

Executive Assistant (part2 of 4)

by: [Jacki Pett](#) -

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

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Part 2

The new taupe pantyhose were first. I was very careful not to poke a fingernail through them. That brought another dilemma to mind.

"Let me help you fit your bra." I was reluctant to let her see my chest but there was no way to hide it and put on the bra. "Jeffrey," She said with concern, "your swelling hasn't gone down yet." She touched my chest tenderly. "It almost looks worse. Does it hurt?"

It wasn't painful but it was embarrassing. "No, as long as I don't bang myself or brush against it."

"We should get you back to the doctor."

"He said it could get worse before it got better." If it did get better. I didn't really want to go back to him if I didn't have to. The swelling wasn't confined to my enlarged nipples any more. My chest seemed to be swelling now too.

"Well you shouldn't let it go on too long. We should get you a second opinion if it doesn't get better soon."

Connie adjusted the straps so the bra fit, taking care not to bump me. She stood back and contemplated a moment. "What are we going to use to stuff those cups?"

"Cotton?" I suggested. It seemed logical.

"No, it won't hold a shape." Connie continued to ponder a moment

while I waited patiently. "I know. I'll be right back." She went to her bedroom and came back with a pair of shoulder pads. "These may do it." She adjusted them in the bra. I'm glad we only got you one with A cups. "Let's try that. Go ahead and get dressed."

I unwrapped the outfit from the plastic. "You need to put on your camisole first."

"I know that." I said, feeling foolish.

"Well excuse me." Connie had a way of making me more at ease.

"Sorry Mom."

"Just put your clothes on young lady." She said grinning.

"Yes ma'am." I took the delicate looking piece from the bed and let it drop over my head. I was careful not to let it touch my face so I didn't get any makeup on it.

I pulled the skirt up and zipped it up the back. The button was a little difficult to do with my longer nails.

"Don't forget your slip."

I scowled at her, still joking around. I had forgotten and started to unbutton the skirt.

"No honey, just pull it up under your skirt, to your waist."

I was her honey now. She was acting like a Mom. I didn't think she realized she was doing it. It didn't bother me.

I took the jacket and slipped it on. I had been worried it would be too small.

"She had enough measurements from you to have it custom made." Connie reminded me.

I buttoned it up. Connie looked pleased. "It fits you perfectly." She said, admiring the way I looked. I was definitely a tailored fit, narrowing at my waist. "I think we're going to have to do something different with your 'breasts'. They just don't look right. Let me see what else I can come up with."

"I want a look." I said, turning to walk to the mirror.

"No, let's finish you first. Come on over here and we'll put on your lipstick." Connie scooped the pencil and lipstick from the vanity table.

I stood very still while she carefully outlined my lips then put on the lipstick. "You have the cutest pout."

"I have a 'pout'?"

"Yes, you have a 'pout' and it's adorable." She said as she finished. "Now stand back and let me have a good look at you."

I took a few steps back.

"It needs something." It dawned on her. "Your new earrings! Go ahead and put them on. I've got a necklace that would look perfect with them. I'll be right back."

I took the opportunity with her out of the room and went to the mirror. My reflection was unsettling. I made a very convincing woman. The thousands of times I had looked at myself in the mirror, I had never seen the young woman I saw now.



"Here Jennifer. Connie said, coming back into the bedroom. She saw me at the mirror. "Oh, you peeked. Turn around and let me put this on." She draped the pearl necklace around in front of me, lifted my hair in back and hooked the clasp. "You didn't put on your earrings?"

"I just was distracted for a minute."

"I know. Let's finish you off and you can take a good look."

It wasn't easy replacing the hoops with the new pearl earrings. I felt so clumsy. I finally managed.

"That's much better. Now your new shoes."

I stepped into the heels sitting at the foot of the bed.

"Ok. You look fantastic." Connie grinned from ear to ear.

"You sure?" I felt so weird.

"Yes. I'm very sure. I would be nice if you smiled a little though."

I gave her the smile I showed the girls at the registers in the department stores earlier.

"Lovely Jeffrey but it's all right to show off your nice white teeth. Just relax a little." Connie beamed. "And when your hair is done properly you'll look even prettier."

I looked back to the mirror. "I'm not too fat?" I ran my hands down my waist to my hips. They seemed wide to me, or my waist was too thick.

Connie walked over behind me. "You have a lovely figure. Most girls would kill to have your hips."

That brought an involuntary smile to my face. "Thank you." I only wanted to look as convincing as possible.

"You're welcome Jennifer. That's a much prettier smile. If your done admiring yourself, it's eleven thirty and we haven't done your nails yet."

I looked back at her in the mirror with surprise. "Tonight? What about

work in the morning?" That would mean I'd have to go to work with nail polish on.

"I've been thinking about that."

I knew that tone. I turned to look at her. It seemed strange, I was two inches taller in the heels and I was almost as tall as her now. I still had to look up a little. She still had a couple inches on me. "What?"

"This isn't going to work. It will take at least an hour to do your nails properly. Your hair will have to be washed again if you don't do it in the morning. It will take you at least two to two and a half hours to get ready. It would be much easier if you just did your nails tonight, fixed your hair in the morning and we go to work."

"You mean go to work like 'this'?" I was all but terrified at the mere suggestion.

"Sure. Bennett and Hamilton are out of town. That only leaves Terry in the mailroom and Peter in Mrs. Coleman's office. You're friends with them and they've seen you when you've been joking around with the girls. That just leaves the girls and they all think you're adorable any way. We'll just tell everyone that we're playing a prank on Ms Castle. They'll understand."

What she said made sense, sort of. Of the people I saw on a daily basis, there was hardly anyone in the office I didn't call my friend. They had all seen me having fun or joked with me at one time or another. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Hamilton were the only two that didn't appreciate the humor of my lighthearted antics from time to time. "They'll tease me."

Connie laughed, "Yes, I imagine they will. But so what. It'll all be in fun."

I could imagine a few of their faces. Turning back to the mirror, I wondered what Trish and the others would say. I might be worth it just to see the look on their faces. Again, my hands caressed my slender waist. "I'd would love to see the look on some of their faces."

Connie laughed again. "That's my girl."

"Your girl needs your to help her make her finger nails look pretty." I said sarcastically.

"Well if my girl will go take off her makeup now and get all ready for bed I will be happy to help her with her nails"

"I'll be right back, Mommy." I said over my shoulder as I swished back into the bedroom.

"Don't forget to use that baby oil I gave you to take off your makeup and be gentle on you skin. Don't stretch it." Connie called after me.

I stuck my head out around the bedroom door. "Yes Mommy."

"Now just tuck your skirt under you as you sit. That's it. Sit up straight, hands in your lap."

We had been up since six. After not getting to bed till one, we were both reluctant to get up. Connie had me do my hair and makeup myself while she supervised. Now she was giving me a crash course in acting like a lady, there at the kitchen table.

"No Jeffrey, shift your weight forward as you get up. Don't push yourself up." Connie was very patient with me.

"Not as easy as it looks, is it?"

"No," I admitted. I felt anything but graceful in my heels. It would have been worse if I had never had a pair on. I had the walk down, but Connie still insisted that I needed practice.

"I just wish we had more time. There's so much you need to learn."

"I'm really worried." I confided to her.

"You'll be fine. It's just a luncheon. You have all morning to practice and we're going to see that you do."

I still worried about the people at work.

Connie made me eat something. She insisted just my vitamins weren't enough. My stomach was doing flip flops, much worse than it had Saturday.

"Cut your food up into small bites and put it in your mouth past your lips, pulling it off with your teeth. Otherwise you'll end up eating off your lipstick."

I was so used to gobbling my food down. It was a lot to remember.

The doorman, Lester, and Carl, the valet, both took a double take when Connie and I came downstairs to go. It wasn't as if they hadn't both seen me in a skirt before. They'd just never seen me dressed the way I was that morning. Of course, they were too professional to say anything and I just acted as if nothing was out of the ordinary.

Given their reaction to me, or the lack of it, I actually wondered if they had always taken me to be a woman. I had never spoken to them. All the times they had seen me I was dressed up in the clothes Connie had picked out for me. I decided they didn't know. It was just as well.

Connie decided we should take her car. "It's a lot different, driving in heels. It takes getting used to."

I didn't argue with her. I was too nervous to drive anyway.

Connie encouraged me all the way to work. The lighthearted bravado I displayed the night before was all but gone.

We were later getting to work than usual. That was my fault. I could see Bobbie at the reception desk as we walked up to the front door.

"Jeffrey, watch your walk. One foot in front of the other. Head up, shoulders back. And for God's sake, smile."

I was so nervous.

Bobbie didn't look up until Connie opened the front door. She smiled at Connie and started to say, "Good morn . . ." Her greeting was cut off at seeing me, a step behind Connie. "Jeffrey!?"

I gave her my usual smile, "Good morning Bobbie."

I watched her wide eyes as they looked me over from my high heels to my perfectly styled hair. She said my name again, "Jeffrey?"

Connie's words finally brought her out of shock. "Relax Bobbie. Jeffrey's going to help me play a little prank on Ms Castle today. How does he look?"

Bobbie came out from behind the counter. She came up to me, the look of amazement still on her face. "He looks beautiful." She walked around me, looking me over in amazement.

She stood looking me in the eye. "Jeffrey, you're marvelous. No one would ever know." She sniffed my perfume. "And you even smell wonderful."

"Thank you." That helped. That plus the fact that she didn't look at me like I was some kind of freak.

Connie looked pleased too, pleased with me and pleased with Bobbie's reaction. She told Bobbie, "It's business as usual Bobbie. We don't need the whole world knowing about this."

That was a waste of words. Bobbie was the biggest gossip in the place.

"No, of course not." She couldn't take her eyes off me. While I was glad she approved, her staring made me a little uncomfortable. "Ms Castle is certainly going to be surprised."

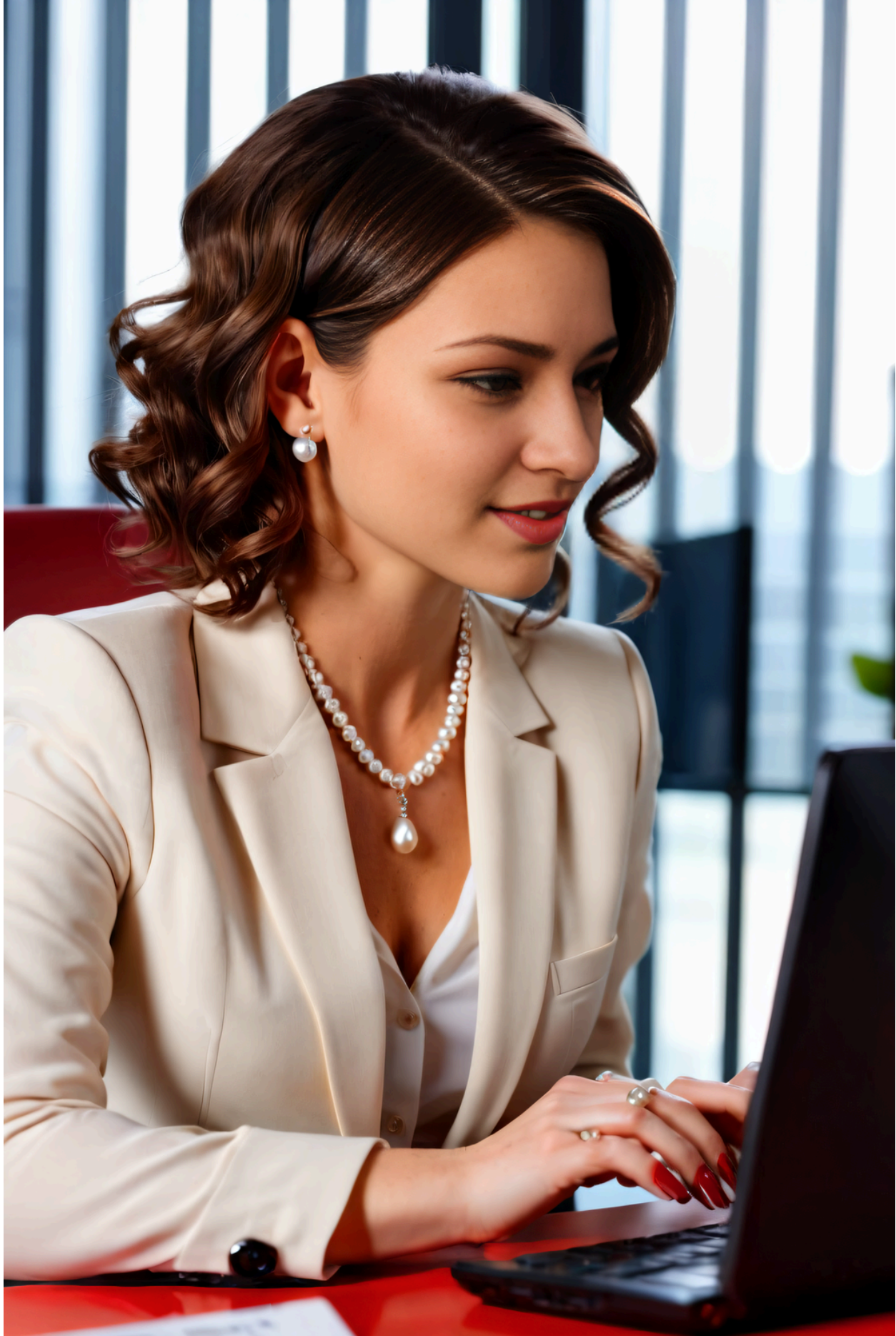
"We're meeting her for lunch at the downtown Hayatt." I told Bobbie.

"I wish I could be there to see her face." Bobbie only went back to her desk when we disappeared down the hall, into our office.

I said to Connie, "She's going to tell everyone."

"I know but there's really nothing we can do about it. At least we won't have to explain why you're dressed this way to them all. Bobbie will take care of that."

Since we had eaten breakfast at home, it was time to get busy. My workload was enormous for today and taking a long lunch wasn't going to help. I settled down at my desk to get to work but it wasn't easy to concentrate.



We could see each other through the glass wall that separated the inner and outer offices. From time to time, when I looked up from my work, I caught Connie smiling at me. She seemed to be really enjoying seeing me this way. Once, she motioned to me to close my legs. I didn't realize I was sitting with them apart.

I fidgeted a lot. The red skirt was definitely shorter than anything I had worn and when I sat, it rode uncomfortably high on my leg. It was one of the times I was tugging it down that I couldn't help but notice the increased amount of traffic in the hallway outside the office. It was inevitable. I thought that at least some of them would come in and have a smart comment to make, but no one did. The women smiled when I caught them looking and I just smiled back, like everything was normal.

I knew it that wouldn't last long. Trish, Joyce and a few of the other girls were due in around ten. I knew they wouldn't miss an opportunity to tease me. I sort of looked forward to it.

Connie came out of her office around nine. "Come on with me."

"Where are we going?" I asked as I carefully got up from my chair.

Connie grinned, "You did that beautifully." Commenting about how gracefully I rose.

"Thank you."

"We're going up to see Stephanie. I think she has something better than those shoulder pads that you can wear."

I came around my desk to go with her. "Here, maybe you better put this away for today." She handed me the placard from my desk that identified me as 'Jeffrey Mitchell'. "We wouldn't want a stranger coming in and being confused."

I couldn't help but laugh. "No, we wouldn't want that." I put it in a drawer. I hadn't considered for a moment that I might have to meet a customer, looking the way I did.

Some heads rose as we walked past accounting on our way to the stairs. The girls smiled and I smiled back. "Good morning Cathy." I said as

we passed by Mr. Bennett's secretary.

"Good morning Jeffrey." She said with a smile and playful, melodious lilt to her voice. All eyes seemed to follow me as we went up the stairs.

Navigating up the stairs was much easier than going down. My steps were placed very deliberately. I had a little trouble coming down the steps at Connie's but I was fine as long as I didn't try to hurry. Connie said I actually looked graceful, taking my time.

Stephanie and Pam apparently knew we were coming. They were waiting for us.

"Did you find them?" Connie asked Stephanie.

Stephanie tore her eyes from me and addressed Connie. "It took some searching but I found them." She looked back to me, beaming. "Jeffrey, you look lovely."

Pam came closer to inspect my makeup. "You did a marvelous job. I taught you well. Ms Castle is really going to be surprised."

Word did travel fast in our little group. It was actually a relief.

"How about you help him put them in?" Connie said to Stephanie. "I have to get back to work."

"Come on in back Jeffrey." They followed me into the back and Connie headed back to her office. She had told me that she thought we had something in wardrobe that would be better than the shoulder pads so I wasn't completely in the dark about what was happening. I was a little surprised when Stephanie brought out the silicone breast forms.

"These are the closest things to real there is." Stephanie explained. "We used to have a girl modeling for us that was almost flat chested. She was a great model, a beautiful girl but had almost no breasts. These have been buried away for years. I wasn't even sure we still had them."

