



Reluctant Press presents:

Escape For Life

Norman Way



A 'Her TV' E-Book

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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ESCAPE FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

The title of the movie was "Gone". The critics were pretty harsh, but not from the standpoint of the actors. There were no big names in this low budget movie but the character's roles were well played. The problem the critics had was that the story line was so old. It had been updated for the times of course but in so many ways the movie was too predictable so after a couple of weeks it went straight to DVD rentals.

Essentially the movie details a man's humdrum life. Periodically he loses himself in his dreams and fantasies where he escapes to start life over again. He has a new identity, new job, new everything. Here he is successful, looked up to, admired and respected. He is financially sound with no worries or cares.

I enjoyed the movie very much because I had occasionally seen people like the lead character.

Once at a family reunion picnic I saw one of the men with his wife trying to control a couple of rowdy kids. Later I saw him look wistfully in the distance as he attended the burgers on one of the grills. I am sure at that moment he was a million miles away either alone or with someone at a place where it was quiet and peaceful. There he had no responsibilities and everything was the way he wanted it to be. In that special place and time nothing would change.

Another time I saw my mother at her vanity brushing her hair. She didn't seem to be looking in that mirror as she whipped the brush thru her brown hair. It was like she was looking into another world. She was somewhere far away. Maybe she was doing the things she dreamed of as a little girl but never achieved for one reason or another. I walked past her open bedroom door without saying anything.

My class got a tour of a local factory and as we walked thru the loading dock area of the warehouse I saw the foreman take off his white safety hat, wipe his forehead, and then put it back on again. He wasn't looking at the truck backing up to the dock. He appeared

to be staring at the horizon with a far away look in his eye, like he was searching for something. Something he knew he had no hope of ever finding.

These things had an affect on me. I knew I was going to have to be careful about what I chose to do in this life. I didn't want to get "trapped" so to speak into a life I thought was going to be good and then find out later in life that it wasn't what I had anticipated.

The divorce rate was fifty percent and the number of skilled people who lost jobs and had to either get re-trained again or accept work that paid much less just to keep their heads above water was too numerous to count.

I can't say I was looking for Utopia or a Nirvana. Just exactly what constituted those two things I didn't know either. I did know that I did not want to become trapped like so many men and women. They all felt encumbered by jobs, family and financial responsibilities. They couldn't leave and they were slowly going crazy where they were with no solution in sight.

So what was the solution? Damned if I knew. Maybe the best thing for a kid to do was to keep his eyes and ears open for any opportunity that came along. Of course opportunity sometimes comes disguised. A person wouldn't always recognize it. Even if he did, would he be in a position to seize that opportunity and make the most of it?

Chances are that it would come along once in a lifetime and if he missed it there would never be another. He would have to act quickly or spend the rest of his life regretting it. This would result in an unhappy life and thoughts of "oh if only, yeah once I had the chance to, I shoulda-woulda-coulda but I didn't."

How many people had a chance to buy Xerox at a dollar a share or Microsoft when they first started up? A man gets out of the service and several friends try to talk him into taking his service pay plus his life savings and join them in a venture where they are going to sell chicken in a bucket. Of course the man passes on the offer when family and relatives caution him against taking that kind of risk. Thirty years later he is laid off again, nearly broke, while the partners sell out their interest in a dozen of those chicken places to an investor group for a zillion dollars and now they all live in Maui, rich and retired at age fifty-five.

I got the feeling that if the devil showed up and offered any of these people a way out in exchange for their soul they probably wouldn't even hesitate. They would be gone in a flash without the slightest hesitation. At the extreme point of their desperation even their soul was worth giving up just for the pleasure of being "gone".

Naturally as a child you don't know the ways of the world. You are shielded somewhat by living a secure life with you parents and siblings. You have no thoughts of escaping because you are in a comfortable situation and besides you have no place to escape to.

Even as young as I was I knew that deep down inside there was no point in busting your ass over anything because you were only going to wind up with a busted ass. But just what was I going to do to avoid the same trappings that get everybody else? It wasn't going to be from working for someone else that was for sure. I had to work to some degree to get money. For what I still didn't know. But at a very young age I made a resolve that no-

body was going to get me. I was going to make every effort humanly possible to insure I was not going to be one of "them".

As an only child I was never spoiled. I had chores to do and responsibilities like most kids. My schoolwork, of course, was number one with everything else second. Mom was a waitress. She made good money because she worked at an upscale restaurant affiliated with a private golf course. She ran her butt off for her customers and made more money from Friday night thru Sunday night than most people made all week. Dad liked his sales job but it did take him away from home a lot. Together they had a comfortable living.

Despite their above average income both were able to stretch a buck. My dad always bought used cars that were three to five years old after selling his current car and then dealing cash. Except for shoes and underwear mom shopped at charity and mission stores for her and me. When they bought a house it was on a land contract dealing directly with the seller instead of going to the bank. The price was cheaper, no application process, and of course no realtor commissions just an attorney's fee to check the papers.

I never lacked for anything I needed for school but I didn't have or want a lot of the gadgets many of my friends had that all add up to more money than you might think. We had an older TV that worked fine. The rabbit ears brought in five local channels. Enough for the little time that any of us did watch it and saved the cable or dish money for more important things. I was raised to be frugal just like they were.

For my twelfth birthday Dad bought a used lawnmower. He taught me how to use and maintain it. That first summer I made about a hundred dollars a week mowing lawns for a dozen seniors in the neighborhood. At that age other kids were still asking their parents for money.

Before the first leaves began to fall I had paid Dad back and added a sidewalk edger along with some assorted hand tools to my inventory. I had just over two thousand dollars in my savings account. I continued by raking the leaves later in the year. Just before the snow flew I bought a used snow thrower at an auction and two snow shovels at a thrift sale. I was ready for earning money in the winter too.

Besides my own house cleaning chores I had begun to clean for some of my customers. Most of these were women who had arthritis. I did the dusting, vacuuming, cleaned their windows and scrubbed their floors as well as their bathrooms. I was very meticulous like my mother had taught me.

I made good grades in school and was able to schedule my work around my school hours. I was putting most of my earnings in the bank. I knew if I was going to find a "good racket" as one friend of Dad's put it I was going to need some money to start with.

There were no kids in my neighborhood. The area was made up of mostly working people whose kids were gone and seniors. As a result I was alone most of the time. That suited me just fine since I was working for my neighbors when I wasn't doing my homework or helping around the house.

I had stayed away from sports because of my work. I was a short, small frame boy so except for soccer or tennis there was not a lot sports I would be eligible to participate in anyway. My work plus the treadmill in the basement kept me in good physical shape as

did the fact that we ate healthy meals and rarely did we go out for pizza or burgers and fries.

By the time I finished middle school I had several thousand more dollars in my savings account. Unfortunately I also lost several customers. These seniors had sold their homes and moved to a retirement apartment complex. The people who bought their homes were young married couples who took care of the yard and cleaned for themselves.

With my business cut back I began checking the want ads to see what type of employment was available to me. I didn't want the fast food environment so I looked at the ads for part time retail jobs that would fit around both my school and work schedule. I didn't need a job just yet but I thought it would be a good idea to keep track of the various openings.

A week before Easter Sunday I had just finished cleaning Mrs. Levin's house. She paid me in cash as usual and then held up a fifty-dollar bill.

"I need you to do me a big favor," she began.

"What is it?" I asked. I was mildly curious as to what she would need me for.

"My niece is coming here from out of town for Easter weekend. I made her a beautiful dress for Easter Sunday. She is a little taller than you but has about the same build. Would you mind slipping it on so I can see if I have the size correct?"

I was more than a little surprised at her request but that fifty dollar bill in her hand meant more to me than spending a little time wearing a dress so she could see if it was going to be a proper fit.

Ok, I guess. Did you want to do this now?" I asked.

"If you would please. Go down the hall to the bedroom on your right. Take off your shirt and jeans. Put on the petticoat and then slip on the dress. Come out here when you are ready so I can take some measurements."

I walked down the hall to the bedroom and undressed. The petticoat and dress were on the bed. I stepped into the petticoat and brought it up to my waist. The purple dress was made of a shiny, slippery fabric. I picked it up by the hem, put my arms through the sleeves, and then pulled it over my head.

The fabric felt good against my skin. The stiff petticoat made a rustling sound under the dress as I walked out to where Mrs. Levin was standing and a smile lit up her face as I approached her. I stopped in front of her and she motioned me to turn around. When I did she closed the back zipper and adjusted the hem over the petticoat.

It took about fifteen minutes for her to take some measurements. She continued to fuss with the hem and then the elastic on the short puff sleeves. After fastening some pins along the hem she stepped back and looked at me.

"Turn around please," she said.

I did so and then she asked me to turn around again. She walked behind me and unzipped the dress.

"That should do it. Be careful when you slip the dress off so you don't pull out the pins," she ordered.

I nodded as I walked back to the bedroom. Carefully I took off the dress and laid it on the bed. I slid the petticoat off and put it next to the dress. I got dressed and went back to the living room. Mrs. Levin handed me the fifty-dollar bill and I went home.

After supper that night I couldn't seem to concentrate on my homework. I kept thinking about my reflection in the full-length mirror on the closet door. If I would have been wearing makeup and had longer hair I could very easily have been mistaken for a girl.

The soft, shiny fabric had felt so good on my skin and the rustle of the petticoat under the dress had given me an exhilarating feeling. Why was that? If I felt that way and looked that good in a dress should I have been a girl? I tried to put those thoughts out of my head as I finished my schoolwork.

A month before the school year ended I turned seventeen. I got a work permit that limited my hours during the school year but not the summer. I enrolled in Drivers Education too. As much as I enjoyed riding my bicycle, whether I was towing my yard equipment behind it or not, I knew I would eventually need a car to get back and forth to work.

With few employment prospects because of my age I decided to try a temp agency. I got an interview with the first agency I called. The manager of Top Temps, Alice McCann, was a rather stern faced woman. She wore no makeup, had a short hairstyle and wore a black pantsuit. She was impressed with my self-employment activities. She said she was certain she could find something for me that would enable me to work around my yard care and cleaning business.

I left the interview feeling good. There was something a bit odd about the way she and her secretary had looked at me when I first came in. I couldn't quite put my finger on it. As I left the office both of them were giggling about something.

In another month I had my license and purchased a two door Honda Accord with my savings and a loan from my parents. Between the car and insurance for a seventeen year old I was now just about out of money. I knew it would take me a while to build my savings back up but I had a set of wheels in case the temp agency called me.

I got a call Friday night to report at eight am to a local department store at the mall that was closing. I would be packing up the unsold merchandise from their close out sale for shipment to some of their other stores. The pay wasn't much but it was a start towards building a job resume and I felt I had to take it.

When I reported for work at eight I met my supervisor Delores Raymond. She took me to the cosmetics department first. There was a tape gun and a stack of small folded up cardboard boxes near the shelving unit holding the makeup items.

She spent a few minutes explaining the different products and how to properly label the boxes once they were filled. She left and I unfolded the first box and taped the bottom seam. I began with all the nail polish, remover, manicure kits and cotton balls. Next I boxed up all the lipsticks, lip pencils, blushers, and liquid make up. Followed by the eye shadow, liner, mascara, eyebrow pencils, tweezers and eyelash curlers. Last were the perfumes, body powders, bubble bath and lotion sets.

Delores stopped by with a handcart. She was pleasantly surprised that I had everything done so quickly and exactly the way she wanted it. She inspected several boxes to

see that I had things packed properly and then verified that I had the right label listing the contents and how many of each item were inside.

“Okay Eddie, after you take the boxes to the back room, meet me in the toiletries section,” she said.

I made three trips to the loading dock with the cosmetics and then proceeded to the toiletries section where she explained how she wanted that done. I unfolded several larger boxes and began packing up the shampoo, conditioners, hair spray bottles and cans.

Delores checked back with me periodically thru out the morning. Each time she checked less and less items apparently feeling I didn't need to be so closely watched.

We stopped for lunch. The other temps were all women so I sat by myself. I thought it was a bit funny their conversation stopped when I walked in the lunchroom. I guess being the only guy there it gave them something to talk about.

That afternoon I worked with another woman packing up formal apparel and accessories. The bridal, bridesmaid and prom dresses had to be packed with great care, first in a plastic bag and then in the cardboard boxes. The shoes and accessories were last.

Delores came by at five and asked me to come back the next day though it may not be for a full day. I agreed. As I passed the women's restroom I heard several women laughing after one of them remarked “How I would love to see him in that pink chiffon gown with lipstick, blusher and heels!”

As I drove home I wondered if it was me they were talking about. At home I looked at myself in the mirror. Is that what everybody saw? I asked myself. Was I that feminine? I didn't think so. I knew I had looked good in the purple satin dress and petticoat Mrs. Levin had me wear.

That night as I lay awake in bed I had difficulty in going to sleep. The woman's words kept echoing in my head. I thought about all those bridal and bridesmaid gowns along with the prom fashions that I had helped pack up.

I saw myself in them with the long petticoats, heels, gloves and a veil or tiara. Were they right? Would I have made a better girl than a boy? I tossed fitfully for several hours before finally going to sleep.

My alarm clock shocked me awake. I felt tired as I got up and dressed. After breakfast I looked at my reflection in the bathroom mirror as I brushed my teeth. Momentarily I saw myself wearing pink blusher and lipstick with a purple tiara in my hair to match the purple satin dress I had once worn for Mrs. Levin. I blinked and saw my male self again.

I drove to work and spent the morning packing up women's clothing, shoes and accessories. That afternoon we finished up with the fixtures and shelving units. I was tired and glad to get home.

It was two weeks before I got another call. Alice wanted me to come to the office on Saturday morning. She explained her secretary was going on vacation and she needed me to do some clerical work and answer phones for the next two weeks.

I agreed to come in. That morning I learned the phone, computer and filing system. She bought lunch and then we resumed my training by showing me how to audit some recent

applications, entering them in the computer and also how to proctor the pre-employment testing exams. Everything seemed pretty straightforward. I already had a computer and an accounting class in school so it was just a matter of adapting what I had learned to the system used by Top Temps.

The next two weeks was hectic at times but I enjoyed the challenges of the job. I spent my evenings doing yard work and cleaning homes for my regular customers. I slept very well during those two weeks. When Alice's secretary came in late Friday afternoon to ask how things were going I just smiled and said "ok".

