinted in a letter to your sister about Aunt Julia's decision, Jo became curious as a cat. She hammered away at Donna in letter after letter, until she finally learned the whole delightful story. Since then, I have had several letters from Aunt Julia as well.*

Jack's shoulders sagged, and he dropped his hand, resting the letter in the lap of his skirt. He had a hopeless feeling that all was lost. Even his own mother had known of his fate and had willingly agreed to his new training. Tears welled up in his eyes as it became clear to him that his last hope had disappeared. There had always been the

chance that his mother would allow him to go back home, and he had lived on that very expectation. Now, even that was taken away from him, and worse. . .his sister Jo knew all about him and his situation.

With his head in his hands, he fell back on his bed. He had never before felt so hopeless, deserted, and alone as he was that very minute. He was like a swimmer who has fallen overboard and sees the ship slowly disappear over the horizon. He knows that he is doomed, and that nothing can save him. Eventually, his strength will give out, and he will drown with the certainty of the setting sun. After a long while, he sat up and read on.

I want to tell you how proud I am of your progress. When I saw your photograph, I could hardly believe my eyes. Neither could Jo.

Jack turned to the second page. On it was glued a color photo of himself. . .one he had never seen, nor knew existed. He read on:

*Because the photo was taken when you were unaware, we can tell how completely natural you are in your new role. We are so grateful that Donna sent it to us. It shows how much you have changed for the better. Your lovely yellow blouse fits you so well, and the color is very becoming to you. Jo was especially intrigued to read that you had been shopping and had chosen it yourself. You have really good taste in clothes Dear. The blouse is so simple and stylish. Your choice of hairdo is also perfect. We can't wait until your own hair grows long enough to wear in the same style. Your nice hands and beautifully manicured nails are such a pleasant change from the dirty bordered nails and grimy hands you used to sport. Your eyebrows are shaped so nicely and expertly.*

*Jo could hardly believe it when Donna wrote that you do all that yourself now, without being told. The thing that impressed your mother the most, was the calm clear look in your eyes. This indicates that you are finally finding yourself and have obtained peace of mind and self acceptance. That is so important for a young man because it enables him to develop his character and obtain the maximum benefit from his education. Of course, that also applies if the young man finds he was mistaken and really is a pretty girl who will grow up to become a woman his mother can be proud of. If only your father could see you now. Jo was so happy with the enclosed photo, that she had some enlargements made.*

*Therefore, we can now return it to you, as I have an idea that you had not yet seen it. We each have a framed copy beside our bed to remind us of your new status. Oh yes, just before we left on our Caribbean cruise, we ran into Mrs. Daynor and her delightful daughter Cathy, on a shopping trip. They filled us in on many details of your new training. Cathy was quite taken by you in your new clothes.*

*She described how nice you looked, that first day they arrived, in your black and white dress with the white collar and cuffs, along with*

*your terribly feminine white tea pinafore over it. She said you were absolutely precious as you poured tea for them. She also described how chic you were in your pretty, short tennis dress and in your bathing suit. Cathy's eyes sparkled every time your name was mentioned. You must feel very happy to make such a lasting impression on this lovely girl. She said Tim, your football friend, really thought of you as a girl now, and refers to you as Jackie or Jacqueline whenever they talk about you.*

*She further said that Tim mentioned inviting you to his Senior Prom next year when you get home. He wants to make all the other boys envious by having the prettiest girl at the dance on his arm when he enters the dance hall. All of this must really make you proud. I hope you will be wise enough to admit to yourself that you now have reached a new plateau in your life. You have progressed to the place where you belong, to a life that suits you and will make you very happy.*

*So, instead of complaining to me, you should thank me, and above all Aunt Julia, for helping you so much and for steering you in the right direction. You should also be grateful to Donna, of course. She is the one who has taken care of the details and the everyday help you needed in the beginning. I understand that she succeeded in teaching you all those little things you needed to know.*

*I am especially pleased to learn that you have such an outstanding governess, who will give you the very best continental education. You are really much more fortunate than your older sister, who had to be content with a public high school and four years at Holyoke.*

*Aunt Julia has promised me that she will introduce you to some nice young men of the best families in the area. So, in addition to learning, you will have a most enjoyable social season as well. And of course, this first rate education will later come in very good stead.*

*In return for my permission to have you enjoy all this, I will expect you to behave accordingly and be a dutiful daughter to me. I want you to write me regularly and keep me informed about your progress in becoming a well adjusted young lady. And, I stress the word LADY!*