I picked up one. Its outside texture and color was almost like skin. It was filled with a jell like mass. I expressed my concern. "Won't they move around too much?"

"Oh no." Stephanie assured me. "See this ring? It's adhesive. It

attaches to your chest. They'll look and feel, almost like the real thing. Now let's get your top off and fit them to you."

I would have preferred to just leave the shoulder pads but it was too late for that now. Neither of the girls said anything about my chest. They had to notice but I supposed they were simply being tactful.

I didn't know what real breasts felt like but they had to feel a lot like what I had attached to my chest now. Even in my bra, they moved with me.

"Are they comfortable enough?" Pam asked.

"They don't pull or pinch." It was just the odd sensation of having something hanging from my chest that was so strange.

"Later, just take some rubbing alcohol on a Q-Tip and soak the adhesive loose. It's going to take a while to get them off but at least they won't come loose on you today." Stephanie assured me.

That was a comfort.

"They look really nice." Pam told me smiling. I had put my bra and camisole back on and the shapes underneath looked real. Right down to the slight impression of the fake nipples.

I was almost dressed again when I heard the studio door open out front and voices. I quickly put my jacket back on.

They all came up from the offices. The first floor must have been almost empty. The teasing I had anticipated wasn't lacking but neither were the compliments about how pretty and natural I looked. They all knew about the supposed 'prank' on Ms Castle so it wasn't too hard for me to endure.

I still wasted no time in getting away from them. They followed me downstairs and it was only their fear of Connie that kept them out of my office.

Now all I had to do was wait for Trish and the others to come in. I was looking forward to hearing their opinion.

"That looks much better." Connie came out to tell me when she got off the phone. "Are they comfortable enough?"

"Apart from the way they move when I walk." I told her with a meek

grin.

Connie smiled with delight. "Welcome to womanhood Jennifer."

"Oh, thank you so much Ms Sackett." Some of the lighthearted feeling of last night was returning.

I had a dozen calls to make and I wondered what the people, who were only familiar voices on the phone, would think if they were to see me sitting there in my lovely dress, all made up and looking so pert and pretty? When I worked on my computer, I made so many mistakes because I kept being distracted, looking down at my red nails. I was able to work for almost an hour before I was interrupted again.

I saw motion out of the corner of my eye. I turned to see Trish peeking her head around the corner, looking in through the glass wall. She had this adoring look on her face. I almost laughed out loud. I waved to her to come in. She wasn't alone, Judy, Kim and Patty were with her.

"Jeffrey, you look beautiful." Trish cooed.

I sat up straight, brushed my hair from my cheek and crossed my stockinged legs at the knees. "It's Jennifer today." I said with a silly grin.

They thought I was precious and laughed.

Connie came to her office door. I was afraid she would be annoyed at the fact I wasn't working but her smile said it was all right.

"Jennifer, it doesn't look like you're going to get anything done this morning."

The girls all thought it was cute that she called me Jennifer.

"Why don't you take Jennifer upstairs where she won't be such a distraction to everyone and give her a crash course on being a lady. We only have an hour and a half before we have to leave to meet Ms Castle and Jennifer needs all the help she can get."

"We'd be delighted to." Kim said beaming.

"But Ms Sackett, I have so much work to do."

"That's all right. We'll just work a little later tonight to catch up. Now

you girls run along."

I turned off my computer and put away the things on my desk. I almost forgot as I 'arose', I reached down and picked up my purse, slinging the chain over my shoulder.

Patty seemed absolutely taken by me. "Oh Jennifer."

Oh, did they tease me. They were serious at times too. A crash course is what they gave me. I walked, sat, talked, stood still, smiled and swished my way back and forth across the room till they were satisfied that I moved like the lady I portrayed. I had to talk with expression, using my hands and body. That was difficult for me but they didn't let up. The hour and a half went by like a shot.

"Fix your lipstick and check your makeup. We have to get on our way." Connie said when she joined us. They all wished me luck. Trish and Kim gave me a hug.

"Did they help?" She asked as we went to get into the car.

"There's so much to learn, to remember." I settled into the front seat, swung my legs in after me and straighten my skirt. I put my hands in my lap and turned to her smiling.

"Very nice Jennifer. The time was well spent."

"I hope so. I'm so scared." I admitted. Fooling around with my friends was one thing but going out in public was another.

"Remember what we talked about. They don't know you and they'll never guess you're a young man by just looking at you. Just remember what you've been shown and relax."

That was easier said then done.

It was a beautiful day. About normal for Atlanta in July, according to the weatherman. The sun was warm but it wasn't too humid. White clouds spotted the sky. It was a sort of picture perfect day.

It was only a twenty minute ride to the Hayatt but it seemed quicker to me. The valet opened my door for me, smiling pleasantly. The doorman opened the lobby doors for the two ladies on their way to a luncheon engagement. Heads rose as we walked through the lobby. A few men did

more that glance our way. I was so self conscious but I just put one foot in front of the other and didn't look anywhere but straight ahead.

Connie tried to ease my tension by talking to me as we walked across the spacious lobby. "They really have a lovely dining room and the food here is exquisite."

"I wish I could say I have an appetite."

"Once we're seated with Virginia, you'll be more comfortable."

We were joined in the elevator by two men who were also on their way up to the sky high restaurant. I was content to be silent as we rode up with them. The younger of the two smiled pleasantly at me as he got on. I felt silly returning his smile.

"Are you ladies going all the way to the restaurant?" He asked, looking at me.

What was he, stupid? That was the only button that was lit up. If we were going anywhere else, wouldn't we have pushed a different button? "Yes, we are." I answered, practicing the inflection in my voice that the girls tried to teach me. Connie could have answered, I wished she had. She was behind me and I couldn't see her face.

"Have you eaten here before?" He asked, trying to make conversation.

It was nerve wracking. "No, this is the first time." I answered. He was standing not more than three feet from me, looking directly at me.

"You should order the Grouper. It's excellent here, they cook it in a sauce that's gives it a faint lemon taste without losing its original flavor."

He expected a response. It would have been rude of me to ignore him, as much as I would have preferred to. "Thank you for suggesting it. I may give it a try." The smile was the hardest part.

The elevator doors finally opened. There was a small crowd waiting to be seated. I was afraid we wouldn't be able to get away from the two men but Connie led me through the crowd to the maitre d'.

"You're reservations ladies?"

"We're dining with Ms Castle today." Connie told him. I was impressed with how elegantly Connie carried herself, her self confidence.

Connie looked particularly attractive in her jade jacket dress. The white surplice top was really pretty with a draped couture neckline. She showed just a hint of cleavage. Despite her height, or because of it, she definitely turned men's heads.

"If you'll follow me ladies?" He led us to our table.

Ms Castle was there waiting for us. As the maitre d' led us across the dining room toward the window tables, I spotted her. She looked up when we were about ten feet away and when she saw me walking toward her, her hand went to her mouth in surprise. I wasn't sure if it was delight or shock that caused her reaction. I didn't have long to find out.

Connie didn't give her a chance to speak. "Virginia, I was such a treat for you to invite Jennifer and I to lunch."

Understanding showed in her response as we stood there in front of her. "I'm so delighted that you and Jennifer could come. Please, sit."

She didn't take her eyes off me as the Maitre d' pulled out our chairs and seated us. I remembered my lessons.

"Jennifer, you look lovely." She was still in a sort of shock.

"Thank you so much Ms Castle." I couldn't wait for the man to leave us.

"May I order you ladies something?" He asked Connie and I.

Ms Castle had a glass of white wine. I would have loved a double anything. Connie ordered wine for both of us. "We'd like a glass of Chablis please."

I simply sat there, looking demure with my hands folded in my lap.

The look on Ms Castle's face was absolute delight. The Maitre d' left us.

"I can't believe how stunning you look 'Jennifer'. It appears my little gift fit you perfectly."

I spoke quietly, even though our table was somewhat secluded, surrounded by several large potted plants. "I really love it." She was, after all, a client and, an important one.

"I'm so pleased. I worried so."

"Jennifer just beamed when she first saw it." Connie joined the conversation.

She turned back to me. "Would you mind terribly standing for a second so I can see how it looks? You caught me a little off guard a moment ago."

I didn't particularly want to but . . . "I'd be happy to Ms Castle."

"Virginia." She corrected me.

I pushed my chair back and rose carefully. I was getting better at it. Standing next to her, behind the partial screening of the plants, I made a slow turn like I had seen my friends do so often while modeling.

"Just exquisite." Virginia said gasping.

"Do you really think so?" I asked.

"Oh yes Jennifer."

I sat again.

"And I don't mean just the dress. You are a really lovely girl."

That was a compliment? "You're too kind Virginia."

She was still in shock. She turned to Connie and whispered. "He's a delight."

"Jennifer's very special." Connie said with pride.

The compliments were getting to be too much. I was relieved when the waiter arrived with the wine and to take our orders.

I sipped the wine. Virginia hardly took her eyes off me throughout the meal.

The grouper was delicious. I ate with delicate care.

Connie tried to distract her with talk of business but she would have none of it. She kept bringing the conversation back to me. She had a hundred questions. She wanted to know all about me, where I came from, how Connie and I got together. She asked about my upbringing and my family and about Christy and our relationship.

Most of the questions I could answer in complete honesty. She was surprised and delighted that I was living with Connie.

"You take good care of our Jennifer." Virginia told Connie. "If she doesn't, you can come to me." She told me. It sounded like she meant it. It was almost comical.

"I love her like a daughter." Connie said kidding. At least I thought she was kidding. She was becoming more and more of a Mother to me. That was the truth.

It turned out to be a pleasant lunch. I was full. It was more than I'd eaten at one meal in a long time.

When the bill was settled, Virginia and Connie said they had to use the ladies' room. They looked at me with concern. "You probably need to go too. You haven't been since this morning." Connie said, concerned for me.

There were too many people gathered in the restaurant lobby for me to object too strongly. I did have to go but I was going to try to hold it until we got back to the office. "I think I can wait." I told Connie.

"Nonsense Jennifer. Come with us." Virginia took my arm and led me to the ladies' room.

After the initial awkwardness of the situation, and a stall became available, I did relieve myself. I know I took a long time doing it but it was all so strange to me.

Virginia and Connie were putting on fresh lipstick when I finally came out of the stall. "You need to freshen up too Jennifer." Connie said.

I looked in the mirror. My lipstick was all but gone. I dug through my purse for my lipstick and, feeling silly, put on fresh. I watched them freshen their perfume and mimicked that too. It was a relief to get out of there.

We dallied downstairs in the lobby. "Jennifer and Connie, this was delightful. Connie, would you mind if I stole Jennifer away from you occasionally? I'd love to take her shopping and spend a little time with her."

That came as a surprise to me.

"No, not at all Virginia but I think you should ask Jennifer." Connie didn't want to commit me and I appreciated that. The problem is now I didn't know how to tell her no. As much as I liked the woman, I wasn't interested in 'shopping' with her.

Virginia turned to me. "What do you think Jennifer? Nothing would please me more."

She made it almost impossible to say no. "That would be nice."

Virginia was thrilled. "Wonderful." She kissed me on the cheek. "I'll call you dear. We'll get together very soon."

It had gotten warmer and Connie had to put on the air in the car.

"Now what am I going to do?"

"I wouldn't worry too much. Virginia's just a little eccentric. She probably won't even call."

I didn't believe that. Connie was just trying to ease my apprehension.

Bobbie was anxiously waiting for us when we got back. "The Jansen Sportswear people are here. They're waiting in your office."

"They weren't scheduled till Monday." Connie was disturbed and I knew why. Their's was a big account and we'd been after their business for months. Connie had gone through hell just getting them to talk to us.

"They called right after you left for lunch and said it had to be this afternoon because they had to go back to California tomorrow, unexpectedly." Bobbie didn't know what else to do. "I told them to come ahead, that you'd be back from your 'meeting' around two."

Connie thought fast. "You did the right thing Bobbie. Call Rudolph's and change our reservations to tonight. How many of them are there?"

"Three men." Bobbie said, jotting it down.

"They'll be four for dinner. Call the limo people and tell them they have to be here at five. See if you can get tickets for the Met and I need the best seating possible."

"Come on Jeffrey. I need your help."

"Connie!?" I said in panic.

She turned to me. "What? Oh!"

"I can't."

Connie looked at me, I could tell she was weighing her options, then she made a decision. "You'll just have to pretend to be Jennifer a little longer. I need you." That was all there was to it. "Come on."

I was introduced as Connie's assistant, 'Jennifer', to the three men who rose to greet us. The oldest of the three, Mr. Sanders, was about fifty. Mr. Niles, Robert, looked to be only twenty five and, I supposed women might find him good looking. The last was Mr. Park. Mike Park looked to be at least thirty. He had a beard and reminded me of the kind of guy you'd see in a western wear ad, a very outdoors type with rugged good looks.

I sat, uncomfortably, through the long session with them. I took notes and helped Connie give our presentation. I had spent a lot of hours with Connie preparing for it. Despite the short notice, things went surprisingly well.

Business went well but I was a wreck. The two younger men definitely considered themselves ladies men. I was at the center of their attention.

I knew Connie didn't like doing it but I also knew she didn't have a choice. I served the men refreshments when we took a break. Serving refreshments wasn't so bad but being the object of their attention was mortifying. I had to smile and be pleasant through it all.

As everyone got to know each other better, one of the men started telling some rather off color jokes and I wasn't sure how to react so I laughed at them. That only served to endear me all the more to them. It backfired on me.

As it neared five and things began to wrap up I was relieved.

"I've made reservations for us and a very fine restaurant and I have tickets for the Met." Connie announced when we were finished. She had set the groundwork for a contract and they seemed very pleased with it.

The older man, Mr. Sanders, spoke for the three of them. "That's very kind of you Connie."

"Jennifer, I look forward to having dinner with you." The youngest of them, Robert, turned to be and said smiling.

Connie jumped in, "I don't know if Jennifer can join us."

"Oh of course she can." Piped in the other man, Mike. He was the one that made me most uncomfortable. "Please join us. It wouldn't be the same without someone to laugh at my jokes."

"She'll come, won't you Jennifer?" Robert insisted.

I looked to Connie, she couldn't help me anymore. If I didn't agree it would leave a bad taste in their mouths and it could hurt prospective business. Connie would have to go with the three men alone. She had been prepared to do just that, but now . . .

"Of course." I felt sick. "If you'll excuse me gentlemen. I need to use the bathroom." I got up to go.

Mr. Sanders also rose. "Perhaps you can show me the way to the men's room?"

"Of course. Just follow me." This presented a problem. I really did have to go again and I couldn't just follow this man into the mens' room. I showed him the door. When he went inside, I looked over to the other door. I had no choice, I couldn't be just standing there when he came out and what if one of the others decided they had to go?

I surprised Mrs. Hubbard and Carol who were already in the ladies' room.

"Jeffrey!?"

"I'm so sorry. I didn't know what else to do. One of the Jansen men is in the men's room." I apologized for intruding.

The both laughed at my predicament. "Oh what the hell. It's just us girls. Go ahead."

Connie came in a moment later. "Is Jeffrey in here?" She asked Carol. Apparently Carol pointed to my stall. "Jeffrey?"

"I'm here." I said meekly.

"Jeffrey, I'm so sorry. Everything just went wrong."

"It's not your fault, you tried to get me out of it." I pulled up my panties and pantyhose, straightening my skirt, I was finished. Connie was waiting.

"You did fine this afternoon, just be brave, we'll get through it."

"Sure." I answered, feeling very sacred.

The other ladies dallied, listening to us.

"The limo's here. Fix yourself up. Here, I brought you your purse. Don't take too long."

I brushed my hair and put on fresh lipstick. I felt uneasy with the two women watching me. I put on perfume before zipping up my purse. I turned and looked at the ladies.

They smiled, encouraging me, "You look darling." Carol said warmly.

"Lovely, just lovely." Mrs. Hubbard agreed. "Try to have a good time tonight dear."

"Just relax," Carol tried to reassure me too. "You'll be fine."

"Thanks, but I don't know." With one more look in the mirror and a deep, calming breath, I left them.

I had to sit between Robert and Mike in the limo. At the restaurant, it was the same. They held my chair for me when I sat. Back and forth they went, vying for my attention. It was so hard to smile and pretend that I enjoyed their interest in me.

Connie took me to the ladies room, hoping to find some privacy

there, to boost my spirits. All we found was a room full of women. We didn't have a chance to talk.

The limo took us to the Met. I was escorted in by the two men who insisted that I walk between them, my arms in theirs. It was so embarrassing being escorted between the two men, each standing about a head taller than me.

The only peace I could hope for was during the performance and that was disturbed by Robert who started putting his hand on my knee. The only way to get it off was to take his hand away but he just put it back a few minutes later. I ended up holding his hand in mine, disgusting.

Mike, who saw it all, acted jealous. He stood with his arm around my waist through the entire intermission. All I could do was sip my wine and endure it. The second half of the performance was just as bad.