She walked into Alice's office and shut the door. I assumed she was talking about her vacation as I entered some additional information into our computer. The office wasn't entirely sound proof. I was standing near Alice's office door filing some applications when I overheard the secretary's remark: "and so you couldn't talk him into a tight skirt, frilly blouse and heels?" followed by laughter.

I said nothing as I returned to my desk. The secretary left with a smile on her face. Shortly I punched out and went home. That night after my shower I stood naked in front of the full-length mirror on my closet door.

I saw myself in a black skirt and a white blouse with ruffles down the front. I guess my lack of masculinity or somewhat feminine face had been apparent to Mrs. Levin, the women at the store and now my boss and her secretary too.

It had never occurred to me that I was pretty enough to be a girl. I certainly wasn't effeminate by any means. I had never been called a sissy or a girly boy. I went to bed and had a lengthy dream about being Alice's secretary. I was wearing makeup, a tight black skirt, frilly blouse and high heel shoes. My fingernails were pink just like my blusher and lipstick.

Alice had me walking around the office in stiletto pumps. After work she took me out to dinner to an exclusive restaurant almost as if she were showing me off to her other business friends or the general public. She even told me to freshen up my lipstick at the table after we finished eating.

The next morning I looked at myself in the mirror over the bathroom sink. No blusher or lipstick was visible. It really had been a dream. I was beginning to wonder if there was something wrong with me. Why were women seeing me this way but no one else was?

It was month before I got another call from Top Temps. I was caught up on my cleaning and yard work. I lost two more customers when their homes were sold but I gained one through a referral. I still had enough of a customer base to keep making my car loan payments to my folks.

This job involved working late afternoons until midnight for a small cleaning company. The company mainly cleaned offices and was called Carol's Cleaners. I was given the address of an office building and told to report there at four thirty Monday night. Someone had quit without notice so the job would last about two to four weeks until they could hire someone permanently.

I met Carol at the designated time and place. She handed me a pink smock and a pair of pink latex gloves. The other woman I would be working with was dressed the same

way. After I put on the smock and gloves we began our work. We finished around midnight and then carried the garbage bags out to the dumpster.

Carol asked me to come back the next night at a different address and I agreed. As I walked out of the building to my car I overheard the woman I worked with say to Carol: "Isn't he a doll? He'd be so gorgeous in a dress!"

I drove home, washed up and went to bed but I couldn't get her words out of my head. I was trying to understand why so many women saw me for my feminine features. I had never been seen or thought of in that regard by any of my teachers or the guys at school. Was this something that only the women could see? Did they have some sensory ability that men didn't have?

My cleaning work ended in two weeks when Carol hired a permanent replacement. She said she would keep me in mind if she ever needed someone on short notice. With school starting up again soon I knew I probably wouldn't be getting any more calls from Top Temp but it was good to know that both the agency and their client were happy with my work.

My junior year began and once again between my studies and my business I had very little time for anything else. The courses were stiffer but I took everything in stride and made good grades. I didn't have a social life yet except for an occasional gathering of friends after a football game at a local pizza joint.

Halfway thru the first quarter I was in the men's room when I heard one of the boys shout: "Teacher coming!" I heard the bang of the trash can lid as I opened the door to my commode and walked to the sink.

Several jocks were hurriedly exiting the rest room as Mr. Glendon, one of the shop teachers, strode in. He was glaring at them as they left and then he watched me as I washed my hands. Satisfied that nothing was going on he turned around and left.

I finished drying my hands. I opened the top of the trashcan to see several magazines lying on the top. There was a beautiful girl on the cover of the top one. I grabbed them and stuffed them in my notebook. I was curious what had made them ditch those magazines in such a hurry. I had one more class before the end of the day so I stuffed the magazines in my locker. After class I slipped them in my notebook with the rest of my homework and went home.

That night after supper I got the magazines out and spread them on the bed. They were all titled "Mimic Monthly." The current issue was marked "Final-We're Now Online!" and there were two previous issues. I opened the current issue and began paging thru it.

As I began reading and looking at the photos I found to my surprise these were not beautiful women at all but men with very feminine features who were made up and wore dresses. The articles were instructional ones on how to use makeup, wigs, so these men could, as they put it, "pass". There was also an interview with the "girl" of the month.

I was very surprised to see this. Occasionally I had seen comedians or actors "do drag" as they put it but they were very obvious and you would have to be blind to not recognize that they were really men in dresses, wigs and makeup.

I read the articles about the proper techniques of applying makeup, wig, hair, nail care and something called a gaff. Despite my initial reaction I became intrigued. The magazine contained no pornography at all but I was certain it had been purchased at an adult bookstore.

I spent several more hours gazing at these beautifully transformed men in their sexy lingerie, gowns and high heels. Some of the pictures had been taken in nightclubs where these men sang or danced.

I noticed on the inside of the front cover the publishers address was listed and it was right here in the Twin Cities. Two of the nightclubs named in the articles were also here. There was also a subscription rate but I knew I would not be able to download this magazine on my parents' computer.

I placed the magazines under my mattress. I knew models made a lot of money so I supposed that these men must make a pretty good living. Performers usually had agents who negotiated contracts for them and I was aware they had unions to insure a decent wage.

From time to time I thought about what that must be like. Work a couple of hours a night and then have the rest of the week off. I didn't know anybody at school who had any knowledge of the business. There were only a few kids in school that were interested in theater and drama. I didn't know any of them so I had no real source of information. I tried the Internet but it only gave me the address of the two local unions. The yellow pages listed numerous talent agencies and it would be difficult for me to pick one to call just to get information.

I continued working for myself but spent more time looking at those magazines. I guess I found it difficult to believe such a startling transformation could take place, let alone make a living from it. After their shows I wondered if they dressed as women to go home or wore men's clothing to and from work. They looked so totally feminine I wondered why they would go back and forth. It seemed it would be the logical thing to just stay cross-dressed.

One Saturday morning I drove to the address of one of the clubs. It was not a particularly good part of the city. A number of the buildings in the area had been boarded up. There were no pedestrians and few cars on the streets. I drove to the other one that was on the west end of the city limits to find it was located in a little better area just off a freeway ramp. When I got back home I took the magazines out and read them again. I wrote down the addresses of the publisher and the two clubs then tossed the magazines in the garbage that night.

I kept thinking about the words of my father's friend "find a good racket" If those men were making a good living just based on the way they looked then maybe I could have a shot at it. I had to get more information but didn't know where to look. I was still a minor so I couldn't sign contracts to get work unless I had parental consent.

School was going fast. I was busy between my business and doing some additional office work at Top Temps. October brought many people out for Oktoberfest. I went down to see the parade by myself. There was one float called "Drag Fest". I recognized one of the impersonators from his picture in the magazine.

When one of the tires on the float went flat the truck pulling it maneuvered it to the curb where I was standing. The mimics disembarked while several men jacked it up to change the tire. The tall blonde wearing a sash over her gown that said "Lolita" looked right at me. He smiled as he walked over to me.

"Hi," he said in a soft voice. "Are you eighteen?"

I shook my head no.

"Call this number when you are," he said as he took a card from his purse and handed it to me.

He walked away and a few minutes later waved to me as the float made its' way back into the parade.

I looked at the card he had given me. "The Pink Pussycat" was the club on the west end of town that I had driven by earlier. Jo Laird was listed as the manager. There was a phone and fax number too.

I had been standing alone off to the side as the tire had been repaired. I wondered why she, that is he, had walked over to me while they waited for the tire to be replaced. I thought back to the remarks about seeing me in women's clothes made by several of the women I had done work for. Was he trying to tell me something too?

I put the card back in my wallet and watched the rest of the parade. That night in bed I closed my eyes and saw myself on the float waving and blowing kisses to the crowd like Lolita had done. I was wearing that dress and looking as gorgeous as the other mimics.

The Holidays were soon upon us. Top Temps had me doing some more cleaning for Carol. She had landed a new client and wanted me to start right away until she could hire two more additional people. I found the pink smock and gloves to be just a little more appealing as visions of the mimics on the float flashed thru my mind. I continued my self-employment duties as well adding to my savings account.

With school out for the holidays I had a little more time on my hands. I did some cleaning for a recently divorced schoolteacher who had been given my name by one of my customers. She had just purchased a new computer. We were talking about it after I had finished cleaning when her phone rang.

"This will take a few minutes, surf the web if you like," she said.

I immediately went on a search engine and typed in "Mimics". There were plenty of sites. I clicked on Mimics Monthly and paged thru their sample pictures. The left hand menu had a bar for employment so I clicked on it. "New girls apply Wednesdays only, 1 to 3pm, ask for Jo" it stated.

I visited several other websites and when I heard her hang up I returned the computer to her home page and cleared my history. She handed me my check and I left.

I wrote the day and time for the interviews on the sheet with the addresses I had at home and then taped the business card to the sheet. I placed the sheet under some old clothes in the bottom drawer of my dresser. That night I thought about what I was going to say at the interview if I went there. It wasn't going to be like registering at Job Service or Top Temps that was for sure.

The second semester started and I got back into the routine of classes and work. Top Temps called me in February for a two-day job. I was sent to a formal apparel store where I spent a Saturday hanging tuxedos on racks as well as dressing two male mannequins for the window display. Later I helped put prom and bridal fashions on racks and dress four mannequins in gowns for the window display.

I watched as the other temp I worked with applied lipstick and rouge to the mannequins after we had finished dressing them. At breaks and lunch I closed my eyes and saw myself in those beautiful dresses. I seemed to be thinking more and more about it since seeing the Mimic Monthly magazines. I wondered if I would be able to look that good.

We finished up stocking shoes and accessories late Sunday afternoon. As I passed the front window I saw myself standing there in white satin or pink chiffon. I shook my head and tried to clear the images from my mind. I must be going crazy I thought.

These desires seem to be more and more consuming as I got older. I had been several years since I had tried on that purple satin dress for Mrs. Levin. If they kept getting stronger what was I going to do then?

The cold weather stayed thru March. I lost two more clients and hadn't had a call from the temp agency since February. I was still making enough to keep up my payments but I hadn't added to my savings account in several months. I was a little concerned as I always had money coming in freely and now that was beginning to tighten up.

I didn't date very much because I had my business. I usually met friends for pizza after a football or basketball game. I asked a classmate, June Leighton, to the prom and she accepted. I had known her for about a year. She had registered from out of state when her father's employer transferred him here. I liked her because she was quiet and soft spoken as well as being studious. She too had worked up a cleaning business in the neighborhood where she and her father lived.

I passed my final exams with no sweat. The prom was the following week. June looked good in her pale blue chiffon gown. The theme was "Romance Is Always In". Most of the girls, like June, wore long gowns and over the elbow gloves. I couldn't help but wonder how I would look in those beautiful clothes as I glanced around the gym. I took June home after the closing music from the big band era.

"Dad's gone for a week, why don't you come in?" she asked at the door.

I followed her inside and took a seat on the couch. She put her purse on the bar and came over to me with a soft drink in each hand. I took one from her and she sat down next to me.

"I don't care for alcohol," she smiled as she took a sip of her drink.

"Me either," I replied.

She set her drink down and wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed me hard. It took me by surprise. In the back of my mind I recalled one of the guys saying "watch out for those quiet, mousy types."

She smiled as we broke and took the drink from my hand. Without a word she grabbed my hand and led me down the hall to her bedroom. She turned around and I unzipped her

with shaky hands. I helped her out of her dress and pettislip. I undressed and a short time later we were entwined on the bed.

It was hard to describe the way I felt. She had supplied a condom after we had worked up a sweat in each other's arms. I liked her assertiveness. She had taken charge and I found myself liking the submissive role. It had been my first time but not hers. After the second time we lay still for awhile and then she got up.

"Time for shower!" she announced with a giggle.

I followed her into the bathroom. She adjusted the spray as I removed the condom and flushed the toilet. After she put on a pink shower cap I joined her in the shower. We soaped each other up and then rinsed off the suds.

"You have very soft skin. Just like mine," she said as she giggled.

After we dried off I got dressed and she put on her nightgown and robe. She walked me to the door and I drove home. I was thinking about what she had said about my skin being girly soft.

As I lay in bed that night I was conflicted to say the least. I had become a man in one sense but hadn't lost that longing to be in all that feminine finery I had seen at the prom. It was some time before I finally drifted off to a restless sleep.

I continued working and my savings account was beginning to be replenished though I still had a ways to go to get out of the debt to my folks for the car loan. It was good to keep busy and I managed to get two more customers but lost one due to another home sale.

I thought about going to the club. I was eighteen now, old enough for "adult enter-



tainment", but I still had one year of school left. I drove by the club on Wednesday afternoon. I saw a few cars parked there but lost my nerve and went back home instead with my heart racing. I wasn't sure just what I was going to say at an interview like that.

The next week I got a call from Brandy Thornton. She was the divorced teacher I had started cleaning for over the holidays. When I arrived she had a pensive look on her face and acted a little nervous. I went about my business and when I finished she ask me to sit at the kitchen table as she wrote out the check.

"I was referred to you by one of your regular customers who said you had started your business when you were only twelve. How old are you now?"

"I turned eighteen in May," I answered.

She nodded and seemed to be relieved as she handed me my check.

"I was wondering if you would like to make a hundred bucks this Saturday night," she said with a smile.

"Doing what?" I asked.

"Well I am having some friends over for a party. It's sort of a combination - "Happy Divorced" and a Fourth of July party. I would like you to serve the pizza and the drinks. You would have to wear a serving costume though and it may not be something you would want to wear."

I was puzzled by that remark as well as the fact that she had said it with a smile.

"What do you mean?" I asked with some apprehension.

She handed me a sheet that she had printed off her computer. There were six different French Maid Costumes pictured. I was surprised that she would ask me such a thing. Didn't she have any female friends who would be willing to do this? I mean why me?

"Well, I don't know, I guess so but I..."

My voice trailed off as she handed me a second sheet.

"After you left the first time I dug into my computer to see what you had been looking at while I was on the phone. It didn't come as much of a surprise as you might think. Here is a chance for you to make a hundred bucks tax free and play dress up at the same time, right?"

She looked at me coolly with an "I know you can't say no" look. I knew there was no sense backing out. I was going to have to go through with it. It would have been hard to explain my interest in those websites with some lame excuse that she probably wouldn't believe anyway.

"Your friends don't have to know who I am, do they?"

"Of course not, that stays between you and me."

"Okay," I answered.

A big smile creased her face as she got up.

"Come with me so I can get your measurements," she said.