*You must make sure that your clothes, manners, and features display the good breeding for which our family is known. Give my regards to your school friends Terry and Hennie. I shall write a personal note also to your governess and tell her she has my blessing and complete cooperation in our plans for you.*

*Your Loving Mother*

The letter dropped from Jack's hands as he realized the weight of the blow that had just fallen on him. He went numb with shock. With one single letter, his whole escape route, his hope for a reprieve from his feminine prison had been erased. Gone now were the thoughts,

that had always comforted him in the past months of stress, that he would soon go home and be his old self again. His fate was sealed! Now, he had nothing to look forward to, no hope of escaping, and no way to regain his trousers and return to his former life, friends, and school.

How could his own mother do this horrible thing to him? He might have expected it from his sister Jo. She had always teased him and enjoyed having fun at his expense. But his mother? Was she really convinced that this was all "for his own good"? Had Aunt Julia and Donna brainwashed her? And, what about Tim? How could Tim ever consider taking him to the Senior Prom? Had they all gone crazy?

As he contemplated his situation, doubt crept into his mind again. Maybe. . . just possibly. . . were they really doing this because he should have been born a girl? Yet, who was to judge such an issue? Shouldn't it be himself? Who else could decide if something was wrong? He had always felt normal and perfectly aligned with his friends. What made them think something was wrong?

He picked up the letter and reread it. Why in heaven's name was everyone so willing to accept him as a girl? Imagine him on Tim's arm in a long low cut evening gown, dancing on little high heeled slippers in the high school gym. He shivered at the mere thought of it as he realized it certainly was not beyond the realm of possibility if Miss Vincent's training went on for many more months.

His mind refused to accept the finality of his situation, and he feverishly tried to think of a way out. He sighed deeply with the realization that he was stuck, but good, at least until next year. And then what? Suppose his mother decided that he should continue as her daughter? Could she. . . would she. . . do that? Would she even consider such a thing? Tears welled up in his eyes, and he felt more miserable than ever before in his life.

Then, there was that nagging thought again. Was HE perhaps the one who was out of step? Was he really a girl who had posed as a boy all this time? Is that what everyone saw and why they readily and completely accepted him as Jacqueline? His tears flowed freely as he considered that possibility.

He imagined himself in miniskirts among the other "chicks" at high school, a silly girl trying to attract the attention of some boy. His body shook with sobs as the calamity of his situation became more clear to him. Was he now irrevocably doomed to become a girl. . . and to be one for the rest of his life? Why were they doing this terrible thing to him? Why? Even his own mother?

He could find no answers. After a long cry, his tears stopped and he became calmer. He looked at the clock and saw it was nearly time for dinner. Slowly, he stood up and studied himself in his mirror. As if programmed, he untied his pinafore and slid it off his shoulders.

His mind drowning in the terrible forebodings regarding his future, he took off his sweater and skirt. In his slip and corset, he washed his face and re-did his makeup that had been ruined by his tears. He had learned a lot about these things in the last few months, and especially since Miss Vincent had made them read and study a book about cosmetics and their use. Through this line of study, they learned how to make the most of their features. He now knew the difference between simple day makeup and the most accentuated evening beautification. As though still in a dream, he picked a dress from his closet.

The daily grind of routine had taken over his reactions like a remote controlled robot. He chose the simple blue dress with the peasant trim he had pressed the day before. As he lifted it over his head, he got a glimpse of some extra flesh on his chest, which had appeared out of nowhere. His bra now stayed in place better. In the beginning, it always had a tendency to ride up, as the pads were not enough to keep it in place. Now, there seemed to be something to hold it in place, quite a bit, as a matter of fact! But, with his other troubles, the reality did not penetrate his consciousness. . .not yet.

He zipped the dress up in the back and brushed his hair. With a smile, indicating he was pleased with his appearance, he left the room. His mind was still in a daze, and he did not fully comprehend the full extent of his situation. His eyes had a strange, almost vacant look as he entered the dining room.

He was dimly aware that Donna and Aunt Julia were watching him closer than usual. He guessed that they had received a letter from his mother as well, telling them that the cat was now out of the bag. Now, they were certain he was aware of the fact that his mother and sister knew he was a girl, and they wanted to see his reaction.

Without being actually conscious of his actions, he was trying not to show them how he felt and what a bitter disappointment it was for him to know that his only means of escape had been cut off. He tried to hide the helplessness and hopelessness that pervaded his very soul and numbed his mind. He said nothing at all during dinner, trying to avoid meeting the eyes of Aunt Julia and Donna. He even looked away when he saw Hank questioning his strange silence. He quickly averted his eyes, afraid that they might show the cold fear for the future that filled his heart.