The limo returned us to the office at midnight. They wanted to take Connie and I out for drinks, but Connie put the kibosh on that, saying we had a shoot early Friday, which we did.

My final, and most embarrassing moment came as we all said goodnight. Robert was telling me how much he enjoyed my company and how lovely I was when all of a sudden he kissed me. Right on the mouth. I had all I could do to keep from wiping my mouth off on my sleeve.

Mike expected no less and I had to endure his affection too. He took the liberty of pulling me close, pressing me against him when he said his good night. It was a case of one trying to outdo the other.

Neither of us said much on the short ride home. Connie was embarrassed for me. She saw it all and could do nothing to stop it.

"Now you know what we girls have to endure." She said as we walked in and both kicked our shoes off.

"It's horrible, I didn't encourage them a bit but they just went ahead and did whatever they pleased. Does this happen a lot?" I took off my jacket and dropped on the couch.

"All the time." Connie admitted.

"Can't you stop them?"

"Could you?"

"No." I couldn't "I need a shower." Then I remembered. "Do we have any mineral spirits?"

"I'll get you the bottle from my bathroom." Connie came over and put her arms around me and just held me for a minute. When we let go of each other she said. "Go ahead honey, you'll feel better after a shower."

"Good night." I gave her a little smile.

"Good night." She kissed my cheek.

It took me forever to get ready for bed. It took a half hour so loosen the breast forms from my chest. It was after one when I finally climbed in bed and turned the light out.

I lay there in the dark for a little while. The luncheon hadn't been so bad but getting caught up with those men was horrible. Through it all though, I played my part rather well. I definitely fooled them. Curious, that I could pull it off so easily. The last thing my mind's eye saw as sleep overcame me was the reflection of the pretty girl in my mirror earlier.

I knew I set the alarm for five thirty, why was it waking me at eight? I spotted the note Connie left, behind the clock. 'You needed some sleep Honey.' That was all it said. Connie had reset my alarm. I truly loved that woman like a mother.

I raced like crazy to get ready for work. Knowing I was meeting Christy after work, I dressed simply in my khaki slacks and my turquoise rayon camp shirt. I put in my small hoop earrings and wore only my herringbone necklace and matching bracelet that she liked so much.



I felt nothing like the girl I pretended to be the day before. I made it to work by nine fifteen. It wasn't till Bobbie, greeting me in the lobby, pointed out my hands, that I realized I was still wearing the red nail polish I had on the day before. Her comment surprised me.

"I was hoping Jennifer would be here today." Bobbie was joking, of course.

"She had a late night and decided to stay home today." I kidded.

"But she's all right?" Bobbie asked with genuine concern.

I wondered how much she'd heard. I thanked her for worrying.
"Thanks for asking but she'll be alright."

"Good, I'm relieved. You tell Jennifer I think she should come back to work really soon." Bobbie's smile warmed me.

"I'll tell her." There was some polish remover in the kitchen and, after cleaning away the last of the evidence of last night, I headed for the stairs and the studio.

It took me a while as I was stopped repeatedly to hear everyone's praise and concern. Praise for the way I looked yesterday and concern because they all knew what I had to do the night before. I was amazed at how many people wanted to see more of Jennifer.

I received the same reception in the studio. I didn't want to disrupt the shoot so with the promise to tell the girls, later, everything that happened, everyone got back to work.

"Did you have a good rest?" Connie asked.

"You shouldn't have let me sleep." I scolded her.

"You needed it." She knew I was exhausted and upset. "Are you ok?"

I had already resolved to put the experience out of my mind. "I'm ok."

When we finished around one, I filled in Judy, Patty and Kim with

what had happened.

"Oh my God. What did you do when he kissed you?" Kim was so concerned about me.

"There wasn't anything I could do. They took me by surprise. I couldn't say anything and give myself away."

"I hadn't thought of that." Patty reflected.

"What was it like, you know, to kiss another guy?" Judy asked, curious.

"I was so embarrassed and ashamed that I just wanted to run." I implored them. "Please don't tell anyone what happened. It was bad enough that everyone knows I went out with them."

They swore to secrecy.

A surprise awaited Connie and I when we returned to our office later. Both my desk and Connie's were adorned with bouquets of brightly colored flowers.

"Want a guess where these came from?" Connie asked as she retrieved the card from hers.

I didn't need to guess, I knew. My card read. 'Jennifer, we had a wonderful time and wanted to thank you for a lovely evening. We look forward to working closely with you in the future.' Both cards read the same to that point. It was signed, Robert Niles, Mike Park and Jim Sanders. Mine had a PS. 'I really look forward to seeing you again.' It was signed M.P.

I didn't know what to say.

"It was sweet of them." Connie said grinning.

"I could have done without the thought." I didn't think it was as cute as Connie did.

Apparently Bobbie had spread the word of the delivery. More than a few people came to see my flowers and read the card. I was teased mercilessly.

I didn't stop for lunch. I was so behind that I worked right through. I

was so engrossed that I didn't even notice the time.

Connie had to come out and tell me it was five o'clock. "Don't you have a date with Christy?" Startled at the sound of her voice, I looked up to see Connie standing over me. "I've got so much to do." I felt guilty for being so behind.

"Don't worry about it tonight. It'll still be there Monday morning. Now pack up and get out of here." She insisted. As I was getting ready to leave, she asked, "How much money do you have?"

I didn't have much. I had given Connie some money to begin to pay her back for what she'd spent on me last Sunday. I gave her money for food and rent and I sent most of what I had left to my parents. "I have about twenty dollars." I said after checking my wallet.

"That's not enough to take Christy out with." She went into her office and got her wallet. "Here's another forty. We'll just add it to your bill. Now go have a good time and don't forget to call me if you're going to be really late. I'll worry about you."

She was so cute. "I promise to call, Mom."

That made her smile. "Go on, get out of here."

Christy was waiting for me. I was a little timid and only kissed her on the cheek.

"Is that the best you can do?" She asked and immediately wrapped her arms around me and kissed me hard. It certainly dispelled any concern I had about her wanting to see me again.

"Mmmmm, I missed you." She said grinning like a cat. She stepped back to look at me. "I thought I told you to dress casual?" She asked.

I looked down at myself. I thought I had. "I did."

"Don't you have any jeans?"

I did, but not with me. "I didn't know you meant that casual."

"Come on." She said, dragging me to her bedroom. "I have some that should fit you."

I imagined the worst but she brought out a normal looking pair of jeans. Not even the label gave away the fact that they were really girls' jeans. "Put those on and I'll find you a top." She went to her closet and came back with an ordinary looking green tee shirt.



She stood looking at me holding the clothes. "What are we going to do about something on your feet?"

I had the answer to that one. "I have my gym bag in the car. I have a pair of sneakers."

"So what are you waiting for? Get changed."

I would have felt better if she didn't see my underwear but she wouldn't leave. When I was stepping into the jeans she came up behind me and squeezed my ass through my pale blue panties.

"That's such a turn on." She reached around me and rubbed my chest. "If Debbie and Brook weren't waiting for us, I'd rape you right here."

I was glad I could turn her on that way.

"These are a little tight." I commented as I tugged them up to my waist. There was no question they were girls' jeans now.

Christy checked them out from behind. "I don't know." She said grinning. "They don't look too tight to me." Again she playfully grabbed my ass.

Christy's friends were girls she worked with. Debbie worked for the agency as a secretary. She was cute enough but Brook, with her long blond hair, pixie like features and fantastic figure, was really beautiful, a model just like Christy.

We met them at a place called Crabby Bill's. At a picnic table on the outside deck, we ate raw oysters and lobster, washing it down with beer. A redneck band played country music while we got to know each other.

Debbie and Brook knew all about the party last Sunday. They were anything but judgmental about me. Christy obviously told them the views I had expressed and they wanted to hear more. We stayed there, after we finished stuffing ourselves, and talked for an hour.

I really liked her friends but parts of our conversation included such off the wall subjects. We talked about fashions, of course, but we also talked about the differences between mens' and womens' views on topical subjects. The conversation got pretty deep at times.

To sustain the position I had taken on Sunday, I supported the

women's view in most cases. I had always been sympathetic toward the women's movement and equality. With my experience the night before, I was more inclined than I had ever been to support the women's viewpoint.

Christy insisted on picking up the bill for the two of us. "I asked you out, remember?" I knew better than to argue with her. I was beginning to learn how stubborn she could be.

By the time we left the restaurant I felt like I had known these people for years and I really enjoyed them. We went from there to a movie. It had been months since I had been to a movie and I really had a good time.

Being with Christy made it all the more enjoyable. She was the most uninhibited girl I had ever met. She thought nothing of putting her arm around my waist and putting her hand on my ass as we walked up to the window at the movies and bought our tickets. Again, she insisted on paying.

I thought it was late when we got out of the movies around midnight but the others were still raring to go. Christy and her friends wanted to go to Debbie and Brook's place and have a few more drinks and talk. I was enjoying myself too much to object.

Debbie and Brook shared a two-bedroom apartment. It was a small apartment that they had decorated in such a way that I felt comfortable there as soon as we walked in.

I really liked Debbie's sharp wit. She was very quick to throw barbs and Brook was, more often than not, the recipient of her jokes. She didn't seem to get upset at her though.

Very little seemed to bother Brook. She was one of the most easy going people I had ever met. I could see why these two were roommates and why Christy liked them so much.

I helped Debbie in the kitchen. We popped pop corn while Christy and Brook got us all something to drink. I had enough beer at the restaurant but they had several bottles of wine in the fridge.

There were times I laughed so hard at Debbie's jokes that my sides hurt. I guessed Debbie liked me well enough because a number of her jokes started being at my expense. It was inevitable that they would tease me about my taste in clothes. I really didn't mind.

Other times, the conversation turned serious and we got on the topic

of sexuality. I learned that Christy and her friends disagreed strongly on some subjects. Debbie surprised me with one of her questions. "So Jeffrey, what are your views on homosexuality?"

I had known a few gays in New York. One was a guy I grew up and went to school with. We were 16 before I learned he was gay. We had shared too much for me to turn my back on him at that point. Our relationship did suffer but that wasn't because I was prejudiced. The peer pressure was so intense.

There had also been a few in prison. Those had been the ones I stayed clear of. "They're people just like anyone else. I've had gay friends."

Her next question hit a little close to home. "Have you ever thought what it would be like to be with a man?" Flashes of the night before came to me. It didn't take any time at all to answer that one. "No! God no!"

I wondered what the exchange of glances between them meant but I was content to be able to dispel any thought that I might be gay. After all, considering what Christy must have told them about me and the way I looked with my long hair and plucked eyebrows, it wouldn't be inconceivable that I might be gay. They seemed satisfied and the conversation turned to lighter subjects.

Before I knew it, it was two in the morning and I was feeling a little drunk. I wasn't the only one, Christy was slurring her words and had trouble sitting up straight.

"Stay the night. We've got room." Brook insisted. Neither of us could drive. I wasn't so drunk that I had forgotten my promise. I should have called Connie but it was so late I didn't want to wake her.

Christy and I took one bedroom while Debbie and Brook had the other. We didn't make love that night, we could barely stay awake after hitting the pillows. We did curl up together in only our underwear and held each other all night.

I awoke to the sweet smell of her hair in my face. She looked so beautiful there, sleeping beside me, with the morning sunlight hitting her face. I just laid there looking at her. Christy was the most beautiful girl I had ever met and she liked me, a lot. With my problem, I was certain I would lose her if I wasn't able to perform for her soon. As I lay there, I made up my mind to do anything and everything I could to please her while I waited for my hormone imbalance to correct itself.

She must have sensed me staring or perhaps it was the warmth of the sun on her face that brought her out of her dreams.

I at least knew why I was unable to perform now. Under the circumstances I was quite content to give her the pleasure that she desired. When she was exhausted, as before, she sought to please me. As I had caressed her breasts, she did the same to mine and it felt so wonderful.

"I love the way they feel Jeffrey." She whispered as she molded the skin around my swollen nipples. "You have the chest of a young girl. So soft and pliable."



It was a left-handed compliment. What so pleased her, scared the hell out of me. The pills the doctor prescribed for me didn't seem to have helped me at all. Each day I checked myself and each day my chest seemed to be swelling more. It was hardly noticeable but I was sure I felt a difference. The

enlargement of my breasts had begun to expand out beyond my nipples and I feared that what the doctor warned me could happen, was. I was developing breasts. Small mounds, poorly defined, but breasts.



"I've never known anyone like you Jeffrey." Christy whispered softly and she caressed me. Her finger gently traced the bridge of my nose,

the contours of my eyes and stroked my cheeks. "You have such a pretty face."

That was the way Virginia had described it. The way Christy said it when she looked at me was not the same. I felt like a freak at times but there, next to her, I felt wonderful. Not manly, certainly, but . . . It was too alien to put into words.

We laid there for a long time before we heard noises out in the living room that told us Debbie and Brook were up. "I need a shower." Christy said rolling out of bed.

"I'll wash your back." I offered, excited about the prospect of soaping her wet body under the hot cascading water.

"No," She put a hand out to stop me from getting out of bed. "I'm funny about that. I like to shower alone."

I was disappointed a little but I conceded and lay there while she went into the bathroom and showered.

It didn't take her very long. She came out wrapped in a towel with another on her head. "I saved you plenty of hot water."

It felt good to stand there and let it beat on me. I probably used more hot water than I should have but it felt so good.

I heard the bathroom door open. "I brought you something to put on. Debbie loaned us some clean underwear."

I peaked around the curtain. Christy was carefully laying a robe on the toilet seat. On top of the robe she laid a pair of little, lace trimmed, pink panties. "Are those for me?"

"Yea, wasn't that sweet of her? They're pretty. Hurry up now, they've started breakfast. Don't bother to dry your hair. You can do that after we eat. Just wrap a towel on your head and come out." Christy leaned over and kissed me, smiling. "Hurry now."

I bothered me that Christy had told her friends my preference in underwear. The ones they loaned me were nothing like the plain cotton ones I was used to.

I dried off and wrapped up my hair in a towel. I picked up the pink

panties with their pretty lace trim. My option was to go out there in just the short robe without anything on underneath. I couldn't do that. So they knew, I thought to myself, so what. They must have known last night and it didn't seem to bother them. I didn't want to make a fuss in front of everyone. I had to keep in mind that I did turn Christy on and I wanted to keep her happy.

I used the phone in the bedroom to call Connie.

"I was worried sick about you."

"I'm sorry. It was so late, I didn't want to call and wake you."

"I was up till three, waiting for you."

I felt terrible. "I'm really sorry."

"Where are you?"

"I'm with Christy. We stayed with some friends of hers. We drank a little too much and decided it was safer not to try to drive."

"Well, I'm glad you used good judgment about that at least Honey."

There was her endearing 'honey' again. She was acting like a mother again and I liked the feeling that she cared so much. "I'm so sorry I made you worry. I promise I won't do that again."

"I hope not. Oh, by the way. Virginia called last night. She wanted you to come for dinner tonight but I covered for you and told her you already had plans."

"Thanks Connie." I was relieved she had made excuses for me. Going to her house for dinner would have certainly meant dressing up as Jennifer again.

"She wants you to call her sometime today. You really should."

I didn't want to but she was right. "I will."

"When will you be home?"

"I'm not sure yet."

"I have to go out for a while and I don't expect to be back until some time late this afternoon. You have your key?"

"I have it."

"All right. Have fun Honey and I'll see you later." She paused. "And don't forget to call Virginia when you get home. I'm leaving her number by the phone."

"I won't forget."

They acted as if nothing was out of the ordinary. Brook and Debbie were wearing only their nighties. Christy and I apparently had their only bathrobes. I waited for Debbie to make a crack about my wearing her underwear that peeked out from under her short robe, but none came. I was a little uncomfortable with them dressed in just their nighties but it didn't seem to bother them at all.

Breakfast was wonderful. I hadn't sat down to eggs, toast and bacon in months.

"Debbie and I are going to the arts and crafts festival at Lathen Park. Why don't you two come with us?" Brook suggested to Christy and I.

"Jeffrey and I would love to. I go nuts over that stuff." Christy said, excited.

She didn't even ask if I did or if there was anywhere I had to go. I could have objected but why? It would be a nice change from my usual routine of work and home. I hadn't spent any time outdoors in a long time. The best reason to go was that Christy wanted me to.

Christy and I helped clean up the kitchen.

"Brook, can I borrow your rollers?" Christy asked.

"Sure." She was quick to respond.

"I've been dying to see what I can do with Jeffrey's hair."

I spun to face her. "My hair!?"

They ignored me. "He's got such pretty hair. Can I help?" Brook asked anxiously.

I injected myself between them. "But . . . "

"It's alright Jeffrey. It'll be fun." Christy cut me off. "Just sit down here and hush. I'm not going to hurt you."

Objecting was a waste of time. It seemed what Christy wanted, Christy got.

"Oh, he's going to look so pretty." Debbie got excited. The way they talked around me they could have been setting a wig.

