

the
**FEMININE
MYSTIQUE**



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THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE

BY JENNIFER SUE

In the heyday of bustling Philadelphia, many of the wealthy sought an area even more elite than Society Hill, they sought a quiet get-away far from the noise and heat of the city. To the north, a beautiful forested area interspersed with farms along the Delaware River beckoned. The village of NEW HOPE became and still is an exclusive community that supports and fosters the arts and a more sedate way of life. Artisans work from their homes. An old mill has been converted into a quaint community theater hosting off Broadway style productions. The town and its environs have become a quiet quality tourist Mecca.

Also along the Delaware River north of Philadelphia is an isolated, seemingly sleepy little community that is a well-kept secret. Founded shortly after the Revolution, the village of Mystique has maintained many of its eighteenth and nineteenth century charms. Up until the 1890's the entire township boasted no more than three hundred souls, virtually all farmers, with a few millers, a blacksmith, and one storekeeper. Then, like the village of New Hope, it attracted the wealthy matrons of Philadelphia as a beautiful site for summer homes far from the heat and dirt of the city. It too has fostered the arts and artisans. Community theater, symphonies, and ballet flourish. Unlike New Hope, it has not become a tourist attraction... the residents have scrupulously avoided attracting outsiders. In Mystique, the feudal-like society of the wealthy has maintained its dominance.

Beginning in 1890 the wealthy began building luxurious summer homes. The men spent little time there while their wives and children stayed the entire summer. Around 1910 many of the wealthy matrons, many widowed, decided to stay there the year round. By the end of the Great War their polite society teas evolved into hotbeds of political debate, especially about Women's right to vote and temperance. These elegant widows, clad black with white lace gloves, ruled their wealthy families and servants with a loving iron hand. Beginning in the year women received the right to vote, the township of Mystique including the unincorporated village by the same name, women were elected to every public office. The area became a matriarchy.

The school board of Mystique revamped the public school system to meet the needs and desires of the wealthy matrons. The school, utilizing donations from the wealthy, forged ahead in all areas. Science labs featured the latest equipment. The library was well stocked and spacious. In the early 1970's every student in grades seventh and up received instructions on how to operate a computer. By 1980, every student from kindergarten on received such education. By 1990, in each classroom there was a computer for every student and teacher. Music and art were stressed while sports, other than tennis and golf, were deemed unnecessary activities that benefited only a few... and those few were generally the type they didn't want elevated to heroic portions. Physical Education classes featured gymnastics, acting, and dance. All students learned the basics of ballet, and in later years, of tap and jazz. Everyone learned to play an instrument and sang in the chorus. In addition, to avoid the competition of fashions, school uniforms were required and five were supplied each year to every student.

Under the dominance of the wealthy women, Mystique Township established one of the first sets of comprehensive zoning ordinances in the country. The entire township was either single or semi-detached home-residential or rural-farm. Businesses already in existence were allowed to continue, new enterprises were allowed only along Mystique's Main Street and all new construction had to be approved by a zoning hearing. In this way, future development was well controlled and the charm of the area was maintained. The explosive housing developments of the late forties and fifties and the sudden unchecked sprawl of modern suburbia was thus avoided. Mystique remained a quiet, elegant, and cultured closed community.

The community playground and park was spacious and tree covered. Sliding boards, swings, and the multitude of other playground equipment and pavilions abounded. The park, bordering the Delaware River, featured an outdoor band shell/stage with awning-covered seating. Everything was immaculately groomed and maintained. While sports fields were part of the park and playground, no organized teams existed. The matrons felt teams inspired unneeded pressures and competition upon the participants and fostered violence and profanity. In accordance with this there were no neighborhood bars where the men could gather to drink and carouse.

This is not to say the community banned consumption of alcohol, in fact several fine restaurants existed with well-stocked bars. It was over-indulgence, especially alcoholism, which was frowned upon. Public drunkenness resulted in a week in jail. Physical abuse, especially of a spouse or child, was harshly condemned and the perpetrators severely punished.