During the next few days, Jack might have done something desperate if Miss Vincent had not kept him constantly occupied. Because of her special attention, his mind was forced to divert itself away from his terrible situation and unreal personal problems.

Miss Vincent, of course, was told about Jack's little crisis. He was barely aware of the fact that his governess was paying him more attention than the others. She sought to engage him in conversations during meals and at other times. She was trying to draw him out and

lift him from that frozen feeling of depression into which he had sunk. She assured that his school work did not suffer, and that his mind did not wander during lessons or homework studies. She would pat him encouragingly on the shoulder whenever he said or did something right, constantly conveying concern and special interest. It eventually had its effect.

She would brush his ever growing and thickening hair for him each night, and was quick with a compliment about his appearance or behavior. She would fold his bedspread for him and made many other little endearing gestures. In time, these things gave him a warm feeling towards her. He began to look forward to her visit as if her presence gave him some kind of comfort or consolation. This seemed to gradually fill the void his mother's letter and desertion had left.

Miss Vincent, of course, knew what she was doing. She had many many years of experience in handling this type of situation. She used Jack's softer attitude toward her as an opening to instill in him an ever increasing feeling of femininity. These seemingly cordial bedtime sessions were used as a part of her training. In a subtle way, she would make clear to him how a girl would behave under certain circumstances would be expected of him. These seemingly innocuous, kind moments probably did more to change Jack's personality than anything else, and the boy was not even aware of what was happening to him.

Time heals all wounds, and as the days turned into weeks, Jack gradually managed to push his problems and resentments into the background. While he would not completely forget his predicament and the humiliations connected with his conversion, his new classes opened many never expected horizons for him. They captured his interest and pushed his depressed feelings back into his subconscious.

There was one week that Jack, Hank, and Terry would not soon forget. That was when their new corsets and school uniforms arrived. That was almost six weeks after the arrival of Miss Vincent.

As they unwrapped the parcels at tea time, Miss Vincent's eyes gleamed. She told them she would personally lace them into their new stays every morning thereafter.

Remembering what Miss Vincent had told him about his future waist size on that first morning, Jack looked with concern to Hank, but he was too busy admiring his new uniform. Jack picked up his

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own, which was marked with a neat, "J" embroidered on the left breast. As he held it in front of him like an experienced girl, he saw Donna smile with ill concealed satisfaction. Jack was annoyed no end to give her the pleasure of seeing him in a school uniform, like any other English school girl. Fortunately, it was not like the ordinary school tunic at all, and they would not have to wear a blouse or a tie.

That evening in his room, he tried it on, and found that he could not quite close the zipper in the back. He guessed that it had been made according to his new measurements, after he wore the new corset. As he looked in the mirror he recognized the clever combination of childishness and sophistication this costume represented.

The dress was navy blue and was made of some soft synthetic, form fitting material that almost felt like silk, only somewhat sturdier and heavier. It had short, girlishly puffed sleeves closed with a cute white satin ribbon ending in a bow. The neckline contrasted in that it had a rather deep scoop that was quite grown up and would show considerable flesh. Its sophistication was tempered by a piping of a one inch wide white satin band. The skirt flared youthfully from a very tight waist and was of the new modern sexy length. The white band at the neckline was repeated at the hem, but was three inches wide and called attention to the exposed knees. The waist was accentuated by a belt of the same material and closed with a shiny silver buckle. It was cleverly made in a two inch width so it fit nicely between the lower rib cage and the hip bones. It could be pulled very tight over the soft under belly of the body to show off the curves above and the nicely rounded hips below.

The three were ordered to wear their new uniforms every day until dinner time and then change into something prettier and dressier.

The next morning, Miss Vincent arrived earlier than usual for her regular inspection of Jack's room. She found him trying to lace his new corset. He had not been able to make much headway as the corset and the laces were stiff with newness.

Miss Vincent took over and tightened the laces with a vengeance. At first, Jack did not realize the difference between this and his old inherited corset, but he soon learned!

When she was only three quarters finished, he cried out, "Please, Miss Vincent. . . I cant breathe!"

"Oh yes you can. . . just breathe with your chest," she said calmly, while continuing to pull the laces until there was only an inch of space left in the back. "There. . . that should do for the first few days."