"I've been just dying to do this." Christy grabbed another roller.

"I can see why." Debbie sat across the table from me. "Just wait till you see yourself." Debbie told me, all excited.

"There." Christy finished. "Now it just needs to dry Jeffrey." She kissed my cheek. "You are so sweet for letting me do your hair."

I wasn't aware I was 'letting' her do anything. She didn't ask. My problem was that I craved her affection.

"I'll get my makeup. We just have to go the rest of the way." Brook ran to her bedroom.

This was going too far. First there was Ms Castle, Virginia. Now Christy wanted to make me into a girl too. On top of everything my body was undergoing a change that the doctor couldn't even explain. "Christy, I don't want to do this."

"It's all in fun Jeffrey and you have such a pretty face already. Can't you do this little thing for me?"

Why did making her happy have to mean so much to me? "I just feel so strange letting you do this."

She knelt down beside me and looked up into my face. The other girls stood back waiting and listening. "It'll be fun. You'll be one of us for a little while. Do this to make me happy."

She was so hard to resist. "Do I have to go outside all made up?"

"Just to the arts and crafts festival. I know you'll enjoy yourself once

you just relax and go with it. You'll fool everyone."

Debbie couldn't hold back any longer. She echoed Christy's argument. "Jeffrey, trust me. No one will be able to tell. Come on and join us."

"Just wait until you see how pretty I make you look." Brook added.

I looked to each of their encouraging faces. How could it be any worse than going to the Hyatt in a dress? I got away with that. "Just this once."

"Alright Jeffrey!" I obviously made Christy very happy.

"Jennifer." I told her. "If I've got to do this, when were out, my name's Jennifer."

In the hour it took my hair to dry, Brook made me over. She used different makeup than I would have used but to tell her that would not have been wise. A few things that she did differently than Connie had, I liked better. My eyes were more pronounced and the shade of lipstick wasn't so striking. I checked the color, 'Pale Rose'.

Christy took out the rollers and brushed out my hair. The tight curls looked so strange in the mirror. They were all delighted with the way it came out.

When they finished with me and I was in the jeans Christy had loaned me and the print top Brook supplied, I had to admit I looked very convincing.



I drew the line at the bra stuffed with socks and Christy caved in without arguing. "So you look like a flat chested girl. That's not so unusual."

The weatherman on the car radio said it was going to rain that afternoon. The sky was already starting to cloud over when we got to the park where they were having the fair.

"Don't forget your purse." Debbie reminded me when I got out of the car without the one she loaned me. I hadn't forgotten it, but I wished they had.

I had expected them to try to embarrass me in some way but it never happened. They treated me as if I were just another of their girlfriends and after about an hour of walking around amid crowds, I began to feel a little more at ease.

I remember Connie's words and held my head up and kept my shoulders back. I tried to avoid eye contact with people but that wasn't always possible.

There were a lot of middle aged and older people there. I was not concerned with them. It was the people my age and younger that made me nervous. They were more in tune, I felt. They would be quicker to recognize a freak like me in the crowd.

While it remained overcast all day, it only drizzled off and on. It didn't stop us from browsing.

Christy and the others stayed close to me, as we went into almost every booth to look at all the things on sale. We spent more time in the jewelry booths than the others and in one, Christy bought me a pair of earrings she liked. I was wearing a pair of Brooks that she had loaned me. I tried to tell them that my small hoops were just fine but she playfully insisted. They were big and flashy and made me feel self conscious. She convinced me when she explained that they'd draw attention away from my face. Not, she insisted, that I needed to. Just the same, I took her advice and wore them.

We ate hot dogs for lunch. We bought them from a vendor at the food concession. The kid who served us went out of his way for the four attractive girls who were obviously without male companionship. I didn't pay him any attention but neither did the others. I thought that odd, considering how young and good looking he was.

I became very nervous when it seemed that a couple of young guys were following us. What I dreaded was being approached by a guy who wanted to make small talk. That could easily happen, walking with Christy, Brook and Debbie.

It never happened. I was just paranoid.

I made up a story for the girls, about Connie expecting to see me around three, explaining that we had work to do. It wasn't till after three when Debbie and Brook brought us back to their place to get Christy's car.

They offered to let me change but Christy insisted I would change at her place.

"You were marvelous today Jennifer." She apparently liked calling me that. She tenderly touched my cheek, then leaned across the front seat of the car and kissed it.

Christy was such a sensuous person. She made me feel warm all over.

When she pulled into her parking place in front of her apartment she suggested, "I'll make us dinner. Then afterwards we could go for a walk in the park, before it gets dark."

I did want to spend time with her, but not like this. "I can't Christy. I have to go. I promised Ms Sackett that I'd get some work done today."

We stood next to my car. "Don't you even want to come in and change?" She rubbed up against me, trying to entice me inside.

I wonder what the neighbors would think if they came out and saw two young women standing there rubbing against each other, kissing. "Christy, not here. Someone will see us. I really have to go."

"The hell with them. Don't go yet Jennifer."

"I have to." If I as much as set foot inside her door I knew in my heart, I'd have a terrible time getting away. Even having to go home, looking the way I did, was better than letting her trap me. I suddenly felt a wave of emotion well up inside me and I began to cry. "Christy," I said weeping. "I have to go." I fumbled with my keys, trying to get the door open. I couldn't even see the keyhole through my tears.

"Come on inside Jennifer." She put her arm around me and I just caved in.

Christy sat beside me on the couch while all the pent up emotions I had been building inside me came out with my tears.

"Let it all out." She kept telling me while she held me, stroking my head. I felt so silly, getting so emotional. It was a few days later before I realized that it was the hormones that caused my emotions to take such a roller coaster ride.

It was five before I left. Still wearing the clothes the girls had loaned me. Christy put my clothes in the car. My hair needed a washing before the curls would go away. Looking the way I did, Christy thought it would be better if I kept my makeup on until I got home. She repaired the eye makeup my tears had ruined. She wasn't aware I was capable of doing it myself.

Christy made me promise to call her when I got home.

The door man didn't say anything when he opened the door for me but I was sure his eyes followed me all the way to the elevator.

I was grateful that Connie wasn't home to see me in the makeup with my hair that way. Not that she would have minded. She thought I looked cute as a girl but not for the same reasons as Christy. It didn't turn Connie on. If Connie had asked me to do what the girls did to me, I would have done it myself, if for no other reason than to please her.

I made the obligatory phone call to Christy, to let her know I was home all right. I felt so foolish at that point for having broken into tears in front of her earlier. "No, I'm fine now."

"I really had fun today. I still can't get over how wonderful you were."

Wonderful? Was she talking about in bed or the way I looked, made up? "I'm glad you had a good time." There wasn't much enthusiasm in my voice and she picked up on it.

"Didn't you have a good time?" She sounded genuinely concerned.

Telling her no would have been a turn off for her and I certainly wasn't ready to end our relationship, then and there. I tried to sound more enthused. "I did, honest."

She sounded relieved. "Debbie and Brook think you're the greatest thing since sliced bread. They adore you."

"I think they're great too." Friday night had been a blast with them. Even Saturday, with Debbie's lighthearted kidding and Brooks fussing over me, was fun.

"I think you're very special too Jeffrey."

At least she called me by my real name. What do you say to a girl that thinks you looked better as a girl than a guy? Still . . . It wasn't like she did it to ridicule me. She could have done that easily and I imagined most girls would have. Then I thought about the reaction from the girls at the office. How they loved me as Jennifer. It was just that I felt differently toward Christy than I did toward my friends. I wanted her to be more than just another friend. I decided not to let what happened today ruin everything. I was no worse for it. "I really like you too, Christy."

"Would you like to get away for a day? Debbie and Brook and I were planning to just get out of the city tomorrow."

I wasn't ready for another episode like today. "I can't. I promised Connie I would do something with her tomorrow."

She was disappointed. "We'll do it another time. I'll call you tomorrow night, when we get home." She promised.

I jumped right in the shower and washed away the reminders of the day. I didn't know till I was drying my hair that it didn't lose all the curls from the set that morning. Even washing it again didn't work so I pulled it all back with my brush and, with a rubber band, put it in a pony tail. Connie would wonder about it, of course, since I hardly ever wore it that way. I just didn't want to tell her what Christy and the others talked me into doing that day.

I buried the jeans, top and panties in one of the dresser drawers. Christy had said not to worry about returning them. Since they fit me so well, I could keep them. The top was Brook's and I would return it, and Debbie's panties, as soon as the opportunity arose.

I hadn't forgotten my promise to Connie and called Virginia. I would have just as soon not but.

She was thrilled to hear from me. "I just wanted to thank you again for having lunch with me Jennifer." I didn't feel comfortable with her calling me that but to contradict her wouldn't have served any purpose.

"I called last night to ask you if you wanted to go out and have dinner with me but Connie explained you were out with your friend, Christy. Did you have a nice time?"

She probably would have loved to hear about what we did that morning. "Oh yes. We ate at a place called Crabby Bill's, then went to a movie."

She wanted to know what I ate, what movie we saw and what kinds of things we talked about. I answered most of her questions but didn't give her all the details of our conversations. I didn't understand why she was so curious about me.

"Does Christy like it when you pretend to be Jennifer?" That one caught me off guard.

I lied. "She doesn't know about Jennifer."

"Wouldn't it be easier if she did?"

"Not for me." I told her. It was time to end the conversation. "I have to go now Virginia. Connie will be home soon and I want to fix dinner."

"That's very sweet of you."

Lying to the woman didn't make me feel very good about myself.

"Would you like to come over and have dinner with me tomorrow?" She offered sweetly.

I thought fast, lying yet again. "Oh, I'd love to but I promised to take Christy out tomorrow evening."

"That will work out fine. I always have my dinner in the afternoon on Sundays. We'll have time to talk and get to know each other a little better."

My excuse backfired. If I tried to make up another, she'd certainly know I wasn't anxious to spend time with her. "Is it all right if I just come as myself?" I prayed she wouldn't ask me to dress up as Jennifer again.

"Dear, you just come over any way that you're comfortable. Dinner will be ready around two. Why don't you try to get here around one?"

I had to ask, "Who else will be there." I assumed her husband, whom I hadn't met yet. Who else she invited, I had no idea.

"It'll just be you and I."

That was a relief. I could go as myself and just pass a few hours with the woman. It couldn't be so bad. "I'm looking forward to it." I said pleasantly.

"Wonderful. I'll see you at one. Have a nice evening dear."

"Thank you, you too. Goodbye." What was her interest in me? Maybe I'd find out tomorrow, I decided.

I took advantage of the peace and quiet. The thought of making myself dinner didn't appeal to me. I had eaten more in the past two days than I normally ate in a week. I still felt stuffed.

I curled up on the couch in my leggings and oversized tee shirt. They had become my favorite things to wear, lounging around the house. There was nothing on TV that interested me so I just read magazines till Connie got home around seven.

Before she even put her things down, she noticed. "You look cute with your hair that way. I like it."

If she liked it in a pony tail, she would have loved the way it looked before I had washed it. "Thanks." Connie always had a kind word or a compliment. Even if it was left-handed.

She ran her fingers through my pony tail. "There, that looks better."

She had fluffed it out, making it fuller, I found out later.

"So, did you and Christy have a good time?" She sat next to me on the couch.

"We had fun." What else could I tell her. "I like her friends."

"What did you all do?" She asked.

"I met her at her place then we went and met Debbie and Brook at Crabby Bill's."

"I've heard of that place. They're supposed to have great seafood."

"Then we went to a movie and back to Debbie's and Brook's apartment."

"That's when you started drinking?"

"Yes, well no. We had a few beers with dinner but I wasn't driving."

"Good."

"Debbie had a couple of bottles of wine and they were gone before we knew it."

"It's just as well you stayed there."

"We got up in the morning, had breakfast then went to an arts and crafts festival."

"You wore the same clothes the whole time?" Connie asked.

I decided it was better to tell her, at least part of it. "No, Christy loaned me a pair of jeans and a tee shirt."

"I'm glad she had something that fit you."

I was going to tell her that they didn't, that they were skin tight but that didn't seem important now. "Then we dropped off the others, I changed and Christy brought me back to her place to get my car and I came home." That was the short, uncomplicated version and that was enough.

"I'm glad you had a nice time. Are you and Christy going to see each other again?"

"Sure." Under different circumstances.

Connie changed the subject. "I'm going to make something to eat. Are you hungry or have you already eaten? I'm sorry I'm so late getting home. I was having a good time shopping."

"I'm not really hungry." I told her. I thought about asking her what

she bought but decided not to.

"Do you feel all right?"

"I'm fine." I assured her.

It wasn't till she was sitting down to eat at the kitchen table that she remembered. She called out to me, where it sat in the living room. "Did you remember to call Virginia?"

I got up and went in to her. "I called her as soon as I got home."

"What did she say?"

"She invited me to come for dinner tomorrow."

Connie just looked at me a moment. I read her mind. "She said to dress any way that makes me comfortable."

"What are you going to wear?" Connie put down her fork.

"I thought I'd just wear slacks and a shirt."

Connie didn't say anything, it was just the way she looked at me for a second before she picked up her fork and resumed eating.

"What?" I asked.

She set it down again and looked at me. "Honey, I'm not going to tell you what to do. You have to make up your own mind. It's just that it's Jennifer she wants to see. We both know that."

"She told me to come any way I was comfortable."

She spoke to me like a mother. "Of course she did. She wouldn't tell you to dress up as Jennifer, would she?"

It was obvious now. "No, she wouldn't." I sat at the table.

"Whatever Virginia's reasons are, it's that side of you she saw at lunch that she wants to come to dinner tomorrow."

"I just feel so strange . . ."

"Jeffrey, just do what your heart tells you, you should and you know I'll support you."

I knew that I could rely on that. It was my decision, alone.

No more was said on the subject that night. We relaxed and watched TV.

"I really am happy to have you living here with me Jeffrey. I never realized how lonely it was, living alone." She hugged me as we got up to go to bed.

"I'm really happy here too."

"Do you suppose I could have a kiss good night?" She asked so sweetly.

I couldn't say no. "Sure." I answered smiling and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

She returned it, hugging me again. "Goodnight Honey."

"Good night . . . Connie."

I compromised. I wore the slacks and shirt I planned on wearing but, for Connie, I did my hair the way I had for the luncheon. As I blew it dry and then curled it with my curling iron, I wondered. If I had a set of rollers like Brook's, would I be able to set it the way Christy had? It was just a passing thought.

I liked the way I did my makeup better than Christy's way. The only thing she did that I did prefer was the way she put on the eyeliner. I put it both over and under my eyes and they stood out more prominently. I thought they looked better that way. I couldn't bring myself to say 'prettier'.

If I had 'Pale Rose' lipstick, I would have worn that instead of the deeper red that Connie had bought me. I thought to myself, I could stop and pick up some and some nail polish to match, but no. I just couldn't bring myself to walk into a store alone, as Jennifer, and buy cosmetics.

I conceded to wearing jewelry and Connie agreed that I didn't have to wear the bra and falsies. "You look very nice. I like the way you did your eyes." Connie told me with an approving smile. I still felt foolish but my self confidence was improving. Connie was responsible for that. This was going

to be the first time I ventured out on my own. Granted it was only a matter of driving to Virginia's but I would be alone.

I had on my wide serpentine gold necklace and bracelet. "Your other set would look much nicer with that outfit." Connie advised.

"They're just so feminine looking." I argued. Connie just looked at me smiling. What could I have been thinking of?

"You should wear that nice ring she gave you too."

I changed the jewelry and put on the ring. "How's this?"

"Fine, but your earrings just don't go. We have to get you some new ones. Your hoops are just too plain."

Plain was all right.

"Let's take a look in my jewelry box."

I followed her into the bedroom. She held a few of her earrings up to my ears. "These." She decided, holding up a heart shaped gold drops. "These are perfect."

If I thought the necklace was too feminine, the heart earrings just pushed it over the brink. "Aren't these a little too much?" I asked.

"Absolutely not." She said, concentrating as she put them in my ears. "They look lovely on you."

Connie stood back and looked at me. Her expression changed to a wide grin. She all but laughed.

"What, what is it." Did I look that absurd?

"I was just thinking."

"About what?" I was anxious to know.

"I just was thinking it was so sweet that we're swapping jewelry and mine actually looks better on you than it does on me."

The one thing that terrified me, especially being alone, was the recurring concern that I'd have a problem or an accident and I would be

stopped. It occurred to me that my license said I was 'Jeffrey Mitchell' and anyone looking at it and my picture would certainly know that there was something wrong. I drove very carefully.

I was stopped at a light when a car full of teenage boys pulled up along side of me. I only looked over at them by instinct, without thinking. Two of them were looking at me. They said something but I couldn't hear what it was with my windows rolled up. I looked away immediately and pretended to ignore them. When they pulled away from the light, the kid in the front passenger's seat was still watching me and yelled out the window. All I could make out was, "Hey Babe . . ." I was glad I couldn't hear the rest.