I followed her into the bedroom where she measured my chest, waist and hips. From her closet she put several pairs of high heel pumps at my feet. I tried them on. One pair fit almost perfectly with a little tissue padding in the toes.

“Be here Saturday night about six pm and I will help you get ready. My friends will be arriving at eight so that will give us plenty of time. Before you come take a hot soak in the tub then shave your legs, arms, and face very carefully. After you dry yourself off use hand lotion to ease the razor burn, I will take care of the rest.”

I put my shoes back on and went home. I went to bed that night thinking about what I had just agreed to. I guess I was looking forward to it more than I was apprehensive about it. I could certainly use the hundred bucks and it would give me a chance to “dress up” as she had said. There seemed to be more positive things about this than negative so I closed my eyes and went right to sleep.

Saturday I soaked in the tub for about fifteen minutes. I lathered my arms and legs with shaving gel. Using a new disposable razor I carefully shaved my legs and arms. I rinsed myself off and got out of the tub. After washing what little hair there was down the drain I dried off and then I shaved my face.

I had a very light beard and had been shaving about every three days or so. When I finished I smeared the hand lotion generously over my arms, legs and face. My skin felt tight. I ran my hands over the freshly shaved skin and knew I was as silky smooth as any girl.

I knocked on the door of Brandy’s house at five forty five. She opened the door and I followed her to the bedroom. Her two-bedroom duplex was tastefully furnished and neat as a pin.

“Everything is here on the bed. Set your clothes on the chair. Put on just the panties, garter belt and stockings. Come out and I will help you with the rest of your serving costume. Oh and for tonight I will be addressing you as “Edie” since that is the closest feminine name to Eddie that I could think of.”

She left and I began to undress. The panties were black satin and had four rows of pink ruffles along the back that matched the pink waist and leg elastic. After I put on the garter belt I rolled each fish net stocking down, smoothed it up my leg, and fastened it to the garters. I was surprised how good the panties and stockings felt on me as I walked out to the living room where Brandy was sitting. Her face brightened as I approached.

“Okay Edie it looks like everything fits you perfectly so far,” she said as she grinned at me again

She followed me back to the bedroom. I put on the black bra and she closed the back hooks. After slipping a pair of weighted breast forms in the cups she adjusted the straps. Walking around me she looked me over.

“Sit at the vanity Edie,” she instructed.

I sat down in front of the mirror. She outlined my lips with a lip pencil and then filled it in with creamy red lipstick. Red blusher was next and then she made up my eyes with eye shadow, eyeliner, and a pair of false eyelashes. A nylon wig cap, a black wig and frilly maid’s cap was last.

When I looked in the mirror I couldn't believe the image I saw. I had no idea I could look this good. She clipped a pair of long earrings to my earlobes and then opened a package of bright red press on nails. After she matched them to my fingernails she looked me over and seemed quite pleased.

"Now Edie let's get you dressed," she said as she walked over to the bed.

I got up and followed her. She placed two petticoats, one inside the other and handed them to me. I put them on as she unzipped the black satin, puff sleeve French Maid mini dress. While she held it up by the hem I put my arms thru the sleeves and she slipped it over my head.

After adjusting the hem around the petticoats she zipped me up, closed the top hook, and slipped the frilly white apron over my head. She tied it in a big bow. I loved the feel of the satin dress as she twirled me around twice and smiled at me.

"I found a smaller pair of pumps for you Edie. Put them on and then come out with me to the living room," she instructed.

I slipped my feet into the pumps to find they were four-inch stilettos instead of the three-inch pumps I had tried on previously. These were a size smaller and they fit me perfectly. It was an exhilarating feeling as I stood there at an angle. I turned to see Brandy grinning at me. I took my first steps as she followed me back out to the living room.

"Edie I want you to walk like this," she said and then walked across the room and back.

I followed her instructions and found that it was easier than I thought it would be. In addition the stiff petticoats made the short skirt of the mini dress bounce from the jarring effect of the stiletto heel pumps.

"Keep your elbows in, arms across your body and your hands dangling at the wrist, like this," she instructed.

I watched her walk and then imitated the same thing. Next she demonstrated a curtsy and I followed suit. I practiced some more and then began walking back and forth across the room. Each time I returned to stand in front of her I curtsied again. Then it was into the kitchen and back, down the basement stairs and back, out to the patio and back. Again and again I walked with feminine grace and poise, curtsying each time I returned to stand in front of her. I felt marvelous. It had come easy to me and strange as it may sound it made me feel almost as if I were a real girl.

"I think that's enough Edie. You walk and curtsy just like a girl. Now sit in the recliner, smoothing your skirt with one hand, and then get up again."

I followed her instructions to the letter but found that as I sat down the skirt rode up and revealed the top of my garters prompting a giggle from Brandy.

"Get up slowly like a lady Edie, smooth out your dress, and come with me."

I got up and with both hands behind me I smoothed out the skirts over the petticoats, then followed her into the kitchen. Her duplex was small and so was the kitchen.

"There are two pizzas in the freezer and the wine is cooling in the fridge. When the girls come I want you to meet them at the door, curtsey politely, introduce yourself, and

escort them to the patio. When all four girls are here open a bottle of wine and place it on this tray with the five chilled glasses from the freezer. Bring the tray out to the patio and set it on the table. Pour the wine in each glass until they are half full, curtsy, then go back to the kitchen and turn the oven on. When it's hot place the pizzas in and when they are done take them out and slice them up. Place two pieces on each paper plate and bring the plates out. Do you have any questions Edie?"

I was getting used to being called "Edie" and I had mastered the walk and mannerisms of an effeminate French Maid but I had never opened a wine bottle, served or poured it. As much as I found myself enjoying this little charade I didn't want to make a mistake.

"How do you open a wine bottle, pour and serve it?" I asked.

Brandy took the corkscrew from a drawer and demonstrated with an empty bottle from the recycling bin. She filled the wine bottle with water and I practiced pouring the water into a cup making sure it came out a little at a time. I wasn't used to picking things up and setting them down again with such long nails so I knew I had to be careful when serving her and her guests.

I poured the water out several times and then I put the empty back in the recycling bin. I joined Brandy in the living room. She was watching television so I sat down across from her, remembering to smooth my skirts and cross my legs in girlish fashion. She looked over at me and smiled.

"You look absolutely gorgeous," she said and turned her attention back to the screen.

We watched for about a half an hour before the doorbell rang. I got up, smoothed my skirts, and headed for the door as Brandy shut the TV off and walked out to her patio. I opened the door to a black girl in jeans and a sweatshirt accompanied by an Asian girl in a pink mini skirt and a white sleeveless blouse. I curtsied politely.

"Good evening ladies, I am Edie. Please follow me to the patio where Brandy is waiting."

The two women followed me thru the house and out the sliding doors at the back of the kitchen to where Brandy was sitting at the table. I left them and closed the sliding door to the sound of giggles. A few minutes later the doorbell rang again and I went to answer it.

To my surprise there stood Lolita and another darker skinned woman both casually dressed in denim skirts and pink short-sleeved blouses. I curtsied and introduced myself, then led the two women back to the patio. Once again giggles erupted as I left them to get the wine.

I struggled a bit with the corkscrew. I put the bottle and the five chilled glasses on a silver tray. The giggles had subsided as I returned to the patio table. I poured each of them a half of a glass of wine. I couldn't help but notice that all of Brandy's guests were looking me over closely, especially Lolita. I curtsied, and went back to the kitchen. The giggles were quieter this time.

I turned on the oven and about fifteen minutes later put in the pizzas. I glanced at the girls and Brandy motioned me to come out. I stopped at the table and curtsied again.

"Please fill out glasses and bring the other bottle when the pizza is done."

I gave them each a refill and returned to the kitchen with the empty bottle. When the timer went off I took the pizzas out of the oven. I cut both of them into slices and placed two on each plate as Brandy had instructed. I put four of the plates in the corner of a large tray and the fifth one in the middle. I took the tray out to the women and a few minutes later returned with the full bottle of wine. I curtsayed and went back to the kitchen.

There was a lot of laughter as the women drank and ate. I ate the two remaining pieces with a soft drink as I waited for further instructions from Brandy. When the women came inside bringing their wine glasses with them Brandy was in the lead.

"We are going to watch a movie, Edie. Please clean off the table and bring us another bottle of wine," she instructed.

I nodded and went out to the patio. I tossed the paper plates in the trash and put the two empty wine bottles in the recycling bin. I washed off the pizza cutter and then opened the third bottle of wine.

I had been quite proud of myself so far. I was walking easily in my four-inch stilettos in the effeminate manner Brandy had described. I had not spilled anything or made any serving errors. I wasn't sure what the source of the giggling was, had Brandy told them I was a man or was this just some feminine frivolity?

I carried the bottle of wine into the living room. The four guests were seated next to each other on the davenport and Brandy was seated in the larger of the two reclining chairs. I stood in front of the coffee table and poured each guest their wine. I turned around and filled Brandy's glass. She had held it lower so I had to bend slightly to fill it. I knew my skirts had ridden up a little prompting a quiet giggle from two of the girls on the couch.

I set the half full bottle on the large coaster on the coffee table. After I curtsayed I turned to go back to the kitchen. The black girl sitting on the end of the sofa grabbed the hem of my dress and petticoats and pulled them up revealing the pink ruffles on my black satin panties.

"My my, aren't those panties just adorable! They are so frilly and feminine. Brandy has very good taste doesn't she Edie?"

"Yes she does," I answered as I straightened up and fluffed my skirts.

"Oh Edie, get another glass from the fridge and join us please. I know you will like the movie we are going to watch," said Brandy with a smile.

I went back to the kitchen and retrieved a glass from the fridge. When I returned I set the glass down on the coffee table and poured it a quarter full. With my free hand I smoothed my skirt, sat down in the smaller of the two recliners, and crossed my legs. Despite being careful the hem rode up enough to reveal the tops of the garters holding up my fishnet stockings. I took a sip of the wine as the movie began.

The soft music of the soundtrack was by a large orchestra. It was gentle music as the title flashed on the screen: "Man To Maid-A Male Maids' Story". I took another, larger sip of my wine. I hadn't counted on sitting in on a porn movie.

All the girls had their eyes on the screen as the story unfolded. I watched a man recount how he, an abusive, macho man, had been transformed into a mincing, effeminate sissy secretary by day and a sissy maid by night for his ex-wife and her girlfriends.

Periodically as the story progressed I noticed Lolita glancing over at me with a bit of a smile on her face. To my surprise there was no pornography at all. It was just the story of this man's descent from masculinity into femininity.

His journey was lengthy, over two years. With facial feminization surgery, weight loss, hair removal and his massive injections of female hormones he had become a very pretty secretary and maid. At the end of the movie he had become a mincing effeminate lowly paid secretary and servant to his ex-wife and her friends. To look at him you would never know that he had once been a man at all.

When the movie ended I poured the last of the wine in the glasses. Lolita took a camera from her purse and insisted on taking pictures of the gathering and several of me alone. I wasn't happy about that but since they didn't know who I really was I thought it wouldn't matter.

The girls drank up and left. I carried the glasses into the kitchen. Brandy handed me a pair of pink latex gloves. I put them on and washed the glasses while she dried and put them away. After cleaning the serving tray I wiped down the patio table.

"All done," Brandy announced. "Leave your gloves on the sink and come with me."

I followed her back to the bedroom. I stepped out of the pumps as she slipped the apron off and unzipped my dress. She helped me out of the dress and put it on the bed next to the apron as I slid the petticoats off. She took them from me and put them on the bed too.

"Sit at the vanity and I will show you how to remove the makeup," she ordered.

I did so and she opened a jar of cold cream. After she took off the maids' cap, wig and wigs' cap she removed my makeup and then unhooked my bra. I took it off leaving the falsies inside the cups. She stepped out of the room while I removed the rest of my lingerie and I put on my male clothing. I went out to the living room where she handed me my money and a brown, 8 1/2 X 11, envelope.

"Thanks for your help, Edie. I couldn't have done it without you."

"Your quite welcome," I answered as I left, though I had doubts about the validity of her statement.

When I got home I went upstairs to my room and opened the envelope. Inside there were two photographs of me that had been taken at the party. They had been printed on good photo paper and were very sharp and clear. You couldn't tell who it was but I certainly made a very pretty French Maid.

After my shower that night I stood in front of my full-length mirror and looked at myself. I had to admit I did have a girly, feminine body. Briefly I saw myself in makeup and lingerie. I looked very good, even better than most of the girls that I knew at school.

I continued working thru out the summer including Brandy's duplex though she never mentioned my brief stint as her maid. In essence I still was her maid, just not in the French

Maid dress, make up and heels. In fact when I left after she paid me she had said with a laugh "Thanks Edie, I mean Eddie," as I turned to go.

Just before school started again I got a perfumed note in the mail. The handwriting was beautiful. It read: "One Wednesday left before school starts. Why don't you come in?" It was signed "Lolita" and at the bottom there were three "X's" after her name.

If Lolita knew who I really was I wondered how many others there were. Hopefully my identity was just confined to those who attended the party but I couldn't be sure. I put the note with the business card and sat down on the edge of my bed to think.

Brandy and her friends knew that I passed easily. I wasn't sure how she knew Lolita or how Lolita knew that I was the one she had handed that business card to at the Octoberfest parade. Those things and the comments from the women I had worked with and for seemed only to confirm how good I looked "en femme" as the Mimic's Monthly magazine article had put it. So did my prom date June's comment about my soft, girly skin.

The longer I sat there the more it became apparent that maybe this could be the "racket" as my Dad's friend had put that I was looking for. I was eighteen now and had my senior year left. I still had no clue as to what I wanted to do after graduation.

Many of my friends had plans for college but I wasn't going to stick a couple of grand in something that in a year or two may or may not be what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

I slept uneasily that night and several nights thereafter just thinking about what I should do. I ate lunch on Wednesday and decided I would at least go down and see Jo to find out what the deal was. I had looked on the Internet for the performers union and found two had offices in the Twin Cities. I jotted down the names and addresses of their business offices.

I taped Jo's business card to the outside of the envelope containing my pictures from the party. I drove to the club and parked a block away. No one was around so I walked to the club and went inside.

It was dimly lit inside so I waited a minute for my eyes to adjust. I walked to the bar and asked the woman behind it for Jo. She smiled at me.

"She is in her office. Down that hallway, last door on your right," she said.

I walked to the office where the door was partially open. Apparently "Jo" was short for Josephine. I stopped at the entrance and rapped on the half open door.