He nearly choked when he saw his reflection in the mirror. It showed a new svelte figure any girl would dream of having. He let his hands caress his figure from the filled bra cups down his waist to his hips. The curves were all there. . . and then some! It was unbelievable the way his rear stuck out. It was almost asking to be pinched!

Jack tried to hide the pleasure this new sleek appearance gave him, but he was not successful. His governess had watched him carefully, and he saw her smirk of satisfaction in the mirror, as she stood behind him. Then, he made the mistake of taking a deep breath. The little smile quickly disappeared from his face and was replaced by a grimace of pain. "Ouch. . .I can't wear this thing all day, Miss Vincent. It hurts already."

"Yes you can. . .and you will. . .at night too. . .always from now on. It will get your waist down to twenty two inches in a month or so, I expect. You WILL get your waist down or my name isn't Vincent. Anyway. . .you will soon come to love your new look. . .mark my words. Now, put on your new school dress."

She helped him lift the uniform over his head and over his smooth slip. She then easily zipped it in the back for him. It fit tightly over his figure. . .everywhere. . .without a wrinkle. As the corset forced him to stand upright with perfect posture, it seemed to him that he had become taller as well as slimmer. His chest seemed two inches larger at least, because of the flesh being pushed up into naturally feminine mounds. He decided that this dress did look good on him as he primed and turned before the mirror. He no longer cared whether his governess knew it or not.

He was slightly annoyed when Miss Vincent made him put his childish pinafore on over it, hiding most of the new uniform, although his new pretty feminine curves could still be seen by all.

"Now, your pill. . .and then breakfast," Miss Vincent said, producing her bottle of medicine.

At breakfast, Jack could commiserate with Terry and Hennie, both of whom had been laced by their governess that fateful morning. Hennie especially seemed subdued and in pain, but Miss Vincent paid him no mind. In the classroom, she was happy to see her charges sit up so nicely and correctly.

During their between class pauses, the three talked about nothing other than their new torment. Terry even suggested they loosen the laces.

Jack considered it for a moment, but Hank refused outright. "Oh no. . .I'm not giving her a reason to paddle me. She'll do it too! She told me so this morning."

"You're a. . .cowardess," Terry told him.

"That's alright," Hank replied airily. "A girl can afford a little cowardice."

Terry looked to Jack for help.

He hesitated but then appeared to make up his mind. He explained to Terry, "It won't be any use, you know. Unless we do it every day. If we did that, she would catch up with us sooner or later. One night, she will see that the laces have settled in a different place, and the

next morning, she will lace it even tighter. I guess we will just have to suffer through it. She promised that we would soon get used to it.”

Terry shrugged her shoulders unhappily, her hands massaging her waist trying to relieve the never ceasing pressure.

During lunch, the girls were quite subdued and their appetites almost non-existent.

Mrs. Armstrong, who had been asleep when Hank dressed that morning, noticed the improvement immediately. “Hennie, your figure is just marvelous!” she raved, causing Miss Vincent to beam with an “I told you so look”.

The rest of the week passed, forcing Jack’s and Hank’s bodies to adhere to this new utterly feminine mold until, eventually, they became used to the pressure and sometimes forgot that they were so severely corseted. Miss Vincent was wise enough not to try to tighten the laces further at this time. She knew she could bide her time.

Experience had taught her that in about two months time, these corsets would be completely closed and comfortably worn around the sleek narrow waists of her pupils. Then, she would get them smaller corsets, and the process could start over again.

Sunday morning rituals still included correspondence for the girls. Hank had written several letters to Robert and Peter but, so far, had received no reply. He told Miss Vincent he wanted to stop. “If they don’t bother to answer. . . why should I keep on writing?”

“Because you are their sister, and you have time for it. They have all kinds of diversions, sports, girls, and of course their school work. You just cannot expect active young men to write very often. Anyway, it is a good lesson for you to learn to wait. That is a girl’s fate, you know. You have to wait to be asked for a date. . . and when you are at a dance, you must wait to be asked for a dance. A girl cannot properly be forward. She even has to wait to be asked for her hand in marriage.”

Hank blushed deeply at this admonishment. Obediently, he took a pen and paper and started his weekly missive to his brothers.

Jack had written regularly to his mother, deliberately ignoring Jo. He could not bring himself to write to his sister, whom he pictured gloating over his shameful fate. He especially could not bear to write to his sister in the girlish hand which Miss Vincent required, even though he had now become used to this style of writing. She made him rewrite his last letter to his mother because it was not girlishly neat enough.