The rest of the ride was uneventful. I kept my eyes on the road the rest of the way. I pulled into Virginia's driveway at just one o'clock.

She was thrilled to see me and just had to make a fuss about how nice I looked. She escorted me to a small sitting room off the main foyer. At the party, a week ago, I had seen only the large formal living and dining rooms. The rest of the house was unknown to me. When I commented about how large and beautiful it was, she just had to give me a tour.

At the luncheon she asked me questions about my family. Now Virginia wanted to know more detail. She asked about my childhood, friends, my parents, the trouble I had gotten into, how I was treated in jail, everything, right up till I went to work for Connie. I had expected questions about why I looked and dressed the way I did, but to my surprise, she didn't ask. It was a relief because I would have had a real problem answering.

Dinner was excellent but I was careful to watch my manners and not to eat too much.

When the girl that served us cleared the table, Virginia announced. "I hope you don't mind but I couldn't resist buying you something." She went to the lowboy and, opening the cabinet, withdrew a brightly wrapped package and handed it to me. "I just couldn't resist."

"You didn't have to do that." I said sincerely. I wondered what feminine thing she had bought me this time?

Inside the box, neatly folded under crisp tissue paper, was a white silk tee shirt with a delicate lace inset. I tried to show delight when I held it up. "It's very pretty."

"I hoped you'd like it. It's simple, but elegant. I think our taste in clothes is pretty similar." I could see she was thrilled with my reaction.

My eye caught sight of something else in the bottom of the box. It was another gift, a small box wrapped in pink tissue paper and tied with red ribbon. "What's this?"

"It's just a little something that means a great deal to me and I want you to have it Jennifer."

Knowing it was something she treasured, I unwrapped it carefully. It was a necklace with a small heart locket. It looked expensive with its detailed scrollwork and a single tiny diamond in the center, I assumed it was real. "It's beautiful."

"Look inside." She told me. It contained a tiny picture of me. It was the me that had been at her party. It had to have been one of the pictures taken by the photographer that had been there that night.

Virginia helped me put the necklace on. "I want you to wear it always. Let it remind you that I'm always here for you if you need me." Virginia hugged me, holding me close. When we finally parted, I saw her eyes were moist with tears.

"Are you all right?" I asked. I didn't know what made her react that way. She was so sweet to me and I was genuinely concerned.

"I will be." She assured me. "Now you better run along. You don't want to keep your young lady waiting and I'm sure you want to go home and change."

"I really had a nice time." I felt guilty about lying about my supposed date with Christy. I would have stayed but she would have known I had lied to her if I did. "Maybe next Sunday you could have dinner with me again and maybe visit a little longer? We could have a little more time together. I'd really like that."

How could I say no? "So would I." I just couldn't resist giving her a kiss on the cheek. I knew it was the right thing to do and I felt good for doing it.

My mood was kind of melancholy the rest of the day. I went home and showered and changed, washing away Jennifer again. I only took off Virginia's locket while I showered. I had made a promise and I intended to

keep it, for her sake. It would remain hidden under my clothes.

Work kept me pretty busy that week. We received notice that we were awarded the contract with Jansen Sportswear. The work was to begin in October and a lot of the shooting would take place out of town, in LA and a half dozen other locations around the country. There was a little celebration at work that night.

I was busy typing a letter for Connie on Wednesday afternoon when my phone rang, It was Bobbie. "There's a call from Jansen for Jennifer." Bobbie thought it was funny.

"Who is it?" I was almost afraid to ask.

"It's Carol Hubbard, Mike Park's secretary."

I should have expected it. The three men knew me as Jennifer. What else would they tell their people. "I'll take it."

"It's all yours Jennifer."

The woman called to let us know a fax was coming and wanted to introduce herself to me since we would be working together in the future. I played along. I decided it couldn't do any harm since I would never meet her face to face.

When I hung up, I went in and told Connie about the call. She got a laugh out of it.

Christy called me that afternoon, asking me to go out with her that night. I used the excuse of having to work late to say no. I knew what would happen if I agreed to meet her and I just didn't want to deal with having her turn me into Jennifer again. We did make a date for Friday evening but I played it coy and said I would meet her at the Point Club. If I had met her at her place she would have somehow convinced me to go as Jennifer and I didn't want to do that. It worked out well.

I only got to the gym twice that week. I went with Trish both times. I was getting used to the aerobics and I felt good to expend my energy that way.

I spoke to my Mom that Saturday. She kept asking when I was coming home. I told her I didn't know when I could get away. I had no desire for my Mom or my Dad to see me, I had changed so much. They

wouldn't appreciate the person I had become. "It's just so busy Mom. I just can't see how I can."

She offered to send me some of my old clothes but I told her I was fine and didn't really need them. She didn't understand why not. "I've pretty much got a new wardrobe Mom." She would have been appalled if she saw it, or me for that matter.

"Tina says she still hasn't heard from you."

I finally said goodbye to Mom after promising I'd call Tina as soon as we got off the phone. I made the call from the bedroom.

"Jeff!" She was surprised to hear my voice. Funny, no one called me just 'Jeff' anymore. I wasn't used to it. "I miss you terribly."

"I miss you too Tina." I really did miss the good times we used to have together.

"Why haven't you called me? Are you mad at me for some reason?"

"No, it's just that there's so little time for anything. I work so much." It was lame and I knew it.

"There's always time for a phone call. You've been gone so long. Are you seeing someone?" It was a logical assumption. It would also have been an easy way to end our relationship. Unfortunately, I still cared for Tina and, while it was hopeless to try to maintain a long distance relationship, I didn't want to lose her forever. The other side of the coin was, if she saw me like I was or learned what I had been doing, she would have been absolutely repulsed. I was convinced of that.

It was a catch 22. I couldn't hold on to her but I didn't want to let go either. Telling her I was seeing Christy would have been a disaster. "There's no one else." I told her. I never used to lie to people I cared about.

"Will you be home soon?" Tina's voice sounded so sweet.

"I don't know right now. We just got a new contract this week and we'll be working day and night to get ready to start shooting in October." That was true. With everything else we had going on, it was going to get crazy.

We talked for about an hour. It was so good to talk the way we used

to. I promised to call her, at least once a week.

I spent the day with Virginia the following Sunday. To please her, I arrived in one of the skirts from her collection and the white blouse she had given me the week before. Of course the heart pendant hung at my chest.

We talked again but conversation wasn't totally centered on me. We talked about her a little, her family and her business.

Virginia was divorced. She had apparently separated from her husband about two years ago. She had a son but he apparently died. She wasn't anxious to talk about him and I didn't press.

Her ex-husband had started Castle Sportswear but it didn't really take off until Virginia became involved. She took over the company completely after their divorce. It was her idea to start the new line for men.

She had so many stories to tell. Some hilarious. We laughed until our sides hurt. I stayed till nine that night and didn't regret a minute of the time I spent with her. As usual, she had a gift for me.

"You don't have to do this Virginia." I insisted. "I come to see you because I enjoy your company, not to get presents." It was the truth.

"It pleases me to buy you things. Don't be angry with me Jennifer."

"I couldn't be angry with you." I wanted the hug this time.

I worked late most of the week. I had dinner at Christy's on Tuesday night after I made her promise we would just have a quiet dinner at home. She kept part of her promise. Debbie and Brook joined us. I really had a good time. Debbie couldn't resist teasing me about that Saturday, two weeks prior.

I think it was Thursday morning of that week, when I was getting ready for work, that realization really hit me. I had put on my red polyester shirt that I hadn't worn in a while. I just caught a passing, sideways, glimpse of myself in the mirror and there was the unmistakable shape of my small breasts, pressing against the silky material. When you see yourself day in and day out, subtle changes are not always easily discernable. I stood there, aghast. I immediately took the shirt off and changed it for another, looser fitting one.



The medication, which I took faithfully, wasn't working. I felt the soft mounds of flesh. Now that I noticed how much my chest had changed, I

was also more aware of how much I had changed in other ways.

Almost in proportion to the swelling in my chest, I was losing my manhood. My penis and testicles had slowly been shriveling up. They were barely discernable anymore, through the thin material of my underwear. In pantyhose, they were undetectable. I prayed that my ailment was only temporary.

My skin was smoother than it had ever been. I was shaving only about once every other week and the hair was so much lighter on my face. I still had not grown any hair on my chest and my leg and arm hair hardly grew at all. I had used the Delipatory Connie gave me, on my legs last Sunday before going to Virginia's but there was hardly any hair to remove. When would it all stop and let me go back to being myself?

I was afraid to go back to the doctor, afraid to hear a diagnosis that would condemn me to this new body. Part of my problem was that it was humiliating to go there and have him examine me. Everyone in his office, including the nurse and receptionist already knew of my malady.

I stopped off at the drug store on the way to work and bought a rib belt. In the men's room at work I took off my shirt and put the restraining band of spandex around my chest. Checking myself with my shirt back on, the wrap didn't show through the heavy material. I managed to keep it hidden from Connie and the others at work but I didn't kid myself. Sooner or later Connie or someone would notice.

I made excuses for not seeing Christy. She would have seen as soon as we were intimate with each other and she never missed an opportunity to have me please her.

I surprised Connie as I came out of the bedroom Sunday, ready to go to Virginia's for what was becoming our regular Sunday get together.

"You're wearing your bra?" I was surprised she noticed so quickly.

"I thought it might make Virginia happy and I was worried about looking strange without one under this blouse." I had on the red one I hadn't dared wear in weeks. It was the first time in a week that I wore anything but my bulkier, loose fitting shirts.

She didn't have to know the real reason I was wearing the bra. It was such a relief to get the tight restraint off my chest. I almost filled the small cups of the bra and wearing it let me breath normally for a change.

"You look very natural and pretty. Those breast forms are so real looking."

Of course I looked natural. I wished I had been wearing the falsies.

"Is that a new skirt?"

"A gift from Virginia." It was the one she gave me the week before.

"It's very flattering. You look good in a slim skirt." She said with a grin.

"You are such a tease." I loved Connie's sense of humor. She could joke and I didn't feel offended.

I felt funny asking but, "Connie, do you think we could find me a new pair of heels?" That Sunday was going to be the second time I had worn the same shoes when I saw Virginia and I was becoming fashion conscious enough that I felt funny about wearing the same shoes too often.

Connie didn't mind at all. "Of course Honey. We'll go out one night this week and buy you some new ones."

"Thanks." Connie was so obliging.

"Have a nice day Honey. I'll see you tonight."

I didn't make it out of the parking lot before I took off the heels. Trying to work the pedals with them on was so awkward.

After greeting me and fussing over how pretty I looked, Virginia sort of shocked me with her suggestion.

"There's an art exhibit at a little studio downtown and it's the last day. I thought we might go see it and have dinner out for a change."

I wasn't sure what to say. I would have preferred to stay right there with her, as usual.

She could see I was nervous. "We don't have to go, Jennifer. I just thought you might like to get out for a while. I know it can't be very exciting, sitting around here all day."

I was honest with her. "I'm afraid to go out in public."

"You needn't be Sweetheart." She put an arm around my shoulder. "You conducted yourself beautifully when we met for lunch. No one even imagined that you were anything but a charming young lady."

As far as Virginia was concerned, that was a compliment. "I just feel so self conscious."

She gave me the same smile that Connie so often reassured me with. "I want to help you get over that feeling Dear. Why don't we just go to the gallery for a little while then we'll come back here for dinner. How would that be?"

I pictured a small art gallery, almost deserted, apart from a few patrons, wandering around looking at paintings. I had never been to an art gallery before. I decided, with Virginia beside me for support, that I could handle it. "I guess that would be all right."

To reassure me, Virginia added, "If I becomes too awkward for you we'll leave and come home."

That was enough to settle it. "Alright I guess, let's go then."

Virginia was delighted. "Wonderful. I'll just get a jacket and we'll go. Do you want one Dear? You really should have one on. It would look much more appropriate. I have a black one that would look perfect with your outfit?"

I wasn't about to question her judgement. "Yes, please." I followed her to her bedroom where, in her enormous wardrobe closet, she found the garment she was looking for. It was lightweight and appeared to be of the same material as the skirt she had given me. I worried about the shoulder pads. "They don't look funny?" I asked her, trying it on. It was a very expensive label.

"No, not at all. You have nice, narrow, sloping shoulders. It looks fine."

Narrow sloping shoulders. A disfigurement for a man that had always bothered me and now made me appear all the more feminine.

It was an overcast day and that did little to brighten my outlook. We had to park a block away from the gallery and walk. I had gotten pretty used

to walking in heels but it was a little different on concrete sidewalks with all the cracks and an occasional grating to maneuver around. I could just picture getting a heel caught in something. That would be so embarrassing.

A man was holding the door and greeting people at the door to the gallery. He ushered Virginia and I in with a pleasant smile and greeting. "Good afternoon ladies."

Virginia responded so I felt obliged. "Good afternoon."

I continued to amaze me that no one thought my voice odd, for a girl. I mentioned it to Virginia.

"Not at all Jennifer. It's a little deeper than most girls' but not at all unusual. You have a nice voice. Some even find that attractive. You should be pleased."

Another assault to my fading manhood.

The gallery was a little more crowded than I had expected but it wasn't so bad.

Virginia apparently knew a great deal about art and as we went from painting to painting, she tried to instill in me an appreciation of the artist's works. I stayed close to her, trying to be invisible.

Occasionally, someone, also looking at the same painting, would make a comment or observation. Virginia showed her love and knowledge of art in her responses.

Once, as we were looking at a particularly beautiful rendering of a landscape, an older woman standing next to me made a comment and I couldn't help but agree with her. I spoke before I gave it a thought.

Sometime during the two hours we spent pleasurably walking around looking and talking, I lost self-conscious Jeffrey and became a relaxed Jennifer. I didn't feel threatened. I didn't feel that everyone was watching me with suspecting eyes. I just strolled along beside Virginia, two people just enjoying the afternoon and each other's company.

It had rained sometime while we were in the gallery. When we stepped out on the sidewalk, the air smelled so fresh and clean. The foreboding dark clouds were gone and the sun shown around the few white billowing clouds that remained to make the blue sky a work of art.

Virginia suggested, "It's so nice, why don't we just take a stroll and look in the store windows?"

My apprehension was all but gone. That sounded nice to me. "I'd like that."

We strolled casually up the quiet street. On any other day of the week, the street would have been filled with people hurrying here and there. Atlanta's downtown, a busy business district, was like a ghost town on a Sunday with all the offices closed and the small shops that catered to them, taking a day off.

We occasionally came to a woman's clothing store with beautifully dressed mannequins in the windows. Since these stores catered to the businesswoman, most of the fashions were business attire. Virginia would comment on the skirt suits and dresses. I didn't have much to say. I was interested but not for the same reasons. I didn't want her to think I was enthused.

One shop stood out. I was different from the others. Its displays said it offered more casual clothes. One dress in particular caught Virginia's eye. It was a yoke waisted floral print with a lace collar and calf length hemline.

"Isn't that pretty?" Virginia commented, admiring it.

"Very." I agreed casually. It was a figure flattering dress and just for a second, I wondered how it would look on me. Just for a second.

We turned left at the next corner which brought us out on a park that ran along a gently flowing river. I was unfamiliar with Atlanta and surprised to find it had a river flowing through it.

The park was narrow but full of trees shading its beautiful green lawns. Flowerbeds, overflowing with colorful flowers, bordered the path that wove through the park.

I felt so peaceful and serene walking along by the river. The park was not empty. There were others enjoying it on that Sunday. Several blankets were spread out on the grass and young families were enjoying the afternoon.

We passed two girls with textbooks on their laps, studying. We saw joggers getting their exercise. All in all, it was picture perfect.

We followed the path until we came to the street that would take us back to Virginia's car. I was almost sad to leave the peaceful setting.

Buckling up, Virginia asked, "Are you sure you wouldn't like to have dinner out? It's early yet. The restaurants won't get busy for hours and I know this lovely little place just about a mile from here. It's right on the river and we could get a table with a view and enjoy the rest of the afternoon?"

As good as I felt just then, how could I say no? "That sounds really nice."

Virginia was thrilled that I changed my mind.

The restaurant was everything she said it would be. Especially the part about its being quiet and uncrowded. I did lose some of the serenity I had felt earlier, in the more closed in surroundings. It wasn't too bad though. I was getting more comfortable, acting like a lady in a restaurant. It was certainly not second nature to me but I managed without mishap.

The food was excellent and the view was wonderful. I felt guilty not contributing to the check when we were done. "Don't be silly Jennifer. This is my treat."

The only embarrassing moment was using the ladies' room. It would have been impossible to wait until we got back to Virginia's. We had passed an hour and a half in pleasant conversation over dinner and it was getting to be the regular dinner hour. The restaurant was filling. We did not have the ladies' room to ourselves.

I wanted to get in and out quickly but we had to wait in line for a stall. Virginia let me go ahead of her. When I came out, Virginia took my place. I wouldn't have thought to redo my lipstick if I hadn't noticed a woman doing hers. Afterward, I found myself in the awkward position of waiting for Virginia out in the restaurant lobby, alone. It was better than standing around in the ladies' room.