"Come in!" said a sharp voice inside.

I pushed the door open and walked to the desk. The woman seated there was stocky, with short brown hair. She was reading some papers in front of her and then looked up at me.

"What do you want?" she asked brusquely.

I swallowed hard. "All I can get," I answered with my heart pounding in my ribcage.

Jo burst out laughing and stuck out her hand.

"Jo Laird, and you are?" she said smiling.

I am Eddie Benson," I answered.

"Have a seat Eddie. Now what can I do for you?" she asked.

I put the envelope in front of her as I sat down.

"I met Lolita briefly at the Octoberfest parade. She said I should come here when I turned eighteen,"

"Lolita always had a good eye for pretty things," she mused. After she opened the envelope and examined my photos, she looked right at me.

"You do know what kind of a place this is, don't you?" she asked.

"Well yes. I saw some Mimic Monthly magazines one of the guys had at school."

"I see. Just what exactly do you want to do here? Do you dance, sing or just wait on tables?"

"Well I don't know. I..."

Jo waved me off with her hand.

"So you have never sung or danced professionally and you have no experience waiting on tables either, correct?"

"Yes, that's correct. I mean I served at a friends party once where those pictures were taken and I have never sung at all, in fact since I've never tried it I don't even know if I can sing."

"I see. Well your honesty is very refreshing I will say that for you. You certainly make a passable maid that's for sure. Tell you what let's go out to the stage."

I followed her out to the stage at one end of the room just off the corridor to her office. We climbed the side stairs and she had me stand in front of the mike. To my right a man sat down at a piano.

"Sing happy birthday when I give you the signal," said Jo as she walked away from me.

She turned around at the front door and waved her arm at the piano player who played a short intro.

I took a deep breath and began singing. I was surprised at my own voice. Despite never having sung in public or private I managed to get through the song without my voice quavering at all. I guess I sounded pretty good. When Jo walked back to stand in front of me the piano player gave him a thumbs' up and then left us alone.

"That was just about perfect Eddie. You sing like a girl, which is just the way I like it. Your voice is soft, melodic and not at all falsetto or screechy like some of the guys who come in here and try to sing like they think a woman sounds. Come on back in the office and we will talk further."

I walked down the steps and followed Jo back to her office. I sat down opposite her again.

"First I would like to see some proof of age,"

I took my driver's license out of my wallet and handed it to her. She wrote down my name, address and the DL number. Glancing at the photo and then up at me she then gave it back to me.

"Are you still living with your parents?"

"Yes"

"Do you have an agent and union affiliation?"

"No not yet. I wanted to talk with you first."

"Get an agent. They're listed in the phone book. Lolita uses Judy Maples. Here is one of her cards. Choose AFTRA or SAG. Without a card there's no working for me. That's my rule."

"I understand, then what?" I asked as I placed the card and my DL back in my wallet.

"Wait until you talk with Judy. She will explain everything to you and then we will set up a tryout day for you. I will have you come in on a day when we aren't too busy. You will wait on tables for half a shift. Then we can go from there."

"Okay. Thanks for your time." I got up, took my envelope from her hand and left the building.

I felt relieved as I walked towards the door. Lolita came in just as I reached for the door handle. She stopped in front of me and smiled.

"Well look who's here. How did your interview with King Leer go?" she said with a laugh in her voice.

"King Lear?" I asked.

"Oh come on now dear boy. Jo is what is known in the business as a drag king. A manish woman who dresses and lives like man. Everybody calls her that, behind her back of course. By the way that's King Leer with two "e" s and not with an "e" and an "a". That's between us girls, okay?"

I nodded and walked past her as she sauntered to the back of the club.

I felt relieved to some degree. It wasn't a bad interview. Despite my initial apprehension I felt confident I could pull this off. Jo hadn't asked me to dance for her so I just assumed that would come later. I drove home and put the envelope away.

I looked at the listing of agents in the yellow pages. I wasn't sure whether or not I should call one or several of them and make appointments. I decided to call Judy Maples and cast my lot with her.

My appointment was Friday morning at ten thirty. I arrived on time with my envelope in hand. Judy was a mousy looking woman with a small build but a voice like a drill sergeant. She looked me over carefully thru her narrow frame black glasses as she gave me a firm handshake. I sat down across from her and she opened the envelope.

"You will certainly fit in at the club," she began with a smile.

Over the next hour she explained the agent's contract and how the business works. I filled out the forms for the union and left a check for the full amount. When she finished I

signed the agreement to have her represent me. She gave me some business cards and I put them in my shirt pocket.

“Call me when you get your union card and we’ll set up another appointment. When you set appointments for the people whose cards I gave you, always tell them I referred you. That way you will get a substantial discount. Have a safe Labor Day Weekend, and oh by the way loose a few pounds before you come back.”

She shook my hand and I left her office. I drove home and went upstairs. I lay down on my bed and closed my eyes. I thought about what I was about to do. Though I didn’t think my weight was an issue I resolved to loose the weight she requested.

In my mind I saw myself in a beautiful gown singing before a packed house. When I opened my eyes again I took the cards out of my shirt pocket and looked them over. I set Judy’s cards aside. The others’ were businesses that Judy said I would need.

One was an electrolysis technician whose office was not far from where I lived, one was for a costume and wig shop in the downtown area near the university and the third was for a makeup artist whose studio was above the costume shop.

I knew I couldn’t tell my parents what I was going to be doing. When I was gone they would simply assume that I was cleaning or doing yard work. It wasn’t going to be easy to sandwich this type of work with my business and school too. Living and working en femme 24/7 would be too difficult right now while I was still in school and had my business but it was something to think about.

I didn’t sleep well that night and at breakfast mom had asked if anything was wrong. I simply shook my head no and let it go at that. Dad got home about one thirty and took my mom to the grocery store for the beer and steaks. I fired up the grill and was sipping a can of soda when I heard the doorbell ring.

I walked to the front of the house and saw a cop at the front door with a woman. The cop asked me if I was Eddie Benson and when I nodded the woman identified herself as the coroner and informed me my parents had been killed in an accident at a nearby intersection.

A man fleeing the police in a stolen car had run a red light. They were both dead at the scene. She gave me the name of the hospital where the bodies were kept in the morgue. After they left I tossed a bucket of water on the charcoal briquettes, locked up the house, and then drove to the hospital.

Dad had been driving as they entered the intersection. The impact had been horrendous and there were no side airbags in his car, not that they would have helped much. I identified the bodies and when I got back called a funeral home owned by a friend of my dad’s to pick up the bodies. Neither of them had any relatives to be notified.

That weekend I sorted thru the filing cabinet to find the insurance policies. I had to do something to keep busy or I knew it would be a long weekend. I packed up all my parents clothing and took the boxes to the thrift store drop off. I made out a list of things I had to do on Tuesday beginning with getting an attorney. The funeral director called Saturday night and I confirmed the funeral for Wednesday.

That week was a blur. At its' end I was the sole owner of the house. Their life insurance policies were small but covered the cost of the funeral but not quite all the debt on the house so I contacted a realtor and put the house up for sale. I had some carpet cleaners come in and do all the carpeted rooms.

My union card and benefits book had come in the mail but I had set it aside. I wasn't going to think about working yet until things got settled. School had started on Tuesday and with the funeral on Wednesday I was already two days behind. I hadn't missed that much so I was up to speed in no time.

Between school, my business, and getting the house ready for sale I had been very busy. Judy had sent a card, and so did Jo with all the "girls" signatures. I got the thank you cards out that week and there had been several showings of the house too.

It finally sold in mid October. I took less money than what I thought it was worth but I was glad to get rid of it. The couple that bought it wanted to move in the first weekend in December. This gave me a little breathing room to organize my move. I looked at several apartments in the evenings but did not find one that I liked immediately.

I still had some time. I decided to make an appointment for the make up artist and electrolysis. Wigs and costumes would have to wait for now.

Bobbi Washington was a slim black girl with a very sexy voice. I mentioned Judy Maples and had an appointment the same night I called. I sat down in front of a large lighted mirror and she looked me over. After selecting several bottles and jars she began her instruction. She explained the various products and then we began.

She talked and I followed her instructions. Twenty minutes later I saw pretty girl in the mirror looking back at me. All I needed was longer hair. Then she instructed me on how to remove it. When I finished doing that I was looking once again at Eddie Benson in the mirror. Bobbi put the makeup, tweezers, an eyelash curler, and several packages of press on nails in a large pink cosmetic case. She handed it to me along with an instruction book and a DVD. I paid her with a check and left.

The costume and wig shop on the first floor was closed but I wasn't going to need those things yet. On the way home I thought about the image I saw in the mirror. Everybody had been right. I did make a better girl than a boy. Maybe that's what I should have been.

At the end of the week I had sold or given away most of the things in the house that I wouldn't be using in my new place. I watched the DVD and read the make up instruction book. Saturday night I sat in front of my mother's vanity and made my self up. I thought I looked pretty darn good and wished I could've bought a wig that same night.

That Sunday night I had my first electrolysis appointment. Bertha Hall owned a duplex. She lived in one half and had her electrolysis studio in the other half with another technician. She was a heavy set, jovial woman who had many clients sent to her by Judy. After I took my seat in the reclining chair she examined me.

"You have a very light beard. The hair is very fine, just like a woman's. You won't need many appointments," she stated.



She turned on some equipment and began working on my face. An hour later I made standing appointments for twice a week. I paid her and left. Electrolysis was expensive but I wanted to have a professional look for the club.

I called the costume shop and mentioned Judy's name again. I got a private consultation the next night.

There was no one in the shop when I arrived and identified myself. The owner, Anne Olson, asked no questions when I explained that I needed to try on women's wigs. I sat in front of a vanity mirror in a private room and shortly she returned with several wigs.

I bought two shoulder length wigs. The first was a light brown color, much like my own hair, and the second a blonde one. I also bought the accessories and wig care items. The discount was generous and I went home.

That night I put the blonde wig on and wore it until bedtime. It didn't take much getting used to but initially it was sort of like wearing a cap. Looking in the mirror I knew that even without makeup I was going to have no problem "passing". I kept everything in my mom's bedroom closet.

For the next two weeks I got everything ready for the estate sale. I wore my wigs when I was at home but no makeup. My electrolysis was progressing smoothly though it was hard to tell by looking at me from a distance since I had a very light, sparse beard to begin with.

I made an appointment for Friday night to see a small fully furnished apartment that included utilities. After my session with Bertha I found the place easily. The apartment was an addition to the back of a house that had been used by a late relative of the owner.

Mrs. Grayson, a gray haired elderly lady, met me at the door walked me around to the back entrance. We walked thru a small kitchen into a combination living and dining room. The bedroom was off the kitchen and had a full bath.

Her husband was dead and her daughter had been using it while attending school. Unfortunately she had got into the drug scene and had overdosed. When she asked about my employment I told her I was still in high school but I had some inheritance. I got a little teary eyed as I related the death of my parents in the recent car crash and she didn't ask any more questions.

I liked everything about it and paid her the first and last months rent plus the security deposit in cash. I got my receipt and keys then left. At least now I had a place of my own.

I was quite busy the next few weeks between school and getting ready for the estate sale that weekend. I notified my customers I was no longer going to be in business. My equipment would be going up for sale that weekend too.

The turnout was better than I expected. Everything was gone. I called the realtor and signed all the papers. The check would be forwarded to me at my new address.

That evening I took a last look around the house and yard. I bought a cell phone and notified the phone and power company to discontinue my home service.

I boxed up some bedding, towels, and kitchen stuff. It took me several trips to get everything moved into my new apartment. I left the "girl stuff" boxed up as I didn't want any "prying eyes" to find it and risk being asked to leave. I called Judy and got a weekend appointment.

The strain I had been under and my regular workouts had made losing some weight easier than I thought. I just ate a little less and worked out a little more. Judy noticed the difference when I walked in.

"You look great Eddie," she said as I sat down.

"Thanks," I replied. "Though I feel a little tired at times I have taken care of everything. The estate has been settled, the house has been sold and school is going ok. I notified my customers I was quitting the business because I was moving out of the neighborhood due to my parent's death. I had a session with Bobbi and have been going to electrolysis twice a week for nearly a month now. I bought two wigs but have delayed getting some costumes until I saw you again and spoke to Jo."

"That's wonderful. I'm glad you lost some weight. Jo is a stickler about the girls keeping slim and trim. Her costume requirements are simply that they must be sexy and of course very girly. Anne knows pretty much what you will need."

For the next hour Judy explained the standard contracts I would be getting as an actor. Working as a dancer at the club I would be classified as an independent contractor and I would have to pay a fee up front each time I worked but I could keep all the tips.

As a waitress I would get a minimum hourly rate plus tips and as a singer I would get union scale unless I became so popular I might be able to command more. Recording would be something that might be available to me but that would have to wait for now.

“There is not a lot I can get you now with your class schedule. Summers are better for students. Get some costumes and call Jo for another appointment. She will give you a try-out and then we will go from there. Remember to continue to work out and no more burgers, fries and pizza. Eat lots of rabbit food, fruits, veggies, fish or chicken instead of meat, potatoes, and gravy. No beer or pop either. You should drink red wine or water. A large glass of ice water before a meal fills your stomach so you eat less, alcohol only stimulates your appetite so you eat more. I will call you when I have something.”

I left Judy’s office and went home. I called the costume shop and got a Saturday afternoon appointment for selecting and fitting of what I would need at the club. I called Jo too and arranged to come in Halloween weekend. That seemed sort of fitting I guess.

Saturday I walked into the costume and wig shop promptly at two pm. There were two very gorgeous girls at the register. They glanced at me as they left and then burst into giggles as they went thru the door. Anne motioned me to come in the back.

“Step in the changing booth there and put this on over your underwear,” she said as she handed me a small box.

Inside the room I undressed. I opened the box and put on a bra and panty girdle all in one spandex garment. Despite the snug fit it wasn’t uncomfortable and it did compress my body into a more feminine form. I stepped out of the changing room and Anne placed breast forms in the cups. After adjusting the straps she took my measurements.

She left and a few minutes later returned with her arms full of clothes. The first item was a short pink petticoat. I put it on while she unzipped a short puff sleeve pink satin top that came down only to just above my belly button. The pink satin micro skirt was next and fit perfectly over the short pink petticoat.

I took off the pink costume and she handed me a blue petticoat somewhat larger than the pink one. I stepped into it as she unzipped a royal blue satin mini-dress. I turned around so she could adjust the hem over the petticoats and then she zipped me up. She made some more notes on her clipboard and I took off the dress and petticoat.