He had to be careful what he wrote also, as Miss Vincent did not hesitate to read when she checked his letters for neatness, although she did not appear to absorb the contents of the letters.

At the beginning of the next week, when the three girls stopped complaining about the discomfort of their corsets, Miss Vincent

announced a surprise. "You have been very good about putting up with your corsets, so Friday night, we will attend a concert."

"What is being played," Terry asked with enthusiasm. "Rock and Roll, I hope."

"Of course not, young lady! What am I ever going to have to do to educate your taste? It is chamber music, played by the famous New London Quartet. They are performing Beethoven and Schubert classics."

None of the girls looked particularly excited, but Miss Vincent apparently thought it was a splendid outing. She continued. "I have already reserved seats quite near the stage."

Terry and Jack just looked grim.

Miss Vincent ignored them for the time being. She knew that taste for classical music must be acquired by exposure and knowledge. "Of course, you girls will dress up prettily and look your very best."

"Formal. . . long dresses?" Terry asked, now with a trace of interest.

"No. . . it is not a formal affair. For chamber music, we usually do not dress up like we do for a grand concert or the opera, but you won't have to wear your school uniforms either. Just pick a nice after five costume."

Hank decided to wear his black dress. . . the one he had worn to his father's funeral. It had that stylish basic touch, making it suitable for most occasions. He dressed it up with a gold chain around his middle. He was annoyed at himself. . . but still could not prevent a smile of satisfaction as he checked his appearance in the long mirror. His appearance was so authentic. Was his waist really getting smaller? He was glad Miss Vincent had told him to pluck his eyebrows a bit.

Satisfied with his appearance, he went to his mother's room and told her about the concert. "Do I look alright Mother?"

"YES Hennie Dear. . . VERY nice!" she said pulling him to her bosom and hugging him. "I am so proud of my pretty daughter. Those long sleeves should be very comfortable as it is really cold outside. Let me see if I have a nice bracelet for you. That's just what you need to offset all that black."

She rummaged around in her jewelry box and came up with a gold chain bracelet. It had rather heavy links, and a little gold plate dangled from it. "Your Dad gave me this when your brother Robert was born," she said, putting it on his right wrist.

"It is very nice Mother. Thank you for letting me wear it," he said, giving her a kiss on the cheek.

With her arm around her daughter, Mrs. Armstrong walked downstairs. This gesture made Hank feel so safe, so wanted, so completely as his mother's daughter.

Jack had decided to wear a glamorous dress he had inherited from Donna. It was also black, and was made of a rich, dramatic looking satin crepe. The long sleeves were excitingly sheer and had narrow cuffs buttoning on his small wrists. The round neckline had soft smock detailing, and the bodice was drawn revealingly over his conspicuous breasts.

Miss Vincent smiled with satisfaction, when she saw Hank and Jack dressed so nicely.

Aunt Julia went even farther and complimented these two boys in dresses. "You two look very nice. . .the boys will really stare at you this evening."

Both boys blushed profusely.

Aunt Julia said, "Jackie, that dress could stand some pearls. If you promise to be very careful, I will let you wear my strand of real pearls."

"Oh. . .yes. . .Aunt Julia. . .thank you very much." He lit up crimson as he spoke, knowing that his eyes had lit up at the offer. Imagine. . .him. . .a boy. . .feeling pleasure about wearing a valuable strand of real pearls! Had he really changed that much? Oh why couldn't he have hidden or prevented that silly smile of pleasure?

Mary Armstrong, still admiring her daughter, said, "You need some color along your neckline also Dear. I think I have a nice light blue silk kerchief that you can drape around your neck. I'll get it now."

"Yes Mother. . .thank you."

Soon after dinner, the three girls left, accompanied by Miss Vincent, who looked magnificent herself in a black satin dress that fell to well below her knees. She wore common sense shoes, making the girls in their high heels look even daintier.

Jack and Hank were now used to exposure as a girl. They had been to church, walked the streets, and had frequently met visitors at the Kerr manor. Still, they were both very nervous entering the large concert hall with literally hundreds of people around them.

They had learned that there is certain safety in numbers. Still, Hank was acting just a little too daintily and elegantly for his age. Jack just followed Terry's example and moved with a certain self confidence he sure didn't feel inside.

Miss Vincent was watching him as he made an attractive picture in this beautifully simple dress, that revealed his figure so nicely. When she saw him copy a gesture a gesture by Terry, who pushed some loose strands of hair from her face, she grinned thinking, "Monkey see, monkey do."