Having men looking at me, some staring, made me very uncomfortable. Even men accompanied by their wives took at least casual notice of me. The uneasiness returned. Were they staring at a guy, dressed up as a girl? I wasn't so sure anymore.

If it wasn't that, if it was, instead, men staring at a woman, then I felt almost as self conscious for looking so convincing.

I knew I used to do that to women but I never thought anything of it. It bothered me now. Did it bother women to have men stare, or was it just me?

Virginia finally joined me and we left. I asked her about it as we drove home to her house. "Not really. It's something you'll get used to. We don't think much of it." She did add, "Now if a woman gets caught staring at a man, that's different. Then she's accused of being a flirt, or worse. We'll talk sometime about the inequalities between men and women and how it affects us." I wasn't ignorant. That would be a heavy discussion. I was content not to get into it now.

We got back to Virginia's around six thirty. She made us tea. I had actually acquired a taste for it.

I took off her jacket that she had loaned me and carefully placed it on the back of the sofa.

Virginia apparently couldn't wait till later to come out with her usual gift because we no sooner sat in the living room than she pulled it from under the couch and handed me the boxes, two this time.

"Virginia, you really have to stop this." I insisted.

"I don't want to stop Jennifer and I intend to continue for as long as it pleases you." She said with an impish smile.

How was I ever going to end the charade when she kept doing things like this?

I held up the light weight, white blouse.

"It's called a funnel collar." Virginia explained. The material was much more sheer than anything I had ever worn. She must have realized what I was thinking. "Look in the box dear." There was a camisole to go under it. No way could I wear it, I told myself.

The second box contained another new skirt. It was an above the knee length, navy skirt with a back zipper and a short slit on the side. I appeared pleased for her sake. "They're beautiful Virginia."

"I knew you'd love them." She beamed. "Do you have blue shoes to go with the skirt?" She asked. "I almost bought you a pair but I wasn't sure."

I don't know what I was thinking when I said. "No, I don't but Connie was going to take me shopping for new shoes one evening this week. I'll get a pair then."

"Oh, I'd love to join the two of you. What night are you going?"

I had opened a door without thinking. "I don't know yet."

"Please call me when you've decided."

I knew then that I would regret telling her of our plans. The irony was that it had been my idea to go.

It was about eight when I finally got up to go.

"Don't forget your jacket." She told me.

"On Virginia. I can't take that too."

"Of course you can Sweetheart."

"Nice jacket." Connie commented as I walked in the door.

"Thanks. Virginia drives me a little crazy with all her presents."

Connie loved the skirt and blouse. "Virginia really has nice taste. Now we definitely have to get you new shoes."

That reminded me. "She wants to go shopping with us when we go. You've got to help me to keep her from buying me things."

"Virginia has a mind of her own. If she wants to buy you clothes, there's not a whole lot you or I are going to be able to do about it."

What she said was true but, "I'm worried that she'll want me to try on clothes in the store."

"If she does, you'll handle it." Connie tried to reassure me. "Don't worry."

I did worry.

"What am I going to do with all the things she gives me?"

"Well, it does seem to give her a great deal of pleasure when you wear them for her."

That was true.

"We went to an art gallery today." I told Connie. I answered the concern on her face. "It went pretty well. I actually enjoyed myself."

"No mishaps?"

"No, not even a funny look. We took a walk and window shopped afterward, had a walk in a park and then she took me out to dinner."

"You went out to dinner?"

"It was kind of nice. It was early and the restaurant was quiet."

"I'm so proud of you."

"I did panic just a little. After we finished dinner and went to the ladies' room," I raised my eyebrows for emphasis and Connie laughed. "I was waiting for Virginia in the lobby and a couple of men were staring at me."

"That's not so strange. When you want to, you make a very attractive young woman."

I let that pass. I didn't want to be a 'very attractive young woman'. I hadn't made my point yet. "Yes, but they were with women, their wives I assume."

"That doesn't stop men from looking."

"But doesn't that bother their wives?" I didn't think I had ever looked at another girl when I was with Tina or Christy, at least not the way they looked at me, staring the way they did.

"Of course it does but we don't say too much about it. Most men think nothing of it and they say we're over reacting if we do."

"That doesn't seem fair. Guys can do it but women can't?"

"Oh, my darling Jennifer. Who said life is fair? You have so much to

learn about men." That lightheartedness I enjoyed so much in her, returned.

"I'm sure you'll teach me Mother."

"Oh yes Daughter. It's a mother's responsibility, after all."

One of my responsibilities was to open and screen Connie's mail. So it was no surprise on Tuesday when I was the first to see the letter from Jansen Sportswear. I dropped everything and rushed into Connie's office, closing the door behind me. Connie looked up, surprised at my panicked look. "What's wrong?"

I waved the letter in front of her. "Mike Park is coming here, Thursday!"

Connie took the letter and scanned it. She apparently didn't understand my anxiety. "He's coming to finalize the details for their spring catalog." She stated simply. "What's wrong?" Then it dawned on her, "Oh my God, I forgot!"

"What am I going to do?"

"Well, to start with, don't panic. We'll figure something out." Connie was calm at least. "I can't afford for you not to be here with me and he's going to expect to see you at that desk out there."

That was not what I wanted to hear.

"Let me think about this."

I went back to my desk feeling very uncomfortable and nervous. I could see Connie making some phone calls. I didn't know if it was about my problem or not. I tried to work but I couldn't concentrate.

Connie came out of her office about ten minutes later. "Come with me."

"Where are we going?" I asked, getting up and following her out of the office.

"The conference room."

Why were we going there? There were no meetings scheduled.

Connie took her normal place at the head of the long table, with me beside her. "What's going on?"

"I've called a staff meeting."

"What's it about?" I already knew and I was terrified.

It took about five minutes for everyone to arrive, including Mr. Bennett and Mr. Hamilton.

When everyone was there Connie addressed them. "I've called this meeting because we have a slightly embarrassing problem and I'll need your assistance to deal with it."

I sat there, afraid to say anything or look at anyone.

"As you all know, Jeffrey and I found ourselves in a very embarrassing position a few weeks ago when we negotiated with the Jansen people. His contribution to our negotiations was substantial. Even though he found himself in a very embarrassing position."

There was a low buzzing of comments in the room and most everyone turned to look at me. The women remembered with amusement but the two men, who were not here, only glanced at me with disdain. They knew what took place from the gossip mill. I could only assume they didn't approve and who could blame them?

Connie waited until everyone quieted down. "What we didn't consider, when we did the only thing we could that day, was that we were complicating future dealings with these people. Now one of the gentlemen is coming back on Thursday."

The buzzing started again. Now the faces that stared at me were not all smiling, most showed concern. I felt so embarrassed. "I've deliberated over what to do about this problem and the only logical solution creates a problem for one of us. Without the support of each of you and your entire departments, we won't be able to pull it off."

Oh God! I thought to myself.

"I don't see that I'm going to have any choice but to ask Jeffrey to bring back Jennifer while Mr. Parks is here."

There, she said it, just what I dreaded. How could I do this?

Their responses were immediate and most had no problem with me pretending to Jennifer. Bennett didn't seem to have a problem with it. He made a joke to Mrs. Steffens, sitting there next to him. I couldn't hear what he said but Mrs. Steffens laughed. She was just one of the women who thought Jennifer was so cute.

Mr. Hamilton just sat there, stone faced.

Connie turned to me as she continued to address the group. "I'm sure you all realize how terribly awkward this is for Jeffrey and I'm asking a great deal of him." She turned back to the others. "Just so everyone has a chance to get use to the change, Jennifer will start tomorrow. Please tell all your people and stress that he is to be treated appropriately. Are there any questions?"

Now the ribbing began. "I assume this means that Jennifer will be using the ladies' room?"

"Does this mean he's entitled to maternity benefits?"

"I'd be happy to loan him a dress or two."

The ribbing from the women didn't bother me so much. It wasn't the first time I'd been teased by them and I knew it was in fun. It was Hamilton's lack of comment that made me feel insecure.

Connie responded to the ribbing about loaning me a dress. "The company will be paying any expenses incurred in outfitting Jeffrey. He shouldn't be made financially responsible for something the company demands of him."

That's when Mr. Hamilton spoke up. It figured, since he was the head of Accounting. "How much is this sick little masquerade going to cost the company?"

I had seen a number of sides of Connie but I had never seen her get angry like she did that day. Her green eyes shot flame.

"Mr. Hamilton!" Everyone else in the room got quiet. "When the day comes that you are willing to be as self sacrificing and dedicated to this company and this young man, then you may question my judgment."

It probably wasn't appropriate for her to lambast him there, in front of

everyone, but I was glad Connie had put him in his place. I didn't like the man.

Connie dismissed everyone but they didn't leave immediately. Mr Hamilton, was the exception. He skulked out of the room. The women, my friends, came to me with their reassurance of support. Even Bennett, to my surprise, came up and assured me that I would not have to worry about anyone from the art department giving me a problem.

The support was appreciated but I still felt so scared as we walked back to the office. Back at my desk, alone with Connie I told her how worried I was.

"You'll do fine Jeffrey. You've already proven that you can play the part."

"Yes but that was when there were only a few people who were aware I was pretending. There's forty people working here."

"That's true. And every one of them is behind you."

I hadn't thought of it quite that way.

"They're going to help you."

"I suppose." I was still in a sullen mood the rest of the afternoon.

"Time to get out of here." Connie came out of her office with her purse over her shoulder. It was only four thirty.

"So early?"

"We have a lot to do."

I had just started working on one of my reports. "Shouldn't I finish this?"

"Tomorrow's another day. We have to meet Virginia at our place at five."

"Virginia?"

"I called her this afternoon and told her what had happened. She rearranged her schedule just so she could go shopping with us. I don't think

wild horses could have kept her away."

I liked Virginia. I liked her a lot, but her joining us was going to be a problem for me.

She was waiting for us when we arrived at the apartment. They wasted no time getting me ready to go, fussing over me.

"Your room is so pretty Jennifer."

Virginia had gotten so used to calling me that. I probably would have been surprised if she called me Jeffrey.

There was an awkward moment. Neither of them were going to leave me alone to change. I tried to slip into the bathroom to change but Connie followed me, walking in as I was taking off my shirt.

"Oh Jeffrey. What happened?" She asked with genuine concern, seeing the rib belt.

What could I tell her? I pulled the velcro apart and laid the belt on the toilet seat, exposing my feminine chest.

"Jeffrey, what's happened to you?"

I hushed Connie. "I don't want Virginia to know." She was busy, going through my closet and dresser, finding me an outfit to wear.

I finally told Connie what the doctor really said.

"And the medication he prescribed didn't help at all?" Connie asked, looking very concerned.

"I called him again a week ago and he said it may take more time. He was surprised it hadn't had any effect yet."

"We're definitely going to get a second opinion. I'm going with you this time."

That was kind of a relief. I wasn't brave enough to go alone.

"I'll explain to Virginia that you're shy and we'll leave you alone to get ready."

"Thanks Connie."

She gave me a hug, right there, naked chest and all. It felt funny, pressing my chest against hers. Not unpleasant, just strange.

She pulled back and gave me that look again. "You're going to be all right Honey."

I hurried and was ready to go by six with my hair restyled as best I could without washing it and with my makeup hurriedly applied. Virginia and Connie insisted that I would have to wear heels to try on clothes so Virginia laid out a skirt and one of my silk shirts. "We really have to get you some nice blouses instead of those things in your closet." Virginia insisted. "Your wardrobe is definitely lacking."

I remembered back when I thought the clothes Connie bought me were so feminine. What a laugh.

Our time was limited. The two of them planned out our shopping trip on the way to the mall.

Virginia took charge in the jewelry store. She had apparently shopped there before because the girl behind the counter recognized her as soon as she walked in. They were more than happy to help us. It didn't take Connie and Virginia long to pick out several new gold rings that the sales girl promised to have sized before they closed. I tried on and bought two necklaces and six bracelets. I would never have thought of buying a watch. Connie picked out two. I went crazy, taking earrings in and out of my ears, trying them on.

When the sales girl left us for a second I insisted, "This is too much. I'm only going to have to pretend for a few days."

"You just hush young lady. We're having fun." Virginia told me smiling.

They wouldn't listen to me. I heard the total when the girl rang it up and it was ridiculous. Connie and Virginia disagreed over who was going to pay. They finally agreed to split the bill.

Connie and Virginia didn't exactly consult with me on the things they bought in Jordan Marsh either. They started in lingerie and after a whirlwind tour through the department, arrived at the register, each with an armful of panties, bras, slips, pantyhose and anything else that caught their eye. I found it embarrassing and left them while the girl rang it all up.

Just across the aisle from lingerie was the cosmetics department. I wandered over to browse at one of the lipstick displays. There was no salesgirl nearby. She must have been busy elsewhere. I took advantage of the privacy and searched for a lipstick that came close to the 'pale rose' that I had worn to the art show. I found a shade that was very similar.

"May I help you?" The pretty young blond behind the counter asked pleasantly. I hadn't even seen her walk up.

I felt funny asking, "Do you have a polish to match this?" I handed her the lipstick.

"I'm sure we do. Let me just take a look. Why don't you follow me around to the other side of the counter."

I looked back across the aisle. Connie and Virginia were still busy at the register. They apparently hadn't even noticed that I wasn't there. They weren't looking for me. I didn't want to just disappear and worry them. I decided it would only take a moment to pick out nail polish.

It took longer than I thought it would. The girls showed me a half a dozen different brands and colors of polish that seemed to match. We finally narrowed it down to two with her help.

"I'll take them both." I told her. They weren't that expensive and I had money in my wallet. It seemed so odd, unzipping my purse and taking out the wallet I had transferred all my things into. I had buried my license so no one would see it by accident. I took out the cash and paid the girl. What was amazing to me was that the girl didn't bat an eye at me. She completely accepted me as just another young woman.

"Where did you wander off to?" Connie asked. They were standing around, looking for me when I rejoined them.

I held up the little bag.

"What did you buy?" Virginia asked.

I reached in and brought out the lipstick and nail polish.

They looked at each other, smiling, then at me. "Very nice Jennifer." Connie said looking very pleased.

"Pretty color." Was Virginia's comment.

Our next stop was the shoe department. Here, I had to take a more active part. Connie and Virginia didn't always agree on what looked best on me. Connie leaned toward the more current fashions while Virginia wanted me to have more conservative styles. They reached an amenable agreement and they both bought me shoes. The women told the delighted salesman to hold our purchases until we were finished shopping. Considering they had bought a dozen pairs of expensive shoes, he didn't mind at all.

Again, I was just the pawn and had little or no input in their selections.

It was seven thirty and the store didn't close till ten. We spent the next two hours in the Junior's department. This was the part I dreaded.

Not one, but two, sales girls were required to help us, according to Connie and Virginia. One followed each of them around, bringing the clothes they each selected back to me in the dressing room.

I was mortified enough to be in there but the attention I was getting made it so much worse. It wasn't so much that it was a busy night but the few girls and young women in there with me couldn't help but notice all the clothes I was buying.

"It must be your birthday." One girl commented.

I had to make up something. "My Mother and my Aunt decided I needed new clothes for the job I'm starting Monday." It was the only thing I could think of to say?

"You're a lucky girl."

'Lucky!?'

I didn't know that Virginia had heard me but later, at the register, I heard them tell the sales girl they were my Mother and Aunt. The two of them picked right up on it.

I lost track of all the dresses, skirts and blouses I tried on and modeled for my 'Mother' and 'Aunt'. It got easier there, near the end. In just my bra and panties I was handed clothes by the salesgirls. It was the first time I remembered being grateful that I didn't have on the falsies because there was no way I could have gotten away with it.

What I didn't find out about, until we got home, was that they bought me all sorts of other things as well but didn't bother to show me. I was completely accessorized with scarves, belts, broaches, purses, pins, perfume and a myriad of other things.

It took all three of us to carry all the packages and our hands were full. I was relieved that they were finally content to stop. We stopped by the jewelry store to pick up what we bought earlier. They sent a guard to escort us out to our car. We piled some of our purchases on him too.

I wasn't sure if I was disappointed or relieved that no one gave me a strange look or comment as we dealt with a half dozen sales people, both men and women. None of the shoppers even raised an eyebrow toward me. Had I changed so much?

Everything had to be put away or hung up. Connie took charge of my closet while Virginia took great pleasure in organizing and putting everything away, neatly, in my dresser. I, more or less, was left to just watch.

At eleven, the three of us sat down at the dining room table and had a drink, a real, honest to God drink. I needed it.

"I had a wonderful time tonight. Thank you so much for calling me Connie." Virginia told her.

"I'm just glad you could get away to join us. I haven't enjoyed shopping so much in years."

They didn't ask me if I had a good time.

"Which of your new outfits are you going to wear tomorrow Jennifer?" Virginia asked.