We walked over to the shoe rack where I was fitted for two pairs of high heel shoes, one hot pink and one bright blue. I walked across the room and back to find they were a little bit big. Anne smiled with a knowing look and removed two soft gel pads from a package. I slipped a pair inside the shoes and was surprised to find they not only took up the additional space but made me feel like the floor had been replaced by a mattress.

“That’s all I need for now. I will make some adjustments and you can pick up your stuff a week from today,” she explained.

I returned to the room and changed clothes. When I left Anne was at the front counter talking to another customer. Back home I fixed myself a chicken salad for supper. It wasn’t very filling even after drinking a large glass of cold water before I ate. I resigned myself to the fact that I was going to feel a bit hungry until I got used to eating right.

Despite being busy at school I couldn’t wait for the week to end. I loved the feel of the satin costumes Anne had picked out. I wanted to see how I looked, not only in costume, but with a wig and make up. I continued my regular workouts and eating more sensibly though at times I still felt hungry.

After my second fitting Anne was satisfied with the way everything fit. She placed the clothes in a plastic garment bag and took them up front while I got dressed. There was a box sitting at the register when I got there.

“Put the foundation garment in this box. Wear it underneath your clothes with the breast forms each time you come. There are some other things you will need in here too. Please read the enclosed sheet as well.”

I nodded and took out my checkbook as she rang up the sale.

My purchase was more than I thought it would be but I knew I had to look right for Jo and the club patrons. I took everything home. I hung up the costumes and petticoats in my closet and then pushed them far to one side.

I opened the box and dumped the contents on the bed. In addition to the shoes and inserts there was a pair of weighted breast forms, two bras with matching brief style panties, four pair of seamed stockings, two garter belts, two pairs of elastic garters, and two large satin hair bows all in colors to match my outfits. There was a single pair of long earrings, several packages of press on nails, and two DVDs. One was entitled “Feminine Deportment” and the other was “Club Dance#1.”

There was a printout of everything I had purchased with the price of each item and the total. Another sheet was titled “How to walk in high heels.” Taped to the top package of hose was a note “keep your toenails trimmed!” I put everything back in the box and ate a salad for lunch. I called Jo to let her know I had everything.

“I’ll have you work two pm to six pm as a waitress. I am mailing you a copy of our short menu and bar items. Memorize it. Be here about one thirty pm so we can go over some things. Come dressed and made up. If things work out you will have a locker and cubicle of your own. See you then.”

I hung up and felt a mixture of relief and apprehension. As much as I was looking forward to being able to dress up I was concerned about how the crowd would react to me. I mean they all knew it was a drag joint. All of the “girls” were guys or used to be.

The next week was ponderously slow. Each night after supper I practiced in my high heels and wore the wigs. I paid close attention to the instruction DVDs and practiced gyrating even though I had no pole. I felt extremely confident that I was going to be able to pull this off.

Friday night I soaked in a hot bath and shaved myself. I did not sleep well and skipped breakfast when I got up. I ate a tuna sandwich for lunch and then decided it was time to get ready. I undressed and put on my bathrobe. I took out a portable lighted vanity mirror I had found at a thrift store and set it up on the kitchen table along with my make up case.

Carefully I made myself up and then I applied the pink press on nails. I added the pink sissy bow at the top of my wig and clipped on the long earrings. When I finished I liked the pretty girl I saw staring back at me. It was an image I certainly thought I would never see. For a moment I wondered what my mother and dad would have thought.

I brought the mirror and case back to the bedroom. After slipping the robe off I put the breast forms in the cups of the pink satin bra, slipped my arms thru the straps and closed the front hooks. The pink satin panties with rows of black ruffles in the back were next. Af-

ter the pink garter belt I carefully rolled down each pink stocking and slipped it over my foot, then smoothed it up my leg and attached it to the garter. I checked to be sure the seams were straight and then put a pink elastic garter on each leg. The pink petticoat, top and skirt were last.

Everything fit like glove. The panties and stocking felt good against my smooth, hair free, girly skin. I slipped on the high heels and walked over to the full-length mirror on the back of the bedroom door. "Wow", I thought to myself. I was as ready as I was ever going to be.

I took my wallet and car keys out of my pants and headed for the door. I stopped short and wondered if Mrs. Grayson would see me. Would she come and ask me about "that girl" she saw leaving my apartment? Would she recognize me if she came to the door? I shrugged it off.

In the car I put my wallet in the glove box and locked it. As I pulled out on to the street I wondered what I would do if there was an accident. What would the cops or hospitals' staff say? What if my car broke down? What would the mechanic say? If there was a picture in the paper how would I explain this to my friends?

I shook my head to clear my thoughts. No sense in getting paranoid. I concentrated instead on my driving. I pulled into the parking area at the rear of the club at twenty after one. I sat there for a few minutes. I thought about going home. I thought about my life to date. Then I remembered the words of my father's friend. "Find your self a good racket."

I took a deep breath and stepped out of the car. I walked in the rear door to Jo's office. Lolita was there. Her face brightened into a broad smile as I stood in the doorway.

"Well Eddie, look at you!!" she teased.

"Eddie, at least for today please," I responded.

"Of course Eddie," she giggled as she walked past me.

Jo stood up and handed me a short, filmy, pink apron, which I slipped over my head. The pink oval with white lace edges over my left breast had "Eddie" in black letters. I put my car keys in one of the two front pockets. She motioned me to turn around and I did so.

"Okay, you look fine. Please sit down Eddie.

I took my seat and Jo outlined the way she wanted me to work. She handed me an order pad and I put it in the other pocket of my apron.

"Some customers will stick a tip in the garter others will hand it to you or leave it on the table. There are no shared tips here, everybody hustles their own. God help you if you pick up anything from another table. When you can take the tips in your garters and put them in the smaller pocket, keep the flap closed. Remember to walk effeminately. Keep your elbows in and your arms across your body with your hands dangling at the wrist. Always be coquettish and girly just like you saw in the DVD. Speak in a soft breathy voice. Never see a customer off duty. NEVER! If there is any trouble come and get me, the bouncer, or just sing out and one of us will come. Do you have any questions Eddie?"

"I guess not," I answered

"All right you have the six tables to the right of the bandstand to the front door. Lolita will be your floor buddy for this afternoon. If you have any questions just talk to her."

I nodded as I got up. My heart was pounding as the clicking of my high heels echoed in the hallway as I made my way to my station. This was it. I was going to be a girl for a day, well for four hours anyway.

My station was deserted. Lolita was at the bar and waved me over.

"Jo let's us sit at the bar when things are slow." No alcohol when you are on duty though," she explained.

The bartender set a pink lady in front of me. I thanked her and took a sip. It had a fruity flavor.

"It's a real sissy's drink," said Lolita as both her and the bartender laughed.

We must have chatted for about thirty or forty minutes. Lolita gave me some good makeup tips. I felt comfortable talking with her even though I knew she was a man. I finished my drink as an older man came in and sat at a table. I got up, fluffed my skirt, and walked over to him.

"Hi, my name is Edie, how can I help you?" I said in a dry whispery voice. My nervousness had made the saliva in my mouth dry up.

He gave me his order and I went to the bar. A few minutes later I delivered it to him and received a nice tip. I thanked him and left him alone. My nervousness subsided a little. Two couples came in and I took and delivered their order too. Again I received a very nice tip.

Over the next four hours I became busier and busier. I stopped to use the restroom only once. I folded all the bills and closed the flap on the small pocket. When six o'clock finally came customers were coming in costume. Another waitress took my place.

He was a college student about my age and was also wearing pink. He eyed me up and down as he introduced himself as "Gail". He went right to work and I walked back to see Jo. I punched out and tapped on her half open office door.

She was on the phone. She looked up and waved me inside. I sat across from her as she hung up.

"So how'd everything go?" she asked with a grin.

"Pretty good I guess," I replied as I tapped the tip pocket.

"Okay. Give me your apron. Have you been practicing your dance routines like you saw in the DVD's?"

"Yes I have," I answered.

I took off the apron and removed the car keys and my tips. I laid the apron on her desk.

"Good. Keep doing that along with your regular workouts. I will call you when I need you again."

I left her office and walked out to my car. I smoothed my skirt and sat down. After swinging my legs in I unlocked the glove compartment and put the wad of tips inside, then locked it again. I fastened my seat belt and checked my appearance in the rear view

mirror. I was still the same pretty girl that had stood in front of the full-length mirror in my bedroom earlier that afternoon.

At home I undressed. I removed my wig, earrings, nails and makeup. Eddie looked back at me from the mirror. I was a male again. I counted thru the tip pile and was amazed at the amount of money in the stack before me. The words "find your self a good racket" echoed once again thru the corridors of my mind.

A week went by with no word from Jo. At night I practiced my walk and dance routines. At first it seemed odd not to have to mince in a floppy wristed, effeminate manner. I was going to have to be careful not to act that way at school or out in public when I was dressed as a male.

The next two weeks I worked an eight-hour shift both Saturday and Sunday. I alternated between my pink and blue outfits. The tips were good. I was finding the adjustment between being Eddie the male at school or home and the mincing, coquettish "Edie" at the club to be no problem.

Looking in the mirror at home and seeing two people coming and going when there was actually only one real person was a unique experience. I was making very good money for someone my age and I wanted that to continue.

School had not yet posed any real challenges for me. This year I did not have a class with June, my prom date from last year. I had not seen her at all until one afternoon she was in the hall talking with Brandy, the divorced teacher I had cleaned for. They both smiled as they saw me.

June gave me a wave and held her hand to her face with three fingers clenched. Her thumb and little finger extended while mouthing the words "call me". I simply nodded as I walked by.

That night I debated whether or not I should call her. If I did, what would she want? Had Brandy told her about my afternoon as her French Maid? If I didn't call her would she pester me at school? Would she tell anybody else what I had done? Did she know about my job at the club? I had lots of things to think about but decided to call her anyway.

"Hi Edie!" She exclaimed in a loud voice when she answered the phone. "I had tried to call you after your parents died but your line was disconnected."

"I know. I decided to stick with just a cell phone after I moved into my apartment here," I said.

"I've been busy with my business and school. As you know Dad is gone a lot. He won't be back until late this Sunday night. Would you like to come over Sunday afternoon and watch the game with me?"

"Let me check my schedule and I will call you back, okay?"

"Sure"

I hung up the phone. June was a nice girl and though we had no classes together I wouldn't mind seeing her again. It had been six months since our brief tryst after the prom. It seemed a little too coincidental to want me to call her now.

I phoned Jo and asked about the weekend. She said she would need me Saturday from two to six again. I called June back and told her I would be there Sunday afternoon. I didn't give it another thought the rest of the week.

Saturday I made myself up and decided to wear the blue satin costume, blue high heels and my brown wig. It wasn't until I was almost to the club that I noticed a car behind me appeared to be following me.

At the intersection where I turned off to the club I looked in the rearview mirror and saw June at the wheel of her car. I pulled into the parking lot and she parked her car on the street. I went inside and after getting my apron I punched in. She was sitting at the bar. My station had no customers yet so I walked over towards her, mincing in my usual effeminate manner.

She sort of drank me in as I sat down next to her. She had a big smile on her face as the bartender put my pink lady in front of me.

"Edie, I mean Eddie, I just can't believe my eyes!"

I sipped some of my drink.

"Do you like what you see?" I asked softly.

"Oh yes I do! I mean you are ravishing to say the least. You could give any girl a run for her money."

A customer came in and I went to wait on him. Just as I was about to return to the bar another one came in. June finished her drink and left the club. I finished my shift and the bartender handed me a note that read "call me when you get home" I stuffed the note in my apron and punched out. That night after counting out my tips I called June.

"Hi Edie," she said in a giggly voice when she picked up the phone. "I saw you were getting busy so I left. I couldn't stop thinking about you after seeing you all dolled up. The game starts at noon but I was wondering if you could come a little earlier, like around ten or so. I need a little help with my cleaning. I want the place to look nice when my dad gets back."

"Okay, sure." I replied.

"Great. See you at ten then."

I hung up the phone and took a shower. I checked myself in the mirror and saw my girly face. I would not need many more treatments before my face and neck were totally hair free. I thought about what June had said about help with the cleaning. She had a cleaning business herself, why would she need my help? Then it dawned on me. Her conversation with Brandy might have entailed more than just school talk.

Sunday morning I rang the doorbell and June answered it. She was wearing jeans, a sweatshirt and sneakers. She had a big smile on her face as I entered.

"Come with me Edie, I have everything ready for you," she said.

I followed her into one of the bedrooms. On the bed was the French Maid Costume I had worn at Brandy's. On the floor were the four-inch stiletto heel pumps.

"I hope you don't mind," she began. "After talking with Brandy and seeing you at the club I wanted to have you here all to myself."

"It's okay, I don't mind at all," I replied.

She left the room and I undressed. I put on the lingerie and the costume. At her vanity I put on the black wig and maids' cap. I slipped on the pumps and walked out to where she was cleaning the wall mirror near the front entrance.

Her face brightened when she saw me. I turned around so she could zip me up. She adjusted the hem of the dress over the petticoat but not before pulling them both up and smoothing her hand over the ruffles of my panties as she giggled.

"Oh, almost forgot," she giggled again as she took my hand and led me back to the bedroom.

From one of the drawers she removed a small bag. She took out a red lipstick, removed it from its' plastic package, and handed it to me. I stood in front of the vanity mirror and applied a generous layer to my lips and then a dab to each cheek. When I finished I put the lipstick down and she looked me over.

"You're perfect, now lets get started."

I walked ahead of her to the living room where she handed me a feather duster and I began my cleaning duties while she watched me carefully out of the corner of her eye with a smile on her face. She seemed more intent on observing me than on accomplishing her cleaning tasks.

It was a little over an hour when we had finished cleaning, doing her laundry and making up the beds. She fixed us both a salad for lunch. After we ate I put on a pair of pink latex gloves and did the dishes. June went into the living room and turned on the TV.

As I walked in the living room she looked up.

"Go back to the bedroom and touch up your lipstick," she said with a grin.

I went back to the bedroom and stood in front of the vanity. I thought I looked ok but applied a fresh coat of the red makeup. I pressed my lips together and went back to the living room. She motioned me to sit next to her as the pre game show started.