As they settled into their seats, they became the subject of many stares. No young male could have missed the entrance of these three pretty young girls, accompanied by such a stately figure as Miss

Vincent.

When Jack became aware of these stares, he felt annoyed. . . and of course, worried. Why did those fellows have to stare at him so? He tried to out stare one particularly handsome boy, but when the young man gave him a big smile, Jack could not help returning his smile. In confusion, he quickly lowered his lashes. . . then his head. . . in shame.

On Hank, the attention had the opposite effect. He opened his purse, inspected his makeup, and patted his hair back into place. He turned his head with an experienced gesture to let some of his long hair fall over his shoulder in front. He appeared to have managed gorgeous long hair all his life.

They had excellent seats, quite near the stage. As the concert began, Jack surprisingly found himself listening intently, and he enjoyed the music.

During the intermission, Terry had to go to the ladies room. Miss Vincent frowned, and told Jack to go with her. "A young lady should never go alone to such a place," she lectured.

Jack, who had never been to the ladies room in such a crowded public place objected vehemently, but it was to no avail. With a red face, he entered the powder room where many women were repairing their faces and adjusting their clothes. No one paid any attention to the two young girls as they entered. They had to stand in line, which calmed Jack down a little.

When it was their turn, Jack suddenly felt the urge and had to go through the complicated procedure of raising his skirt and slip, lowering his panties, and untying his modesty patch. Afterward, he had to reverse the whole procedure. Then, in front of the mirror, he checked his clothes and stockings to see that everything was smooth and correct. He also used this opportunity to touch up his lips, this time setting an example for Terry.

At the end of the concert, they took a taxi home. Hank talked excitedly about the concert and the performers.

The days and weeks passed in this same constant routine. Not a moment of the girl's waking hours was wasted. The one purpose on Miss Vincent's mind seemed to be to instill more and more femininity and girlish behavior into Jack and Hank. She succeeded only too well! The constant feminine lessons, activities, and mental brainwashing could not miss having a penetrating permanent effect.

The boys, of course, could not help themselves from being molded into the form Miss Vincent and Aunt Julia had predestined for them. With everyone treating them completely as girls, they slowly forgot that they were ever boys. These days, Jack thought nothing of the fact that Paul was treated so entirely differently. He was a boy, so of course, he had different activities and was allowed

more freedom.

Neither of them ever made a masculine movement or gesture any more. Their postures were now completely feminine. . .the way they held their shoulders and arms. . .and the way they walked with dainty mincing steps.

The new corsets were now completely closed, and Miss Vincent saw to it that they wore them that way at all times. Hank, as a matter of fact, had lost so much weight trying to please his mother by excelling as her only daughter, already needed a new one. Jack and Terry were not far behind.

When Miss Vincent promised to take them to the shop to order smaller ones, all three protested timidly, "But we are just getting used to this one."

"Exactly my point," Miss Vincent replied. "That only proves that progress is so easy we can count on lacing you at least two inches smaller, maybe a bit more. Don't forget now. . .boys always like girls with very tiny waists."

Jack retorted. "If they like them so much, why don't they wear corsets too and get their own waists reduced?"

"Come now!" Miss Vincent replied tartly. "You know very well what I mean. A boy is much too active to be constricted like that, and a girl should have a FIGURE to appeal to men. You do know that. . .don't you? Do I have to explain right from the beginning that it is the duty of a girl to look her best to attract the opposite sex. That's your real nature, you know!"

Jack and Hank blushed.

Miss Vincent continued in a sugary voice, "Your brothers will be so proud of their pretty sister Hennie."

Hank did not reply. What could he say? He still had not received a reply from either Robert or Peter. Annoyance welled up in him. She was telling him he was duty bound to torture himself so his brothers would think he was pretty and had a good figure. "My brothers could not care less what their sister looks like. They don't even write to me."

Miss Vincent laughed at the way Hank unthinkingly and completely naturally had referred to himself as "their sister".

"Of course they care dear. Sometime soon, you will hear from them. In the meantime, we'll take a picture of you showing your nice new figure. You would be surprised how proudly they will show off your photo to their friends. A slim figure makes a girl look so frail and in need of their help and support. That's what boys really like and it will make your brothers feel tender and protective toward you."

That discussion gave the boys a lot to think about and to digest. It was, in reality, another small step towards their complete femininity.