I didn't want to wear any of them. "I haven't decided yet."

"I think you should wear the blue dress. That looked adorable on you." Connie suggested.

"But the green looks much more business like." Virginia disagreed.

They went back and forth. Not really arguing, discussing would have been a better word for it.

I didn't care to see the two people I had grown so close to, disagreeing. "I've already decided what I'm wearing." I interrupted.

"Which one?" Connie asked.

"The black and white dress." It was long and loose fitting, except at the waist, which was gathered by a wide belt.

"Oh, that's perfect. The short skirt on it looks so sweet with the pleats."

That wasn't the dress I meant.

"Good choice Honey. Everyone at work will love that. It makes you look about eighteen." Connie agreed with Virginia. "I should have thought of that one."

A revelation hit Virginia. "We didn't buy Jennifer any pearls. She has to have a pearl necklace to go with that dress."

"I'll loan her mine tomorrow." Connie solved the problem.

"All right, and I'll pick her up a necklace of her own tomorrow. She'll need a matching bracelet too."

Connie agreed with her, smiling. "Of course."

I stuck my foot in it.

"Isn't that the one I picked out?" Virginia said about the dress, kidding.

Connie was ready to play. "No! I did. Don't you remember?"

I left the two of them in the dining room, talking, and got ready for bed. It didn't seem at all unnatural for me to kiss them both goodnight. "Good night Mother." I said to Connie. "Good night Aunt Virginia." They thought it was cute of me.

"Good night Jennifer." The words echoed behind me as I headed for the bedroom.

My body was tired, especially my feet, but my mind was racing. I imagined all sorts of things going wrong tomorrow.

I heard Virginia leave around midnight. Connie came in my bedroom to see how I was. I had just finished washing up and moisturizing.

"Hi honey."

"Hi."

"This was a pretty exciting night, wasn't it?"

"It was nerve wracking." I admitted.

"You really did beautifully."

"Why did you and Virginia have to buy me so many clothes and things?"

She looked a little embarrassed. "We were just having so much fun. I suppose we just got caught up in it. You really have some beautiful things."

"But I only needed a few to last me for a couple of days. What am I going to do with them after that?"

"We'll worry about that later." Connie assured me. "Did you see what Virginia laid out on the bed for you?"

I had undressed at the closet. I didn't even look at the bed. "No."

I was in my robe. Connie followed me out to see my reaction.

On the bed was a pink satin nightgown, all decorated in lace. Next to it was a matching robe. "Why did she have to buy me this?"

"She thought you'd like it." Connie encouraged me. "Try it on. They're very comfortable to sleep in."

"I'd feel silly."

"Go ahead and try it for one night. If you still don't like it, you don't have to wear it again. At least you can tell Virginia you slept in it."

I didn't want to tell Connie that I really did like the feel of it and as much as I liked my silky pajamas, the nightie was even nicer feeling. "I'll try it."

"Good girl." Connie said smiling at me. I think she knew I wanted to try it. "Let's see how it looks on you. Put on one of your new pairs of panties. I think there's a pink pair in your drawer that will match it."

There was more than one pair of pink panties in the drawer. The new ones they bought me were much more feminine than the cotton ones I'd been wearing. Some were of silky nylon, others were made of satin. A few were trimmed in lace and all were cut differently from my old ones. I had string bikinis, high French cut and scooped front styles. Getting used to these was going to take some doing.

"Very nice. You look lovely." Connie sighed when I finished getting ready for bed.

I felt silly but it did feel wonderful against my skin, even the underwear. "It is pretty." I said looking in the mirror. I meant the nightie, not me.

"I bought you this." She came over to me with a white ruffled hair tie. "That old one of mine you've been using has had it. You needed a new one."

I let her gather my hair in back and slip it through the elastic.

"There, that's better." Connie stood back, admiring me. "It looks pretty on you."

It was different. As I looked at myself, I realized that, even without makeup and my hair styled, I looked a lot like a girl. It wasn't just the nightie or the thing in my hair. My small, slender face and little nose added to the impression. With all the weight I had lost over the past couple of months, my face actually showed cheekbones. Not too well defined but enough to make my face decidedly feminine.



If it wasn't for the role I had to play over the next few days, I might have been upset. For right now, I was grateful.

There was something about the look on Connie's face that made it alright too. More and more, I felt closer to her and I liked that feeling so much. I was reaching the point where I would do just about anything she asked of me.

"You better get in bed. Morning is going to get here before you know it and you know how long it takes you to get ready in the morning."

It wasn't so much what she said, but how she said it. Connie had a way of putting me at ease. "Yes Mommy."

Connie surprised me. "Sometimes, like now, I wish I really was." The look on her face was so sweet.

"You should have had a daughter. You'd make a wonderful Mother." Connie's expression changed slightly. I wondered if I said something to upset her. She didn't have to say she wanted a hug.

"I'll settle for moments like this." She held me tight. "I know it might sound strange and I don't want you to think I'm crazy but I really enjoy being close like this. At times it's like we're really mother and daughter."

"It doesn't sound so strange. I was never able to be close like this with my real mother. It makes me kind of envy what girls share with theirs."

I looked up to her and she was crying. Tears were running down her cheeks. I didn't ask 'what's wrong'. I didn't ask her if she was all right. I just held her. I felt I knew what she was feeling. My eyes were clouding with tears too.

Connie waited at the door while I climbed under the covers. "Good night Sweetheart" Her smile made me feel good.

"Good night . . . Mom."

I didn't need the alarm clock to get up at five. I fussed over my hair for quite a while. My makeup didn't take too long and I thought I did pretty well.

I chose a pair of black panties and the black lace bra Connie had bought. I had been grateful, the night before, that Connie hadn't asked me to try any of them on in the store. The new ones were much prettier than the plain one I had worn.

In my new sheer black pantyhose, I went to the closet to get out the dress. The vee collar and short sleeves were trimmed with white lace. The buttons down the front were cloth covered to match the dress. I stepped into it, buttoning the front. It was as intimidating as it had been when I tried it on in the store.

The waistline was tapered to show off the figure and the little pleated skirt was as short as I recalled, about four inches above my knees.

I heard a noise at the door and turned from the mirror to see what it was. It was Connie in her robe, showered, with her makeup on, standing there smiling at me.

"It looks adorable on you."

I guess I blushed.

"No, it really does Sweetheart."

"It's too short."

"No, it's not. It's perfect."

"I've got ugly legs."

Connie grinned. "You have nice legs."

"My knees are bony and they touch together. I look knock kneed."

"Your knees are fine and they're supposed to touch." She assured me. "Your thighs are nice and trim. You have shapely legs. I think your working out at the gym was a good idea."

I looked at myself again. "You sure?"

"Positive!" Connie was enjoying this at least. "Which shoes are you going to wear?"

"I haven't even thought about that yet." I admitted. One hurdle at a time.

Connie suggested, "I think the black pumps with the black and gold button on the toes would look the nicest."

I went to the closet and searched through the boxes. "These?" I tried them on. They had an inch and a half heel but they were pretty comfortable. Virginia had insisted that we only buy good shoes.

"Lovely." Connie said, giving me a good look. "You did remember to put on a slip, didn't you?"

"I didn't think I could. This is so short."

"No, I made sure you had every size and color you might need. Look in the middle left drawer of the dresser. I think that's where I saw Virginia put them."

I found one. It was tiny.

I posed for her, feet together and hands on my hips. "That's better." Connie agreed. "I'm glad you got an early start. We have time to do your nails. Aren't you glad now, that I talked you out of trimming them?"

They were getting too long for me. They no longer looked just neat, they looked feminine. I suppose it was just as well now that I hadn't cut them.

"Bring your new nail polish out to the kitchen, I'll help you."

It didn't take Connie long at all. I had to just sit there and wait while they dried.

"We'll do your toenails tomorrow." She informed me.

"Why?"

"Because Jennifer, some of your new shoes are opened toed."

"How silly of me" I kidded. Inside I shuttered.

"That and it will be fun." She said smiling.

Fun for her. "This means I have to dress like Jennifer all weekend?"

Connie explained. "We're going to have to entertain Mr. Park this weekend."

I hadn't thought of that. "Both of us?" Mr. Park, Mike, made me very uncomfortable. At work was bad enough but I hadn't forgotten how he and Robert had competed for my attention at dinner and at the Met.

"I'll try to occupy him but we'll just have to see how it goes."

Connie poured me a glass of juice and got out our vitamins then went in and finished getting ready for work.

We stood over the jewelry box, my jewelry box. "Go ahead and put your rings on. I'll help you pick out earrings."

I had two rings for my right hand and one for the left. None of the three were gaudy, thank God. Connie picked out the pearl drop earrings. They bounced against my neck when I turned my head. I certainly wouldn't forget they were there.

Connie found her pearls. The necklace was a double strand of small pearl and the bracelet matched. "Don't forget your new watch. I think the gold one would look the best."

I looked ready but I didn't feel ready. I slung my new Liz Clayborn purse over my shoulder, all filled with everything a girl needed for a day at work, and we headed out.

I had made up my mind, sitting at the kitchen table, that today would be just like any other. My illusion was shattered the moment I got to work.



"Good morning Ms Sackett. Good morning Jennifer."

Bobbie never got to work so early. "Good morning Bobbie." I replied as melodiously as she had sounded.

"You look fantastic." Bobbie's eyes were wide.

I replied. "Thank you. You look very pretty this morning too. I just love those shoes." I told her, practicing what Connie had told me about always finding something to compliment women on.

They both got a kick out of my antics.

I had a surprise on my desk. Someone had put a little basket of colorful dried flowers on the corner. A small picture frame held pictures of two adorable children, a boy and a girl.

"I just couldn't resist. Your desk didn't look right." Bobbie was sticking her head in the door. "They're my niece and nephew. You can borrow them for a few days."

I didn't think the decorations were necessary but I knew she meant well. "What are their names?"

"Candace and Wayne."

"Thanks for the loan."

Bobbie's expression change from smiling to serious. "You really do look fantastic. If you need anything, just call me."

She was a sweetheart. "I will, I promise."

"You're going to do fine Honey." Connie liked the way Bobbie and I got along.

I tried to get to work but people started arriving and the traffic past the office was surprising. Most people normally came in the back way, not today. Everyone wanted to say good morning to Jennifer.

The offices that had grown so familiar over the past few months, now seemed so different. I was aware of the smallest things as I traced the

footsteps that Jeffrey made each day.

I couldn't go anywhere without running into someone. I had expected to be teased, and while they didn't completely disappoint me, a lot of the comments I received were in the form of constructive criticism. Almost all the women had suggestions for how to do this or that, how to behave.

I had expected to have a quiet lunch in the office but that didn't happen either. A number of the younger women regularly got together at lunchtime, in the conference room, to eat. They came and got me, insisting that I join them. Even Connie encouraged me to go.

It was obvious to me at least, that I didn't belong there with all those women but they made me as comfortable as they could while they tried to draw me into their conversations. To say I was the center of attention would have been an understatement. I worked up the courage to ask what they thought of the dress and how I looked. I shouldn't have asked. It seemed they were just waiting for an opportunity to let me know how sensational I came across as a girl.

Fielding phone calls was a problem. I didn't know whether to answer as Jeffrey or as Jennifer. You couldn't tell by the ring if the calls were inside or outside. I just answered them all as Jennifer.

I caught Connie watching me from time to time when I looked up. She had that adoring smile on her face each time. I couldn't help but smile back.

I found myself constantly tugging my short skirt down as I sat at my desk working. If I did it once, I did it a thousand times. It was to no avail. The skirt was just too short to cover my legs. I was very self-conscious about it.

About three I finally couldn't hold on any longer, I had to go to the bathroom. I stood in the hallway, outside the rest rooms. It startled me when Candace came out of the ladies room and caught me standing there, looking lost. She understood my dilemma.

"There's no one in there right now Jennifer, go ahead." She only grinned, holding the door for me.

What could I say, "Thanks Candace." I sheepishly replied and stepped past her.



Some one had to have called them because they had no reason to be there. I was surprised when Trish, Kim and Judy walked into the office around four thirty. The three of them looked so imposing, lined up in front of my desk, smiling down at me. "Oh please." They made me want to laugh.

Connie saw them and came out of her office. "What are you three doing here?"

"We just came by to visit with our girlfriend." Trish said kidding around.

"We're going to take her out for a drink and some fun." Kim added.

"Oh no!" I said emphatically.

"Oh yes!" Trish replied. She turned to Connie. "You weren't planning on her working late tonight?"

Connie looked torn. I knew she was worried about me. "I don't know."

"We promise to look after her. It'll be fun."

"Fun?" I questioned.

"Sure." Judy insisted. "We'll go have a few drinks, pick up some guys." She was kidding.

"Jennifer's had a pretty rough day." Connie tried to dissuade them.

Trish implored me. "Come on. All kidding aside, we'll just go have a glass of wine, a little girl talk. We'll have dinner and then home. I promise."

Connie looked at me and shrugged her shoulders. "It's up to Jennifer."

That was all they needed to hear. Kim came around behind me and pulled out my chair. Judy grabbed my purse from behind me and handed it to me. "Let's go."

"I love that dress." Trish said when I stood up.

I had heard that kind of thing all day.

"No, I mean it. Can I borrow it sometime?"

"Sure." I wasn't sure if I should believe her or not.

I would have preferred to just go home and take off my heels. I wasn't anxious to go out in public in what I was wearing. "I don't think this is a good idea." I told them as they hurried me up the hall to the lobby.

"Relax Jeffrey. We'll have a good time." Judy insisted.

Trish, Kim and I all reminded her, "Jennifer!"

"How did you know?" I asked Trish.

"A little bird told us." She said, laughing.

We passed the little bird on the way out of the building. "I wish I could go with you." Bobbie said, "But I promised Jack I'd come right home after work."

"I'll get you back." I told her as the others hurried me out the door.

I thought my dress was short. Walking next to Trish and Kim, I realized it wasn't all that short. Judy's was about the same length as mine. I caught our reflections in the office windows as we walked across the front of the building to the parking lot. I saw four long, slender pairs of legs. Maybe mine weren't so bad looking after all, I remembered thinking to myself.

"Where are we going?" I asked, climbing into Trish's Camaro. It was awkward getting into the back seat in my heels. "Not to the Point?!" The odds were remote but there was the chance that Christy would be there. No way I wanted her seeing me the way I was dressed.

"No, not on a Thursday." Kim explained. "Too dead. We're going to the lounge at the Marriott, by the airport."

Guys, no matter how young or old, love to look at girls. I was in the company of three very beautiful ones. "Doesn't it bother you to have guys staring at you all the time?"

They all got a kick out of my question. "Not at all." Kim turned and looked over the back seat. "Let them look, as long as that's all they do. It's flattering and it makes a girl feel desirable."

"You've got to learn not to let it bother you. Just don't return their interest." Judy added.

"Unless, of course, they're cute." Trish said grinning in the rear view mirror.

I had felt like everyone was looking at me when I drove to Virginia's those few times. In the car with my friends, it wasn't just a feeling.

"So how did you do today?" Kim asked.

"I was pretty scared at first but everyone was really great. By lunch it got easier."

"You really do look terrific." Judy was so impressed.

"You could fool anyone." Kim agreed.

Trish pulled into the hotel parking lot and found a spot close to the lobby. It was worse climbing out of the car. I felt like such a klutz in my heels.

"Now just stay close and walk in like you own the place." Kim informed me.

Did they think I was going to wander off? I stuck to them like glue. My steps matched their casual stride. One hand rested on my purse, the other swung in a short arc. I kept my shoulders back and my head up.

A couple of men in business suits held the door for us as we approached the lobby. I could feel their eyes as they stared at the four of us. This didn't bother Kim and the others?

"Thank you." We each told them. I was relieved they didn't hear the quiver in my voice.

"Our pleasure." Was the response that came with the lecherous smiles.

We crossed the lobby to the entrance to the lounge. There were a number of men in business suits, coming and going from the hotel and their heads turned as we crossed the lobby.

"I need to check my makeup and go to the bathroom." Judy said as

we neared the door.

"Me too." Trish added.

"Jennifer, you need to powder and put on fresh lipstick." Kim whispered. "Do you have some with you?"

Connie had insisted that I tuck it all in my purse this morning. I nodded. I had everything I needed.

Trish was concerned. Now she whispered to me, "Are you going to be ok, going in the ladies' room?"

"I'll manage." I assured her. I was so nervous about going into the bar that I really had to go. It was getting a little less unnerving, using ladies' rest rooms.

I took Kim's advice and powdered my shiny nose and put on fresh lipstick. It was lucky that I had a hair brush because my hair had gotten windblown outside in the breeze. It didn't want anyone looking at me funny because of so obvious and oversight.

In a way, I was fortunate that we weren't alone in there. There were a couple of women in there with us. I could tell that Judy wanted to tease me. I gave her a smile and a wink that said 'too bad'.