The game was a boring, low scoring one. Two minutes before halftime she shut the TV off and took my hand. In the bedroom she unzipped me and helped me take off the mini dress. I stepped out of my heels and took off the petticoat. After I took off the stockings and garter belt she stood right in front of me. Without my high heels on she was taller than I was. She put her arms around my waist.

"I just love seeing you en femme, but even more so in a bra, panties, and stockings. You have great legs and look terrific in those fishnets," she cooed as she drew me closer and kissed me.

Her kiss was forceful as I wrapped my arms around her neck. I felt myself getting hard in my panties as we stayed locked in an embrace for long time before she stepped back.

From the vanity drawer she removed a condom from the package. With a girlish giggle she yanked my panties down and put the condom on me. She unhooked the bra's front hooks and tossed it aside. We kissed again and she led me over to the bed.

Afterward as I lay close to her she ran her hand over my smooth face. Propping her head up with one hand she looked deep into my eyes.

"Are you thinking about becoming a girl?" she asked. "I'll bet hormones would make your skin even more feminine. You would look great with breasts too, but you could lose your erection."

"No. Not really. I have never felt an attraction to a man. I know I am not gay either," I responded.

"You certainly aren't!" she said as she giggled again. You are so totally feminine though. I mean that really turns me on. Most boys I know are aggressive, pushy, and have no interest in anything except sex. You take great pride in your appearance as either a boy or a girl. I love your feminine side more than your masculine side. No offense of course, I mean you do have a small penis, but I feel totally satisfied. It's like being next to a girl with the benefits of being with a boy too."

She giggled and then kissed me hard again. Later as I sat at the vanity and removed the lipstick from my face she put the maid costume, lingerie, shoes and wig in a large box.

"I have to get this back to Brandy. She misses you. She and her friends were thrilled at your service skills at the party. You do make a perfect serving as well as cleaning maid. Since you have given up your cleaning business and moved she hasn't gotten anybody else."

I got dressed and drove home. Her question about becoming a girl stuck in my head. I showered that night and once again looked at my body in the full-length mirror. I thought about what my life would be like if I were a girl, or maybe just lived like one.

I didn't see June or Brandy for several weeks. As the holidays drew near I got more work at the club. I added a gold sleeveless lame' sheath, a pair of black leather stiletto pumps and matching mid length gloves to my wardrobe. In addition I bought a black bra, panties with pink ruffles, a black garter belt and two pair of seamed sheer hose. I had my own locker and cubicle now, which made things easier.

The first night I wore my new outfit Lolita took one look and let out a "Zowie!" exclamation. When I sat down next to her at the bar the very short hem of the dress rode up revealing my garters. As I tugged girlishly at the hem of the dress Lolita and a new girl Nicki, broke into giggles.

"Welcome to a girl's world," said Lolita with a smirk.

Later Brandy and June showed up at the club. They waved at Lolita and then took a seat at a table in my section. Both women insisted I twirl around once for their inspection before giving me their orders. When I stopped at the bar to deliver their order to the bartender Lolita was nearby.

"Haven't served Brandy for awhile?" she cooed. "You made sure her Fourth of July party was not drag!"

"How you know Brandy?" I asked.

Lolita looked at me quizzically. "Oh my goodness, you mean you don't know?"

"Know what?"

“Brandy used to work here. Back then of course he was Brandon. After his transition he went back to teaching of course. I don’t think the school board knew he worked here to earn money for his surgery but they couldn’t fire him after transitioning of course without risking a lot of publicity and a possible lawsuit.”

The bartender brought the drinks and I put them on a tray. I looked at Brandy and shook my head.

“You can’t believe she was once a he can you?” she asked.

“No I can’t,” I replied and headed for their table.

I served the drinks but did not say anything to Brandy. I left to wait on more customers. They reordered twice and then left the club. I had a good evening and went home. I lay awake that night and thought about Brandy. I mean it was one thing to dress up and play act like a girl but to go thru something like that must have been quite a trip. I knew that was not for me but I still had trouble getting to sleep.

Thanksgiving was difficult. It was the first one without my parents. I ate out at a local restaurant. When I got home the apartment seemed so small and quiet. For the first time since their death I felt really alone. I watched some football and then drank the last of the red wine. I went to bed early as I would be working Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday night at the club and I didn’t want to appear “puffy”. Alcohol will do that to you, more so with women than men.

The month of December was a busy one. Besides working at the club Judy got me a job at the mall as one of Santa’s elves. Along with a half dozen others we had a four-hour shift at the mall’s center court.

The little kids were very cute sitting on Santa’s lap as they were photographed with the elves standing in the background. There were a few rowdy ones but for the most part I enjoyed this gig very much.

I bought a red velvet puff sleeve mini dress with matching suede stiletto pumps, red satin lingerie, and sheer stockings. The red velvet sissy bow looked good at the top my new black shoulder length wig. I added some petroleum jelly to my fire engine red lipstick for a glossy look to match my red press on nails. My tips that night indicated I had made a perfect choice.

On Christmas Eve two butch girls had a little too much of the eggnog special. They had been a little bit loud when the dancers came on but that was not at all unusual. When I served the next round one of drinks one of them pulled up the hem of my dress and placed her hand on the front of my panties.

“Not this one, wrong plumbing!” she hollered.

I pushed her hand away as the crowd turned to look. The bouncer went over and asked them to leave as I headed for the bar. They both gulped their drinks and left. I was a bit scared but otherwise ok. The bouncer came back and handed me a wad of bills.

“They said they are sorry and I told them not to return unless they can behave,” he said.

I nodded and took the wad of bills from him. That night when I counted out my tips I found that while I was none the worse for wear and tear the women had been generous. In fact throughout the holidays I had made very good tips.

I wasn't sure what I was going to be doing after high school but I had a very nice bank account as well as a growing stash in a plastic container in the freezer. Between the money from my parent's estate and my job I felt I was ready for anything despite the declining economy.

Christmas was on a Monday and once again I was alone so I ate out. Jo called me that night. The singer for the New Years Eve bash had cancelled out and she wanted to know if I was available. I said ok and she asked me to come in Tuesday afternoon.

When I arrived I went straight to Jo's office. She handed me some papers with the song lyrics on them. They were what used to be called "torch" songs. The romantic lyrics of these songs would be sung against the background of soft orchestra music. Here at the club of course it would be done by just a few local musicians.

"Go out to the piano and run thru these eight songs with George," instructed Jo. "See Anne tomorrow morning for an appropriate outfit to wear."

I went thru the eight songs in about forty minutes. When I finished Jo came out and said I would do four in the first set at eight o'clock and four more at eleven thirty. At midnight of course we would all be singing Old Lang Syne. I took the sheets home with me and began memorizing each song.

The next morning I was at Anne's costume and wig shop at nine wearing my foundation garment under my male clothing. We walked to a large rack of dresses near the back of the store. She held up several gowns from the dress rack against me. I decided on a black taffeta, mid length, dress. It would go nicely with my new black wig, leather pumps and elbow length gloves.

I put it on and Anne made a couple of notes on her clipboard. She told me I could pick it up Friday night. I took off the dress and put on my clothes. As I left there were two women at the front counter. When I passed by them on the way to the door they began giggling.

I worked Friday night after picking up my gown. It had fit perfectly of course. Anne and her staff did high quality work and the garments were of superior quality as well. Those two reasons meant no squabbling about the price. You get what you pay for like someone once said.

Sunday I slept late. After breakfast I read the paper. Time seemed to drag. I had never sung anything before, much less in public. Jo was confident I was going to do fine so I never questioned her judgment.

I skipped supper. Two many butterflies were having a convention in my stomach. I soaked in the tub and shaved myself smooth. I dressed and drove to the club.

In my cubicle I undressed. After putting on my black lingerie and sheer stockings I sat in front of the mirror and applied my makeup. I did my eyes first. I used a darker shade of rouge and lipstick to match my dark red press on nails. I put on my black wig but decided not to use a bow or wear my long gloves.

I removed the dress from the garment bag and stood in front of the mirror holding the dress in front of me. It looked very good. After unzipping it I put it on and pulled the zipper up with a shoestring on a large paper clip. A trick Anne had taught me at my first fitting.

The dress was a snug fit above the waist and then flared out with layers of taffeta down to the hem. I especially liked the large black bow in the back at the base of the zipper. I fluffed the skirt of the dress a little with both hands and turned around once, then again. I liked the way I looked as well as the swing of my shoulder length wig.

I clipped a pair of teardrop pearl earrings to my earlobes. A single strand pearl necklace and bracelet were last. Slipping on my black leather stiletto pumps I looked at my reflection in the full-length mirror. I still found it hard to believe I was really I guy. I had hopes the audience would feel the same way too.

When I walked on the club floor Lolita and Nicki looked at me in surprise.

"Do I look ok?" I asked.

"Smashing," answered Lolita as Nicki nodded approvingly.

Promptly at eight pm the small band played a chord. Jo, resplendent in her tuxedo, stood at the mike.

"Ladies and Gentlemen to make our New Year's Eve celebration more enjoyable and memorable too I am pleased to introduce a new talent. Please welcome Edie!"

I walked past Jo to the mike at center stage as the band played an intro. I took a deep breath and began.

There is always some conversation when a performer is on, even in some of the more upscale clubs, but within a minute of my opening verse the whole place was not just quiet, it was dead quiet.



In a way I guess I surprised even myself. When I finished the fourth song I stepped back and bowed slightly, then walked off stage to thunderous applause. Jo waved me back and I took another bow.

Afterwards I walked back to Jo's office as several dancers made their way to the stage and began their routine. The taffeta dress felt good against my nylon-encased legs. I liked the whisper of the soft material as I walked and then sat down opposite her. She was smiling as I crossed my legs.

"That was terrific Edie. You sounded like a professional from the get-go. Go back to the dressing room and make yourself comfortable until eleven thirty,"

I got up and went across the hall. The dressing room had four chairs in front of four lighted mirrors on each side of a long table. There were lockers on one side and a sofa and several stuffed chairs on the other. The restroom was in the back.

I sat down in one of the chairs and picked up the remote. I watched a mystery and then the news, weather and sports. Lolita and Nicki came in briefly to tell me what a good job I had done.

Promptly at eleven thirty I was introduced again and I sang the other four songs. When I finished the applause was even louder this time. Midnight came and we all toasted each other. Jo came in just after one with a wad of bills in one hand.

"Your audience was very appreciative," she smiled as she handed me the money.

I stuffed it in my coat pocket and slipped it on. Walking out to my car in the cold crisp January air I felt a mixture of excitement and fear. I knew the audience had liked me, but I wondered just how long this so called "racket" of mine was going to last. I mean nothing lasts forever. The money was coming in faster than I had needs to spend it on. Other than my small living expenses I had spent money on just my make up, wigs, and costumes. My savings was getting more substantial all the time.

At home I stood in front of the mirror again. I held my arms across the front of my body and let my hands dangle at the wrist. I placed both hands behind me and smoothed the dress out. Then I turned around and looked over my shoulder at the large bow at the base of the zipper and smiled.

I looked so pretty, so feminine. I wanted to parade in front of the whole world. I wondered if the other mimics ever felt that way. I turned around and placed my hands under my bust line. June's words about whether or not I wanted to be a girl came back to me. How hormones would make my skin look even better but make me impotent. I doubted if real breasts would make me look any different but I wondered how they would feel against the satin cups of my bra.

I kicked off my high heel pumps and then unzipped the dress. After I hung it up in my closet I went back to the mirror. June said she liked me in just my lingerie and I did too. As I stood there looking at myself I thought about living and working 24/7 as a female. Changing back and forth had not been a problem so far. It just seemed like a shame to be all dressed up to be one thing only to have to change into someone else again.

I sat down in front of my small mirror at the kitchen table and took off my makeup, then my jewelry. I had decided to buy good pearls instead of the cheap stuff. I stared at myself for a minute and then took the wig off too.

Back in the bedroom I took off my lingerie and put on a new pink chiffon nightgown that I had purchased just after Christmas. I had been sleeping in my white cotton briefs but after slipping on the pink tricot panties I knew I wouldn't be doing that again. The pink chiffon top felt equally as good. I brushed my teeth and got into bed. Sleep came right away and I dreamed of a life in feminine apparel.

School began again. This would be my last semester. Graduation was tentatively scheduled for May twenty first. My career counselor was upset because I still hadn't applied to any schools. It had been my last meeting with her. I simply told her I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and that I would be sticking with the temp agency and my business for the time being.

I smiled as I thought about what she would think if she could have seen me at the club or if she found out how much money I made compared to what a high school counselor with a Master's degree was paid. I felt like laughing out loud, but I knew she would not find it so funny.

I began singing every other weekend, both Friday and Saturday night. It was better than waiting tables that was for sure. For Valentines I bought a pink satin sheath. I wore it with my pink heels, blonde wig, and pink sissy bow. I bought a pair of pink over the elbow gloves too.

I had rehearsed a little with the dancers. I was packing them in as a singer so I didn't think too much about that end of it. I did sub for one of the girls on St. Patrick's Day afternoon. We all wore green satin hot pants, tops, and hair bows. The Mary Jane style dance shoes were black. The beer was dyed green of course, as were most of the mixed drinks as well. I enjoyed doing it but of course I preferred to sing.

I stopped in the hallway to talk to June one Friday after school. I was thinking about asking her to the Senior Prom. Brandy walked up to her as I left and I overheard her tell June:

"If you're going to the Senior Prom find out which one of you is going to wear the dress and heels!"

Their laughter echoed in the empty hall way as I descended the stairway. Later that night when I had finished my homework I closed my eyes and saw myself in a prom dress with June in a tuxedo, bowtie and a red cummerbund. Her short hair was pulled back and she was holding me firmly as we danced closely around the floor with her in the lead.

April showers bring May flowers. The warmth of April was most welcome after a chilly March. March had come in like a lamb but roared out like a lion. I was now singing two weekends a month at the club as well as waiting tables the other two weekends. I decided to take my singing wardrobe to the club and leave it there with my waitress costumes.

June and I had a couple of dinner-movie dates. The cinema-plex was located at one end of the mall. After we ate dinner at a nearby restaurant we would go to the boutiques and

the women's department of the big anchor stores. By all outward appearances we were a young man accompanying his girlfriend while she shopped.

In actuality of course she was picking out things she thought would look good on me. We started in the lingerie department. We made our way thru the clothing and shoe departments. She would gleefully point out the dresses and heels she would like to see me in.