Although Miss Vincent kept the girls busy in the house with lessons and girlish activities, she did not let them become homebodies. Her goal was to teach them all the social graces as well as to develop in them charm and manners. This would enable them to bloom as ladies amongst strangers and in society as well. They took part in whatever activities the church offered teenage girls and attended choir practice every week. Thanks to Miss Vincent's singing lessons, both Hank and Jack could produce a sound that could acceptably be classified as mezzosoprano. They could also read music rather well.

Aunt Julia was extremely pleased with Jack's progress in learning to become a girl. What a change she had brought about in her former wild nephew. She just knew that she had done the right thing, although it was highly unusual and probably unethical. She quickly discarded that thought. While in the beginning, she had more or less forced him to wear dresses because the idea of dominating a male. . . forcing him to wear skirts. . . gave her a special charge.

This however, was now changing. She had never dared to analyze that exciting emotion, but she did enjoy it. Sometimes she even felt a little guilty for letting her son escape his feminine trap. Was it because she felt the need for a man around the house, or had she subconsciously cared more for her son than for her nephew?

She quickly dismissed these thoughts. Now that she could watch the improvement in her nephew, she no longer felt guilt, or even doubt. She had created a new person. . . a better human being. One who had the benefit of a superior education, all around cultural development, and certainly much improved looks and manners. All that was surely worth a little confusion in his gender. Was it not?

So, she shushed once more the infrequent voice of her conscience, which was not very loud to begin with. Also. . . he was, after all, not alone in his predicament. Hennie was coming along fine and was making an excellent adjustment as a girl. His whole personality had improved. So. . . as long as the boys had company in each other, they would not feel too humiliated or isolated.

The next Monday was Donna's birthday. Terry had rounded up the family for the long time custom of visiting the celebrant in her bedroom early in the morning. She had not given Jack a chance to put on a robe as she grabbed his hand and pulled him out of the room, giving him time only to retrieve Donna's present.

Miss Vincent had given the girls a chance to buy a present from their allowance when they went on their regular trip to the hairdresser the Saturday before.

Jack had purchased a pair of sheer stockings. He really did not feel enamoured towards this member of the household who had tormented him so.

When the whole Kerr family was assembled in Donna's room, she received and opened the presents. Aunt Julia had given Donna the latest Poloroid camera. Paul picked it up and offered to take some pictures

It was significant that neither Jack nor Hank had so far given any thought to being seen in their girlish nightwear. They felt as if they belonged in them and wore them without any self consciousness, but when Paul, dressed in a navy blue woolen robe over his pajamas, made ready to snap a picture of Donna, Terry, Hennie, and himself, Jack suddenly came to his senses. "Not like this. . . wait till I get my robe."

"Nonsense," Donna replied. She was dressed in a short purple nightgown with a transparent negligee over it. "I have a shorty nightgown on also. After all, there are only girls in the picture."

Terry, who was dressed in a long pink nightgown with a matching negligee over it, said impishly, "You look so cute in your baby dolls Jackie. Come on Paul, take the photo."

Hank had not thought to object at all, dressed as he was in a mint green, sleeveless, knee length, nylon nightgown. He struck a feminine pose and produced a photogenic smile worthy of a movie star. The only thing on his mind was that he was glad he had brushed his hair and put on some lipstick before leaving his room.

Jack never had a chance to get his robe, and he felt great shame at being photographed like this among "other" girls. Heaven only knew who would see that picture later, and they might recognize him. So, it came about, Jackie was the only unsmiling girl in the picture.

While Paul was waiting for the picture to develop, Jack quickly slipped to his room to put on his robe. Soon, he reappeared looking like a princess in the magnificent red and gold garment he had gotten for his birthday.

When Jack saw the picture, he blushed deeply. Heavens! His gown was the shortest of anyone's, and he showed the most leg. He was also amazed at how naturally feminine he held his right hand, and how self conscious he looked compared to Terry and Hennie.

When Miss Vincent, who had not been present at the family affair, was shown the photo at breakfast by Donna, she frowned and said, "Why, you girls look just like an advertisement for a department store. It is not proper for young girls to be photographed this way, in their nightwear. One never knows where the picture will end up, or who might see it."

"Let's tear it up then," Jack said with such hot enthusiasm that Donna grinned and said, "No, we don't! Come now Jackie. . . I'm sure your friend Tim Daynor would love to see it." She looked triumphantly at her attractive and innocent looking cousin in his pretty, well fitting school uniform with the frilly pinafore.