The lounge wasn't too crowded. It was only about five thirty. We had no trouble finding a table. We had to cross the open dance floor to reach it and I could feel the eyes of the men at the bar on us. They all seemed to stop whatever they were doing when we walked in. They just stared.

My heart raced and I could feel my knees shaking. I really had to concentrate to walk normally, like the others.

Trish must have been reading my mind. She leaned toward me and whispered. "Don't pay them any attention. Pretend like they're not even there."

My next problem was the table the others selected. It was one of those high round ones with stools instead of chairs. They had no trouble getting comfortable on the high stools, crossing their legs in a seductive fashion. I found it easier to mimic them than to try and keep my knees locked together, the way I was shaking.

Trish and Judy ordered wine. Kim wanted a daiquiri. I almost ordered wine too. At the last second I realized what could happen if the waitress asked me for proof of age. I ordered a coke.

The waitress didn't seem to notice the tension in my voice. I tried to smile, even though inside, I was trembling.

We were far enough from inquisitive ears to talk. "How are you doing?" Trish asked.

"I'm scared to death." I admitted freely.

The waitress returned with our drinks. We each paid for our own.

"The two gentlemen at the end of the bar would like to buy you a round." The waitress informed us.

"Tell them thank you." Kim told the girl. All three of them looked to the end of the bar, smiled and nodded to the men. I couldn't even look at them.

"I bet Jennifer won't ever have to buy herself more than one drink in a place like this." Judy said to me.

"Or any other bar for that matter." Kim added.

"There are perks to being an attractive young woman." Trish said to no one in particular.

"Does this happen all the time?" I asked, picking up my soda and sipping through the tiny straw. My hand shook and I was actually afraid of dropping the glass.

"Just about." Trish and Kim agreed, nodding.

It wouldn't happen to me, I thought to myself.

Avoiding looking in the direction of the two men, I did look around the rest of the place. It was like a dozen other bars I'd been in, back up north. A lot of wood and brass. What made it unique was that I didn't see one man without a suit coat on.

"Salesmen," Judy explained. "They stay here because it's close to the airport and it's convenient to the beltway. They can get almost anywhere in

the city in minutes from here."

"So why did we come here?" I asked, wishing now that I had been more insistent about not coming. I wasn't ready for this.

They looked at each other and smiled. "We wanted to show you what it's like to be picked up and this is one of the best places in town. Salesmen are unique and you can meet all kinds here. Young, old, married, single and they're all smooth talkers."

"We're not going to get 'picked up!'?" I asked, more scared than ever.

Trish reassured me. "Don't worry. We'll just have a little fun then we'll go."

I trusted her. I trusted each of them. "So what makes them so unique?"

Judy answered. "They'll do almost anything to get laid. They'll buy you drinks to try to get you drunk, gifts to impress you, dinner at the best places in town. They feel safe because they'll jump on a plane the next day. No promises, no commitments and hardly any chance of their wives finding out."

"You make them sound pretty bad."

"A lot of them are." Trish said with conviction. "Take those two that want to buy us drinks. See the white outline on the ring finger on the hand of the young one, the one on the left with the great eyes?"

It meant I had to stare but he and his friend weren't looking at the moment. I had to strain to see what Trish saw. "He's married?"

"That's right and I'll bet ten dollars that he took off his wedding ring the moment the four of us walked into the room." Kim told me. "The bastard probably cheats on his wife regularly."

"But we let him buy us drinks?" If they knew at a glance? "Why?"

Trish was very smug. "We'll play with them a little then send them packing."

With the next round of drinks came the two men. I watched as they

got up from the bar and walked in our direction. My heart raced even faster. I turned on the stool so my leg, which was twitching, rested against the table support. My mouth was so dry. I took another sip of my soda.

The married one looked to be about twenty five. His friend didn't look much older. They made small talk, first introducing themselves. We each told them our names. I was last and followed the lead of the others, only telling them our first names. I was petrified when it was my turn. I barely got out my name. I said nothing else.

Trish and the others responded to their small talk with pleasant smiles, leading them along.

The married one, Pete, seemed particularly interested in Trish. Jeff, ironically, the other man, moved in close to Judy, vying for her favor. It wasn't till Pete tried to get familiar with Trish, resting his hand on her arm, that she decided the game was over.

Out of the blue, she asked, "Doesn't your wife mind that you pick up women in bars."

He tried to deny he was married but she didn't let up.

"What's that ring on your finger?"

"Oh that. I'm recently separated." He explained clumsily.

Even I noticed the change in his voice. It wasn't hard to tell he was lying.

"Well Pete, why don't you come back after the divorce and try again."

He knew he was had and his buddy knew his chances were blown too.

"It was nice meeting you all."

The girls made no bones about it. They snickered loud enough for the men to hear as they walked away from us and right out the door. They knew they had been played for suckers and were too embarrassed to stay.

I almost commented that they had been pretty rough on him but when I thought about it, I realized he deserved it.

I was relieved they were gone. My stomach was doing flips. "I'm not doing to well. Can we go?"

They responded as I hoped they would. My knees were still shaking as we got up and left, leaving the round of drinks almost untouched.

Outside the hotel, walking to the car, we could talk. I was so relieved to be out of there.

"I'm so sorry Jennifer. I didn't think it would be so hard on you."
Trish felt bad.

"It's just that you're so convincing when we fool around at the studio." Kim was sorry too.

"That's different. It's just horsing around and I'm not so nervous around you."

"Do you want to go for something to eat or would you rather we take you home?" Judy asked.

I enjoyed their company. It was compromising circumstances like I had just experienced that scared me so. "Can we go somewhere where we can just eat and talk without anyone trying to come on to us?" Was there such a place?

Kim had a suggestion. "I know a little Italian restaurant that serves great pasta, the tables are all private and the waiters are all harmless, sweet, little old men."

That sounded like something I could handle. "No bar? No salesmen?"

"No bar, no salesmen." She assured me, grinning.

"That sounds alright."

Kim was right about the restaurant. I was a little place in a strip mall. There was no bar. Couples and small groups filled the little private booths. We had to wait a few minutes for a table but it was worth it.

I had to agree with her description of the waiters. They were all little old Italian men. Ours was delighted to have the four of us at one of his tables. He had a wonderful sense of humor and probably paid a little more attention

to our table than he ought to have. Each time he came to us he made his little jokes or comments. He had us all laughing. Here, I could relax and enjoy being out with my friends.

During dinner I talked about Mike Park and asked their advice. I reminded them of what happened on our last encounter.

"I wouldn't be the least surprised if he tried something. From the way you described him, he'll, no doubt, want to take you out for dinner or something over the weekend." Trish was relatively sure of that.

"Connie said she'll try to keep him away from me." I hoped she'd be able to.

"You can't count on her being able to divert his attention all the time. You better be ready for anything." Kim told me.

"How do I handle him if he does try something?" The idea that he might, scared the hell out of me.

They had lots of suggestions. We talked long after our meal was cleared away from the table. We finished off a second bottle of wine. The waiter hadn't raised an eyebrow when Trish ordered the first, asking for four glasses.

Judy's question surprised me. "Do you dance?"

"You don't think he'd ask me to go out dancing?"

"He might."

"I couldn't!"

"You may not have a choice." Kim told me in all seriousness.

I tried to picture that scenario. "I can dance slow I suppose."

"That may not be good enough."

"I don't fast dance very well and I certainly don't know how to dance like a girl."

All three of them thought for a minute. "You've got a good feel for music. I've watched you do aerobics." Trish noted. "It wouldn't be too hard

to teach you."

"I don't have time to learn. He's coming tomorrow." Even if I wanted to, I couldn't picture myself on a dance floor with him.

Trish took charge. "Let's take you home and we'll give you some lessons."

"Right now?"

"Can you think of a better time?" Kim agreed with Trish.

"It sounds like fun. We'll teach Jennifer to shake her bootie." Judy liked the idea and she loved kidding me.

It was still early when we got back to the apartment.

Connie hadn't settled in for the night yet, she was still dressed. "What's going on?" She asked when the four of us walked in on her.

"We're going to give Jennifer some dance lessons." Trish explained why.

Connie's eyes lit up. "Wonderful. I hadn't even thought of that. That's an excellent idea."

I started toward the bedroom. "I'm just going to get out of these heels before we start."

Kim spoke up. "Oh no. Just leave them on. If you're going to learn, you need to do it in your heels. You can't very well take them off if you're asked to dance, out somewhere. And it's not the same, dancing in flats."

I knew she was right. As much as my feet hurt, the shoes would have to stay on.

"May we see your room?" Judy asked out of the blue.

I hadn't give a thought to them being curious about where I lived or how. I tried to remember what shape I had left my room that morning.

"Sure" Connie replied to the question.

They were going to see how I lived and for the first time. I was

worried what they'd think. Did I put away the nightie or was it still lying on my bed?

"Oh, I like this." Trish commented as she stepped into the room.

"It's so bright and cheerful looking."

"I love this." Kim said, picking up my nightie. I had left it on the bed.

I felt my heart sink in my chest when Judy went to the closet and opened it. "Look at all of this. Trish, Kim. Come here and see."

They both went to see. "Jennifer," Kim turned back to me, smiling. "I never imagined that you'd have so many pretty things. You said you went out and bought new clothes but you didn't tell us you bought all this."

I was so embarrassed.

Connie, standing at the door, looked pleased that they were impressed but she could also see that it was bothering me. "Jennifer needs those to fool our visitor."

Judy pulled one of my dresser drawers open. By chance, it was my underwear drawer. The one that held the bras and panties Connie and Virginia had bought me. "Oh, these are so pretty." She held up one of the string bikinis.

I expected Connie to speak up but it was Trish and Kim that came to my aid instead. "Let's leave Jennifer's things alone." Trish told Judy.

"You're embarrassing her." Kim added.

Judy looked ashamed. "I'm sorry Jennifer. I didn't mean anything by it. I was just impressed that you've got so many pretty things. I think it's great."

"If Jennifer's going to pull this off, she's going to have to feel like a girl, right down to her skin." Connie explained. "It's taken a lot of courage for Jeffrey to do this." She reminded the girls.

"Jennifer's very special." Trish said, smiling at me.

"I thought we were going to teach her how to dance?" Kim reminded everyone.

"Come on, I'll crank up the stereo." Connie led the way out to the living room.

For over an hour they worked at trying to get me to relax and just go with the music. My moves were so awkward. I watched them and tried to mimic their moves but I felt like such a klutz. It was, after all, a lot different from the way a guy dances. I wasn't used to shaking my ass and moving my hips the way girls do.

Finally, I mastered some of the moves they tried so hard to teach me.

"You slow dance?" Connie asked, sitting on the couch.

"Sure."

"Think you can do it without leading?"

"I think so."

"Ok," She got up and walked over to me. "Put on something nice." She told Kim. "Let's see how you do. Left arm on my shoulder. That's it, now the right." She put out her hand and took mine.

Kim found an easy listening station on the radio.

"One, two, three. One, two, three. That's it Jennifer."

It wasn't as easy as I thought it would be. Connie worked with me for a half hour, until I grew accustomed to being lead.

"You're getting the hang of it. I think you'll be all right if we have to go out." Connie was satisfied.

"Just watch the other girls around you if you find yourself on the floor for a fast dance. Mimic them the way you did us." Kim reminded me.

"Just go with the music." Judy added.

"We better go. Jennifer's got a big day tomorrow." Trish told the others.

"Just let me get a picture of the four of you." Connie asked as she went to the table in the foyer for her camera.

"What for?" I asked.

"I promised to take pictures for Virginia. She so wanted to see you in your new things." Connie explained. "Now give me a nice pose." She told us.

That was no problem for the three beautiful models. "How do you want me?"

"Here, I'll show you." Trish posed me with one hand at my waist, the other on my upper thigh and my hips swung to one side. "There, perfect. Now, big smile." The four of us stood close to each other. I decided that I wanted a copy of that print too.

Connie checked through the lens. "Jennifer, relax. Where's that pretty smile? Let me see that pout."

I did my best and the camera's flash blinded me for a moment.

They wished me luck.

"Don't forget our date Saturday." Trish said at the door.

"Date?"

"We're supposed to go to the spa. Did you forget?"

I had forgotten, completely. "I did. Why don't we skip Saturday."

"Why skip it?" Connie asked.

"It would be such a hassle to go through for just an hour's workout." I would have to take off my nail polish, put it back on after. I showed Connie my nails so she'd understand. That was the least of it, of course. It was getting unceasingly uncomfortable trying to do aerobics wearing the band on my chest. I couldn't explain that, right there in front of the girls.

"No, you should go. It's good for you and if you start skipping it you'll get out of shape and you've worked so hard to tone up."

Kim had, what she thought was, the obvious solution. "Just go as Jennifer."

"I can't do that. Lots of people there would recognize me. Karen would know me right off." Karen was the aerobics instructor.

"We'll just go early in the afternoon, instead of late." Trish offered. "There's someone else teaching the early class and the people we know all go to the later class."

That may have sounded like a simple solution to Trish. "I don't know."

"Jennifer will go." Connie said from behind me. I spun to face her.

Before I could raise an objection, she said to me. "What better way is there to get acclimated to pretending to be a girl than to do as many things as you can as Jennifer? It's the only way you'll ever get comfortable with the role."

Sure, she was probably right but how awkward for me. "I suppose."

"Do any of you have a leotard that Jennifer could borrow Saturday? We won't have time to buy her one between now and then." "That's alright. I'll just wear my tee shirt."

"Don't be silly Jennifer. I'm sure I have something that will go with your leggings." Kim offered. "Ok if I go with you two?"

If I was stuck going I'd just as soon have both Trish and Kim with me. "Of course."

"I can't go. I have to go to my mother's Saturday morning." Judy was disappointed.

"You'll do fine tomorrow." They assured me as we said goodnight.

Now I could kick off my shoes. My feet hurt even worse after all the jumping around, dancing.

We were alone now. "Did you have a good time Honey?" Connie asked.

I told her about the experience at the bar and how terrified I was. "I thought my knees were going to buckle under me when I got down from the stool."

"I'm glad they got you out of there." Connie hung on my every word.

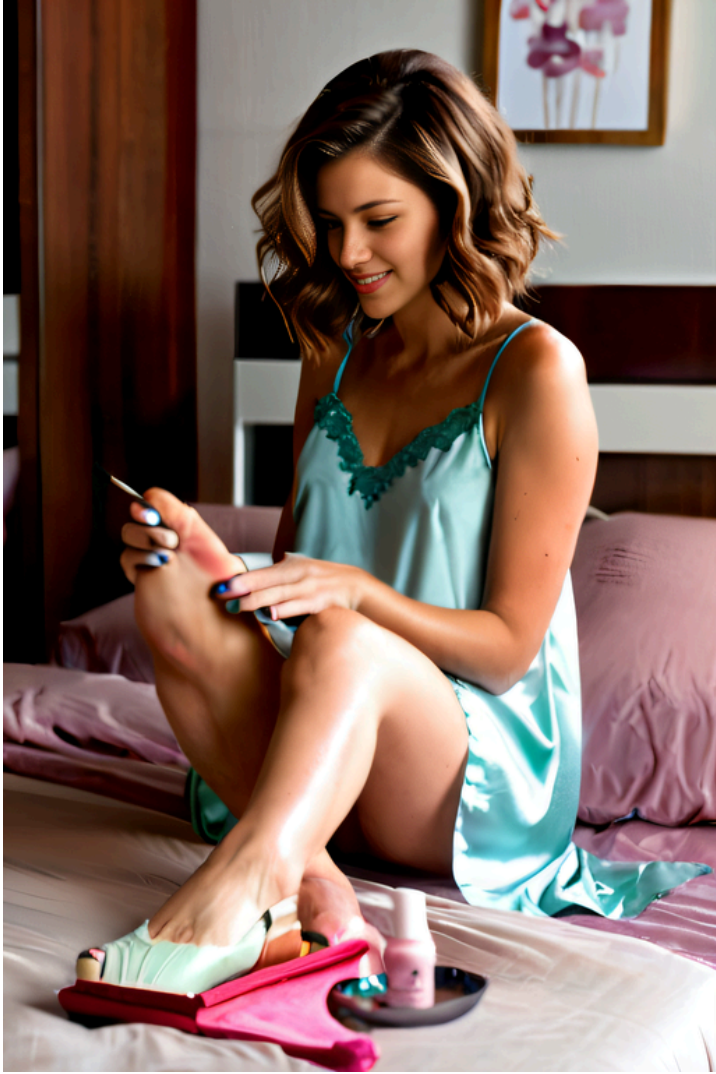
"Dinner was fun." I told her about the restaurant, the waiter and our conversations.

"Trish and the others really care about you."

"I like them, a lot." It amazed me that these girls would be willing to try and make a guy, like me, comfortable with acting like a girl. I wasn't about to ask why. I was simply grateful to have them as friends.

It was getting late. "Honey, why don't you wash up and slip into your nightie. I still want to do your toe nails tonight."

I had forgotten about Connie wanting to do them.



(continued in part 3