We would always stop at the cosmetic kiosk on the way out. She would let me smell a couple of the perfume sampler bottles as well as point out how good I would look in the new spring shades of blusher and lipstick. The salesclerks were none the wiser of course.

After our date in late April I asked her to the Senior Prom. She said yes but with two conditions. The first was that I accompany her to a concert at the university. The other was that I let her dress me for the occasion. I had no doubts about what my wardrobe would consist of but when I expressed concern about being out in public she was miffed.

"You mince and prance around at the club all the time. What's so different about sitting in a concert hall with me? It's not like someone will recognize you," she pouted.

"Well okay," I relented.

"That's my girl!" she squealed. "I found the perfect dress and accessories for you. I will have Anne make sure it fits you to a "T". You will be the only one they will be looking at when we walk in that's for sure!"

I left her house and thought about whether or not I should have agreed to this. None of the patrons at the club knew who I really was. What if someone at the concert recognized me? I still had about four weeks of school left and I certainly didn't want that to be the living hell it could be if I were "outed" so to speak.

I worked the next weekend waiting on tables. I had bought a bright yellow satin mini dress with matching heels and sissy bow to celebrate the warm spring weather. The coming days of sunshine would replace the dark dreary days of winter.

The concert, a benefit for AIDS, was the next weekend which I had off though I still worked Friday night. It was scheduled for two pm Saturday afternoon so June told me to come to her place about noon. She was smiling brightly when she opened the door. She fixed us a tuna salad for lunch. Afterwards she handed me a pink ruffled apron and a pair of pink latex gloves.

"Please do up the dishes while I get dressed," she asked.

I slipped on the apron and gloves and got to work. When I finished I left the apron and gloves on the kitchen table. I had just turned on the TV when she emerged from her bedroom. She had on a black pantsuit, plain white dress shirt with a bowtie and highly polished black block heel boots.

"Too butch?" she asked with a giggle.

"No you look fine," I answered.

"Follow me and we will get you ready," she giggled again

In the bedroom I undressed quickly and set my clothes on the chair. She handed me a pair of pink panties and then the garter belt. I put them on and then a pair of pink seamed stockings. The pink bra was last and after inserting my breast forms she adjusted the straps.

"Please let me do your makeup" she asked.

I nodded and took my seat in front of her vanity. She made up my eyes and then applied pink blusher and a thick layer of bright pink lipstick. My long earrings were last and then she fitted the blonde wig on my head. I put on a pair of pink four-inch heel open toed sandals and stood up.

I walked over with her to the closet. She removed a pink petti-slip and a gorgeous pink chiffon gown. She helped me put on the petti-slip and adjusted the straps. After I slipped the dress over my head she adjusted the hem of the dress over the petti-slip. My pink over the elbow gloves completed my ensemble. Taking several steps back she looked me over.

"God you make one gorgeous girl Edie," she said with a grin.

From the vanity she placed the makeup items in a small pink purse on a gold chain. She slipped the chain over my left shoulder and we walked to the door. She opened the door for me and we walked to the driveway.

As she opened the car door I grabbed a fistful of gown and petticoats, swung my butt in and sat down. I swung my legs in and made sure no part of the gown was going to get caught in the door. June was smiling broadly when she got in on the drivers side.

"You did that perfectly, she cooed. "Just like a girl would."

She started the car and then backed out of the driveway. I had one moment of panic when we had a close call at an intersection. I didn't want to have to explain to the hospital staff and school friends how I wound up dressed like this.

We arrived at the concert hall and June helped me out of the car. I took her arm with my right hand and picked up my skirts with the other. She handed her tickets over at the door and we went inside. I had just smoothed my dress and sat down when the woman in front of me turned around. It was Brandy.

"Well hello Edie! Fancy seeing you here. My don't you look sweet." She turned around as the orchestra started their intro.

I had no knowledge of classical music what so ever. I didn't even like the rock music like most of my friends did. At home we always had soft music playing in the background and I had grown to like it. While I sat still and listened to the music I wondered why some of the other women around me were looking me over. Did everyone around me know I was a guy?

At intermission I stood at the mirror in the ladies room and applied fresh lipstick. June was waiting for me near the door when I finished.

"Did you tell anyone about me?" I asked her.

"No why do you ask that?" she answered.

"Well a number of women were watching me as I walked in and then several of them appeared to be looking me over as we sat there listening to the music."

June laughed as she opened the rest room door for me.

"They are probably lesbians who are jealous of my date!" she laughed. "Now come on the rest of the concert is about to start."

We went back to our seats and sat down. When the concert ended June took me to a fine restaurant for supper. I was careful to eat and drink in a lady like fashion. June was suitably impressed and as we drove home afterwards complimented me on my feminine deportment and manners.

Back at her house she took some pictures of me before helping me out of my gown and pettiskirt. Leave your gloves, lingerie and heels on while I get out of this tuxedo," she ordered

When she hung the tux and shirt in the closet she pulled off her boots. She was wearing white boxers, a tee shirt, and black socks. Without her boots she was a bit shorter than I was.

"You look good enough to eat," she commented as she came towards me.

She kissed me hard. I wrapped my gloved arms around her neck as she unhooked my bra. A short time later her male underwear and my lingerie were in a pile on the floor. I liked being snuggled in her arms. She didn't say anything for a while and I didn't either.

Turning on her side she traced her fingers around the lines the bra cup had made in my chest. Looking straight into my eyes she kissed me lightly.

"I would love to see you with breasts," she said. "Everything else about you is so girly and feminine. Your lips are perfect even without the lipstick, your eyebrows could use a little work, and your beard is just about non-existent now. The electrolysis tech was very good which makes the pink blusher on your cheeks look even better. I'll bet those hormones would make an even bigger difference."

"I had my last appointment several nights ago though I have to go back for occasional re-growth," I replied. "I don't want to mess with hormones since I don't want to be a girl even if they did make me look better. I use lots of lotion and shower or bathe frequently to keep my skin moist."

"You should have your ears pierced too. A lot of men are having it done so it really isn't just a girl thing anymore and I think it would add to your feminine persona whether you would be singing or not."

"I thought about it because Anne mentioned it. Maybe after school is out I'll have that done along with having the electrolysis tech shape my eyebrows at my first touch up session."

She leaned in and kissed me. We made love again. It was ten thirty when I got up and went into the bathroom to remove my condom and pee. June turned the shower on. I went back and sat at the vanity to remove my make up. I joined her a few minutes later. We lathered ourselves up and rinsed off giggling like a couple of schoolgirls. After drying myself off I got dressed and put my stuff in a box.

June sat at the vanity with her hair wrapped in a towel applying cream to her face. I kissed her good by and went home. Before going to bed that night I looked at myself in the mirror again. I WAS very girly and feminine.

Just what those hormone treatments would do I wasn't sure. There was an ongoing controversy about HRT in women and I was very hesitant to go down that path, especially since I wasn't considering changing my sex.

I slept soundly that night. I dreamed June was waltzing me around a huge ballroom with a larger gathering of people watching us. Waking up the next morning was an end to a dream that I didn't want to end. I sat down to breakfast and thought again about living en femme 24/7 after graduation.

I had cut back my hours at the club because final exams were coming up and I wanted to spend more time studying. The Senior Prom was very nice. June wore a pretty beige dress. She kept razzing me about how I would look in some of the dresses the other girls were wearing.

"Actually I wouldn't mind seeing you in all of them," she giggled as we looked around the gym.

I passed my finals and skipped the graduation ceremony. I needed to work more than I needed the ceremony. Judy called and I got a Saturday & Sunday gig at the mall. It was a new store for little kids and I wore a pink bunny suit. A good time was had by all.

I danced in several routines over the Fourth of July weekend. There were six of us in red, white, and blue satin with multi-colored top hats and black Mary Jane dancing shoes. The routines were brief but physically demanding. I was glad I had kept myself in terrific shape.

Among the tips that weekend was a business card. It read "Bayside Productions" with an address in San Francisco. The name on the card was Brian Falstaff. Initially I had been warned about the business cards by Jo.

Many were people looking for a quick lay or had promises of making a lot of money with just one screen test, etc. Usually I tossed them in the garbage. Above the name was a human face with half of it male and the other half female.

This intrigued me so I set it aside and decided to call Judy on Monday to see if she had ever heard of them. When I called her I got her voicemail. Several hours later she called back and told me they were a small production company that to date had only made adult films specializing in the TV-TS genre. Apparently they had a full-length screenplay and wanted to interview prospective actors for a role. I asked Judy to set up an appointment. She said she would call them and get back to me.

Movies were something I had never even thought about. But then I hadn't thought about singing either until Jo asked me to try it. I didn't want any part of an adult film but if this one was legit it certainly wouldn't hurt to look into it. Maybe it would lead to an even better "racket" than the one I had.

My phone rang the next morning at nine am.

"Brian Falstaff will be here a week from Thursday at ten. The movie is about a private detective who goes under cover for the FBI to investigate drug dealing in adult clubs in the

San Francisco area. It is going to be called "Chameleon". He wants someone who can change appearances easily from male to female and back again. There is no pornography at all."

"If you get the part you will spend four to six weeks in the San Francisco Bay area. I will see to it that your contract specifies they will pay for all travel and living expenses while you are out there. He also faxed me a couple of pages of script, which should be in your mail tomorrow. Your characters name is Eddie Stanton and his feminine persona is Edie. What are the odds of that huh?"

"When you come in bring your pink costume, blonde wig and your makeup. He wants to interview you first as a male and then in your feminine apparel. This appears to be a very good opportunity for you and though we haven't discussed specifics I'm quite certain it will be financially beneficial for both of us."

"Thanks. I will see you on Thursday."

I hung up the phone. I immediately felt pangs of uncertainty. If I got the part I would have to be gone about two months. Never the less the money would be much better than my club wages and tips which were not all that bad anyway. It would also be good for my actor's resume since it would be my first real acting role. One I was confident I could pull off, just like I had everything else.

It was one helluva slow week. It seemed as if there were never enough things to keep me occupied. I even took in a couple of movies, which I normally wouldn't do.

I had trouble getting to sleep Wednesday night and didn't doze off until after two am. I had set my alarm for seven but when it went off I reset it for eight thirty and went back to sleep.

When I did get up I shaved my face again, having done my body the night before when I bathed. I wore jeans, a polo shirt and my sneakers. It was a quarter of ten when I walked into Judy's office and was introduced to Brian Falstaff. I had left the script pages home as I knew them forwards and backwards by this time. We exchanged pleasantries and I sat down. He looked over the pictures Judy had scanned and emailed him.

"You certainly have the physique and aesthetics for the job," he said with a smile. "I see except for an occasionally assignment you have no previous acting experience in movies or television?"

"No. I was going to school, running a small business, and working at the club. I was juggling too many things to concentrate on acting full time."

"I understand. Let's begin by having you go over the first two pages of script. In this scene you are a male. I will read the part of the other character in the scene."

I started to recite my lines verbatim. We completed the two pages of dialogue and he folded them back.

"Take a few minutes to change and then we will do the last two."

I got up and took my stuff into the restroom at the rear of Judy's office. When I returned I minced to my seat and we began again. When we were done he smiled up at me.

"One last thing, Edie, I need to hear you sing."

I got up from my chair and turned it around so the back was against Judy's desk. I stepped up on the seat and then up on Judy's desk. I sashayed girlishly over to the edge of desk and stopped in front of him. I sang the first half of the Platters great hit "Only You."

When I finished I picked up my skirts and curtsayed politely. I walked back to my chair, stepped down on the seat and then back down to the floor. I turned the chair around and sat down. After crossing my legs girlishly I flipped the shoulder length hair of my blonde wig with one hand and smiled at him.

"That was wonderful Edie. I have several other appointments here and in Chicago. It was a pleasure meeting both of you."

He stood up and I gave him a limp girly handshake. After he shook Judy's hand he left the office. I went back into the restroom and became Eddie once again. When I walked out I looked a Judy.

"Tell me honestly what do you think?" I asked.

"I think you nailed it cold," she said matter-of-factly. "Let's keep our fingers and our legs crossed."

I went home. I still had mixed feelings about this. It could very well be a ticket to the big time. Then again I could be at the club for a long time to come too. This "racket" had been good to me so far and even if it meant a couple of more years it was better than a lot of things I could think of.

Two weeks later I still had not heard anything from Judy. I didn't call her because I knew she wouldn't call Brian. Things like this just have to work themselves out.

I wouldn't be the first one to be kept in suspense by a filmmaker and then at the last minute have to be at a certain place and time ready for scene one, take one on short notice.

My work at the club continued. I saw Bobbi to replenish my supplies of makeup. I was due for a monthly touch up from Bertha too. My life was going swimmingly and I was steadily building up a healthy savings account. Except for about two weeks worth of tips that had gone into new tires and a battery for my car I was going to have a very nice retirement at the rate I was going.

Judy called me at the club on a Saturday afternoon. It was Labor Day Weekend and we were getting very busy even though it was early afternoon. I was waiting tables and I would be singing Sunday night.

"Stop by my office first thing Monday morning. I have some great news," she said.

I hung up the phone and couldn't conceal my grin as Lolita stopped at the bar.

"My, what good news was that all about," she asked.

"Oh, just another business deal," I replied and walked away.

The weekend went fast as we were plenty busy. Sunday night I wore a new dress. It was a strapless pink satin sheath with a huge bow at the base of the zipper. In the dimly lit club with my pink over the elbow gloves, pink spike heels and the large pink sissy bow in my hair I really lit up the place.

I began with "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend" while sashaying about like Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and then closed with "I Enjoy Being a Girl" while standing still at the mike but throwing in an occasional girlish wiggle. I blew kisses to the audience before I walked off to a standing ovation. My tips that night were almost double what I usually got.

Monday morning I parked next to Judy's car in the deserted parking lot. I walked inside and sat down opposite her. She had a big grin on her face.

"How does fifty grand for a month and half's work plus expenses sound to you?" she asked.

"Where do I sign?" I answered and grinned back at her.

"First things first," she began. "This came by FEDEX on Saturday. Here is the script. They want to start shooting next month. You will be notified of the exact date in a week or two. They will send you a plane ticket. You will have the use of the same car you will be driving in the movie. Your motel is paid for but save your meal and other expense receipts for future re-imbursement. Pack your breast forms and only the male clothing and personal items you will need for about a month and a half. They will provide costumes, a makeup artist and wigs. Take about four hundred dollars in cash as you won't be getting paid until the movie wraps up. I suggest you study your lines like your life depends on it. I don't mean your physical life of course, just the acting part. Do you have any questions?"