Jack grew so mad that he almost used a nasty vulgar expression. He had to swallow it quickly, seeing the frown on Miss Vincent's face. So, controlling his emotion, and showing how well Miss Vincent's methods and influence on proper behavior and choice of words for a girl had succeeded, he whispered softly. . .his head bowed, "If Tim ever sees that, I'll just die. . .I know I will.

"You had better do as I tell you then," Donna said, with a great sense of supremacy.

Jack looked at her from under his lashes. He knew just what she meant. That was how they had blackmailed him into this situation to begin with. He looked down at his plate, saying not another word. After a while, he calmed down. Somehow his fury was gone as quickly as it had risen. Donna was Donna, after all, and what else could he expect? He now felt like a younger sister to Donna, who was much and had much more experience. It was his duty to listen to an older sibling or family relation.

As he thought about this, it occurred to him that Donna might not be too happy either. He had never seen her with any boyfriends. Maybe that was why she was so mean and hard? Maybe she had suffered a broken love affair.

His thoughts were broken up by his governess warning him, "You had better eat up Jacqueline. . .you have only a few minutes till class begins."

In school, the girls made good progress. How could it be otherwise with the strict discipline in class and the constant supervision over their homework and learning progress? Their vocabularies in French and German were slowly growing along with remarkable progress in their other subjects.

In sewing class, the girls were showing equally good progress. This was partly because most of their free time was spent with some kind of needle work or sewing, making their fingers nimble as any seamstress. Miss Vincent had a knack, like with everything else, to make the work interesting. She would either read to them as they busily stitched away or engage them in a discussion of dressmaking and the current fashionable styles. She used pictures from women's magazines to illustrate her points regarding good taste, high style, and the women's art of dressing to make the most of her figure and appearance.

She taught them to recognize quality in materials, workmanship, and above all, the proper attractive fashion to wear for each occasion. Both Jack and Hank had been caught up in this interesting subject, and they could not help but be fascinated by these things that are so dear to every girl's heart.

Terry and Hank had once argued over the newer Mod fashions. Hank had said, "Gee, I would like to wear some of these. . .they look

way out!"

To everyone's surprise, Miss Vincent said, "Well, why don't you try it? I'll teach you to make an outfit like that for yourself. Show me what you would like to wear."

Jack looked at Hank as he, without shame or embarrassment, pointed to a picture in the magazine. Imagine him. . . a boy. . . saying out loud that he wanted to make. . . and wear. . . a girl's outfit! Hank was pointing to a kinky blouse and skirt outfit that would shame any self respecting boy to tears.

Jack, out of necessity he thought, also chose an outfit in the Mod style. After much deliberation, and as if his life depended on it, he chose a simple blouse in white, with a red sleeveless vest of a double knit material. With it went an ankle length Mod straight skirt, with two make believe pockets at the hip line. With it, went a white belt to accentuate the rather high waist.

Miss Vincent saw that the necessary materials were purchased quickly, and showed them how to cut and sew the material into lovely finished fashionable dresses.

Jack and Hank both finished their outfits quickly and expertly. Miss Vincent had Jack try on his outfit in class, right in front of the others. When he was finished dressing, a hush fell over the room, followed by ooohs and aaahs. He looked just wonderful, and the gown complimented him so. Jack really looked the modern miss now!

Even Miss Vincent smiled. "Keep it on Jackie, so Mrs. Armstrong and your Aunt Julia can see it too."

There were no mirrors in the classroom, but Jack could tell by the reaction of his classmates and his governess that he looked great. Through the glass in the window, he was able to catch a glimpse of himself, and he became deeply aware of his completely girlish appearance. The outfit looked so darn natural on him. He blanched when the thought occurred to him, "What would his mother say if she knew he had made the entire outfit himself?"

At dinner, his aunt praised him so highly for his accomplishment in dress making, that Jack could not help blushing

Donna fumed. How could Jack and Hank learn to sew so well? She was more than a little annoyed at the praise and attention they were getting. After all, they were only boys!

As the days turned into weeks, the weeks to months, the boys surpassed Terry in almost every girlish department, and Miss Vincent beamed when discussing them. They were both coming along so nicely! She would say to anyone, "In another year, they will be ripe, fresh, beautiful, and most desirable young women for some lucky young men."

Jack said to Hank as they did each other's hair, "What are we going to do? I find myself actually wondering what being a woman

will be like."

"Me too," Hank said adjusting a roller in Jack's hair. "I think it's like we are now only with confidence that we can do everything like a female."

"Oh my," Jack moaned, "We have a lot to learn!"

**THE END, for now.**

## IN THE PINK



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