I shook my head no.

"Good. Now here are the contracts."

Judy went over the fine print and I signed them. When I walked out the door I felt a mixture of elation and apprehension. There was a lot riding on this. This was a very big opportunity, my once in a lifetime shot at a "good racket" my father's friend had talked about. I was going to have to put everything I had into it. For me it was not just another gig. For me this was all or nothing.

I went home and put the script on the table. I did a load of laundry and then had lunch. I called Bertha and got an afternoon appointment for a touch up and to have her shape my eyebrows. As an after thought I stopped by the mall and had my ears pierced too.

That night I opened the envelope and began reading the script. The first page was a description of my character and then a synopsis of the story. I began reading and before I knew it I was finished. It was an excellent story. Fast paced, true to life, and not at all outrageous or pretentious in any way. It would be easy getting into this character because he was so much like me. I began memorizing my lines.

Several more weeks went by. I had the script well memorized and felt a close association with my character. I couldn't wait to get started. I had never done anything like this before but I was fully confident I would be good in the role. I was sure it would be a "snap".

Judy called me on a Friday. It was the end of the month. She had my ticket and would pick me up and take me to the airport the following Sunday. Brian would pick me up and take me to a preliminary meeting and then to my motel. I would be given a shooting

schedule and a map of the area. I was ecstatic. I notified Jo that I had a west coast gig and I would be gone for about two months.

Time flies when you are having fun. I was having great fun but the week dragged on mercilessly. I got more and more anxious as my date of departure got closer and closer. I ate very little the last couple of days as the butterfly convention returned to my stomach. The upside of that of course was that I lost several more pounds.

Sunday morning I packed my old suitcase. I had two hundred dollars in cash in my pants pocket. Another two hundred more was in a white envelope in my suit coat pocket and the rest was in my wallet. The drive to the airport was uneventful. After a predictably long wait to get thru security my flight took off only ten minutes late.

When I got off the plane Brian was there to meet me. I got my suitcase and we walked out to the car. It was a Ford Mustang. To call the color hot pink was a mistake. This shade of bright pink had left hot pink in the dust a long time ago. I got in and fastened my seat belt. The interior was the softest white leather I had ever sat in. Even with an automatic transmission this thing could lay rubber.

At my motel he went over the shooting schedule and gave me a map of the area. A staff member picked him up and he gave me the keys. That night as I showered I thought about what lay ahead. I felt I was thoroughly prepared but went over the script again anyway. I bought a bottle of wine and had two glasses before going to bed. I slept well and was up before the wake up call came.

The month went by very quickly. I may have surprised the crew and Brian by how well prepared I was. There were three action scenes but only one of those was really strenuous. I managed to do it in one take. The other two required two and three takes respectively. Two of those re-takes were due to equipment problems.

The cast and crew were marvelous. The make up artist and wardrobe lady kept me looking quite glamorous if I do say so myself. I enjoyed the work and we were scheduled to wrap things up after a month and three days of shooting. This was by my estimation two weeks ahead of schedule.

After the last take was in the can I drove back to the motel. There was a cast party the next weekend but I declined. I wanted to get back home. I had left my keys with Judy. She was going to check on things in my apartment while I was gone and pick up my mail.

I had prepaid the rent and the utilities when I had paid the last month's bill just in case I was going to be gone longer than I thought. I made copies of my expenses and gave Brian the originals as well as a carbon of the plane ticket. He took me to the airport and we shook hands at the entrance.

"It was good working with you Eddie. Good luck to you."

"Thank you," I replied and walked inside the terminal.

The flight was shorter than the one going out there. It was the same distance but now I was going home. Judy met me at the airport and dropped me off at my apartment. I went straight to the bedroom and undressed. I didn't bother unpacking. I took a hot bath and shaved myself. The pink nightgown never felt so good. In my dreams I was in one of those fabulous gowns singing a movie theme song at the Academy Awards.

I was back waiting tables for a while. Jo said I would be singing Halloween night and that I should go see Anne for something special for the occasion. My costume was "special" all right but not in the way I had in mind. Anne told me not to open the box until I got dressed in my cubicle that night.

When I walked in the club Jo suddenly disappeared into her office and Lolita grinned and walked quickly out to the bar. This puzzled me until I got in my cubicle and opened the box.



I put on the purple satin bra and panty set. The purple garter belt held up my fishnet stockings. The puff sleeve top and micro skirt was purple taffeta. A small black mini-petticoat flared out the micro skirt, which barely covered my garter tops. After I slipped a purple elastic garter on each leg I put on a pair of black knee high patent leather four-inch spike heel boots. They were a little hard to get on but I managed to get them zipped up.

I applied purple eye shadow, black eyeliner, and an outrageously long pair of false eyelashes. On my cheeks I spread dark red rouge, and then applied purple lipstick to match the purple press on nails to complete the make up scheme. Long earrings and a big purple satin sissy bow atop my black wig complimented the costume.

The last two items in the box were a purple clutch purse and a small spray bottle of perfume. When I took the cap off the perfume bottle it had a very sweet,

almost sick sweet, as in really CHEAP scent to it so of course I had to douse myself liberally with it.

As soon as I walked out on the club floor there was a rush of people to come and see me. I couldn't figure out what was going on until Jo came out of her office laughing. There were hoots, hollers and catcalls as I made my way to the bar. Lolita was there and she grinned as I sat down next to her.

"Relax Edie. This is Jo's way of playing a little joke on the new girl. He does it every year. Once we found out you had spent time in "Hollywood" so to speak we thought it would an appropriate costume for you to wear on Halloween. I must say you do make one fine looking hooker."

I turned to see Jo and two other mimics laughing in the hallway. Okay, I thought well this probably won't be the first time the joke will be on me. I got off the bar stool and turned to them. With one hand I pulled up my micro skirt to reveal my purple satin panties, and then I curtsied while at the same time bringing up my other hand with a one-finger salute. I then turned around, sat back down on the barstool, crossing my legs as I did so. I began sip my pink lady with my head held slightly up in a miffed fashion until the customers began showing up.

Brandy and June showed up around eleven. They were both dressed as black cats and gave me a real hard time about my hooker outfit. Between them and the staff the teasing never seemed to end.

The night had been a great one for tips. The elastic garters were stuffed and several times I added money to the tip pocket of my apron. The pocket was bulging considerably by the time I was finished. I drove home that night and tossed the wad on the end table.

I got undressed and into the shower right away. Afterwards I used some after-shave lotion liberally to kill the awful stench of that cheap perfume. The laughter of Jo and the girls still rang in my ears. Not that it mattered very much as I had been financially compensated for being the object of their practical jokes.

A month went by. I had received my expense check but there was no word as to the release date of the movie. The Thanksgiving holidays approached once again. Judy called me and said the movie had a tentative release date of December first. The day after Thanksgiving I got my check from Brian's company. I was glad to get the money, not that I needed it, but it closed another chapter of my life so to speak. What ever happened I had been paid for everything I had done.

It was another month before Chameleon finally made it to the Twin Cities theatres. I went with Brandy, June, Lolita and some of the girls from the club. The audience seemed to like it but the critics were not too impressed though one national critic said "kudos to new comer Eddie Benson for his dual role".

I kept on singing and waiting tables. The money was good. I bought a bright red satin mini skirt and top for Valentines Day. Combined with red patent leather knee high spike heel boots, red nails and lipstick, and of course a large red satin sissy bow in my wig I danced up a storm in my cage suspended over the bar in the vintage go-go themed celebration.

The end of the month brought another gig as a dancing bear when a new pet store opened in the mall. There were five others, all dressed as animals too. We handed out candy to the kids that had come with their parents to look at the selection of fish, birds, puppies and kittens.

March brought some warmer weather. I saw Bobbi to replenish my makeup and Bertha for a touch up. I liked what she had done to shape my eyebrows. You would have to look real close to see the feminine line. Until I was in costume and darkened them with an eye-brow pencil they were hardly noticeable.

I bought another nightgown, this time a royal blue peignoir. I no longer wore my briefs to bed preferring the soft panties of a baby doll or peignoir. I had also purchased a pink satin chemise. My cotton sheets had been replaced with pink satin ones. The combination of the smooth bedding, my hair free girly skin and those feminine nightgowns made going to bed so much more enjoyable. I slept so much better too. I guess overall I had become a much more relaxed person.

Several times a month when her dad was gone I would spend the night at June's place. Now she insisted I come over en femme and said she wouldn't let me in if I wasn't. At the door I had to lift my skirts to show her I was wearing panties. Once inside, as soon as I sat down, I had to apply fresh lipstick in front of her. She said she was turned on by me doing such girly things.

We would share a perfumed bubble bath before putting on our nightgowns. I applied nail polish to her toes and fingernails. She wanted to do mine but I had to maintain a male appearance half of the time so I couldn't. My press on nails had to suffice.

She was always the aggressor in our lovemaking. She had become a take-charge lover. I was only too happy to be the submissive one. It was like heaven when our two soft, hair free bodies in feminine nightgowns were lying against one another.

May rolled around with its' warm sunshine. I was no longer in school with a prom to go to so June insisted I buy a Navy blue taffeta cocktail dress she had seen in a department store sale advertisement. The price with the matching pumps, gloves and purse was more than I wanted to spend but it made her happy. As you might expect the evening was an enjoyable one from the start. It ended of course with that expensive dress and my lingerie on the bedroom floor.

I was spending more time at the club. I sang most Friday and Saturday nights while waiting on tables several afternoons or nights during the week. I had a very good life by all accounts. I was making good money at the club as well as the occasional gig from Judy. I had substantial savings and good insurance thru the union. I was also very happy in my submissive relationship with June who was now finishing her first year of college.

Judy called me just before the Memorial Day Weekend and asked me to come in to her office the next day. She was usually free with details over the phone but I didn't question it. When I arrived she was on the phone but motioned me to sit down.

When she finished she held up a script in her hands and some contract forms.

"Would you like to go back to San Francisco?" she asked with a big smile on her face.

"Is Brian making another movie?" I asked.

“Yes and no. It’s a two-hour movie for television but more importantly it’s a pilot for a TV series. It will pay you twice what you made for the first movie and if it is picked up you will be making a WEEKLY salary close to what you made for the first movie alone”

You could’ve knocked me over with a feather. I was speechless for a minute. This would mean another trip west and maybe a permanent move if it became a series. I shook my head in disbelief as Judy laughed out loud.

“Take the script home with you. Read it over. The contract is basically the same as last time. The time and place required to shoot it is also the same. Let me know what you think. They probably won’t begin shooting until July.”

I took the script from her and went home. At first I found it hard to concentrate. This could lead to some serious money and the so-called “big time.” I paged thru the script pausing briefly to think about each scene as it played out in my head.

I knew it would be hard moving away from June and my friends at the club. I was still very young and I could stay at the club and make very good money there for as long as I wanted. Girls come and go there all the time. Someone once said that nothing lasts forever and they were absolutely right. I set the script aside and tried not to think about it over the weekend.

I bought a Jade green satin Mandarin dress with black lace overlays and a daring slit up the side from Anne as well as a matching pair of four inch heel stiletto pumps and clutch purse. I fixed the hair on the black wig so it was done in an upsweep style and with the high heel pumps it gave me the illusion of being taller than I actually was.

I walked out on stage Friday night and the applause erupted from the audience. I turned slightly so more of my sheer stocking encased leg was visible thru the slit and the applause got louder. Once again the weekend was more financially rewarding than I had thought it would be.

I didn’t call Judy as I wanted time to not only re-read the script but think about what I wanted to do. The TV movie had been moderately successful and there was the chance that it wouldn’t be picked up by any of the networks.

Once again I was faced with an important decision that was going to affect my future. I had made all the right choices so far and done pretty well by any standard when it came to income. I was making twice what any teacher was making. Except for my modest living expenses the only costly thing was my costumes, shoes, and makeup now that I had for the most part finished my electrolysis.

Thursday morning I came back from grocery shopping and saw a work crew putting siding on the house across the street. One man took off his cap and wiped his forehead as he looked in the other direction. I knew what he was looking for-an escape. I put the groceries on the kitchen table and called Judy. I wanted to come in ASAP and sign the contracts.

The next morning after going thru all the papers I signed my name on the line. When they got the contracts I would be notified of the start of shooting. I felt very good leaving the office.

It was a bright sun shiny day and I didn't want to be in the sun too long. My job depended on my skin staying a milky white color, like a girl's, and I didn't want to risk a sunburn that would spoil my appearance especially now that I was going to be in a movie again.

Several weeks later a plane ticket came in the mail. My trip was very enjoyable. I had the same crew to work with and of course the same pink Mustang to zip around in. I was well prepared and we finished shooting in three weeks and two days. There were few re-takes, which pleased everybody. I skipped the party afterwards again and it felt good to be home.

My expense check arrived first and then my check for doing the movie. I looked it over to find I was paying more in taxes than the average college graduate makes. I wanted to run up to the high school and show it to the counselor but I thought better of it.

The TV movie aired the last week in October as a Halloween special mystery. Critics were a little more kind and once again I was given compliments. I was keeping my fingers crossed about the possibility of the movie becoming a weekly TV series. It would mean re-location and after the first season the second season would still be iffy. I could only hope for the best.

The snow was flying around the Twin Cities that cold November day when Judy got the call. She explained to me that Chameleon had been given the go ahead for thirteen episodes as a mid season replacement for a comedy show that was doing as well as expected.

I went to her office and we went over the paperwork. When I had signed everything she handed me three scripts. Shooting would start the first week in December.

I flew out to San Francisco and Brian helped me find a place to live. I gave my landlady notice and had a garage sale to get rid of my car and most of my accumulation of stuff. I gave the rest away to a thrift store. I shipped my girl stuff and my clothes UPS in care of my new landlord and then stayed in a motel for about a week to tie up some loose ends. I dropped the rental car off at the airport and flew to San Francisco.

The weather was beautiful and I enjoyed driving around the city in my pink Mustang. I went to work and the episodes were completed on time and under budget. The TV reviews were favorable and we got renewed for one full season. I made a trip back to see the girls at the club and we had a good time.

I had just about everything I had ever hoped for in life, a great career, great friends and all the things that lots of money can buy. Most important of all I guess was the fact that unlike so many people who were still searching for that "racket" to escape to, I had found mine. It was not a temporary respite from the drudgery of an ordinary man's life but a true escape from everything I didn't want to be or have. It was by all accounts, an escape for life.

THE END