As a result the men who lived in Mystique were polite, caring, and family and community oriented. All others, those tending to be boisterous and overtly macho, had long since moved on to greener pastures. The community strongly discouraged those types from moving into the area. In fact, few people moved in or out of the township. Those already there liked their way of life. The zoning was such that newcomers could only find housing when someone moved out or died. Although a lot of remodeling occurred, there was virtually no new housing. In this way Mystique managed to escape the fate of many other suburban areas, which were forced to allow subsidized housing projects and the problems, they often engendered.

The economy of the area was basic. The main businesses were farms and orchards. Virtually everything else was service oriented to meet the needs and wants of the inhabitants. There was no industry what so ever. The majority of the money flowing into the area came from the wealthy matrons in their mansions.

Linda Weir, despite being a highly trained and qualified nurse, was unable to hold a job due to her husband's constant harassing calls and insane jealousy. Her husband, Peter, was an abusive alcoholic. Things reached a head on Memorial Day. After he broke her arm in a fit of drunken rage, Peter refused to let her seek medical help. Desperately, fearing for her life and that of her ten-year-old son, Hollis, she called the police. When they pulled up before their apartment, she and Hollis dashed out to their protection as the enraged Peter grabbed his shotgun and opened fire on the police. They shot back. Twenty minutes and fifteen police car reinforcements later when the smoke cleared, two officers had been wounded and Peter killed. Linda and her son saw Peter's bullet riddled bloody body before it was slipped into the body bag. Even though dead and glazed, his eyes still defiantly glared out of his angry macho face.

With no income, the temporarily disabled Linda knew she would lose their apartment before she could hope to put her life back together. Her widowed aunt, Kathryn Delp, who lived in a large home in Mystique, invited Linda and Hollis to move in with her as soon as the school year ended. With no other viable option, and since she had always loved visiting her aunt and the quiet community of Mystique, Linda eagerly accepted.

Kathryn Delp was a life-long and well-respected member of the community serving as head librarian at the school library, which also served as the Mystique public library. Remembering her from her childhood visits the community welcomed Linda Weir offering her a well paying nursing position with the MYSTIQUE MEDICAL CLINIC. The only fly in the ointment was Hollis.

Hollis was all boy, with all the nerve rattling tendencies and habits that give boys such an unappetizing reputation. Even though Hollis understood that his abusive and alcoholic father had been wrong, he still tried to emulate him. To put it politely the boy was obnoxious, rude, loud, and belligerent. Hollis bragged to his cohorts that he'd overheard the school secretary suggest they put his name on one of the chairs outside the principal's office. Each year the first thing the teachers did upon getting their new schedules was to check to see if horrid Hollis was in their class. He played midget football and little league baseball, thrilling in the rough and tough aspects of the games. His profane diatribes could almost blister the paint off the benches as he verbally abused not only the umpires and referees but also his teammates. He loved nothing better than rooting for the bad guys on the pro wrestling circuits. They were his heroes. The violent death of his father hit him hard, yet he still admired the dead man for not backing off from the cops.

So you can imagine his shock when he arrived in quiet Mystique to find that every activity and past-time he loved and in which he participated was not only frowned upon but unavailable! His first day at the playground proved quite shocking. Despite his prowling into

virtually every corner of the park, he could find no boys. The only kids his age he saw were a bunch of girls who seemed content to sit beneath the pavilions and work on crafts! Hollis simply walked about the park shaking his head in disbelief as he searched in vain for boys to join in mayhem and havoc creating play. At the bulletin board he eagerly looked for the times the baseball teams practiced. There were none! Times were listed for folk dancing, aerobics, tennis, and even chorus and band rehearsals. Times and dates for story-telling, arts and crafts, even acting and mime classes were listed. By lunch, Hollis wearily trudged home, confused by the absence of boys and manly activities.

"Couldn't you find anything that interested you at the park," asked Aunt Kathryn sweetly as she set out lunch. "I haven't really looked at the schedule this year, but I know they always had plenty to do other years."

"There's a lot going on," Hollis mumbled as he toyed with his soup. "But it's all sissy junk! A bunch of dumb girls sittin' around doin' crafts! Aren't there any guys around here? I couldn't even find a schedule about little league!"

Kathryn sighed quietly. She was well aware of the problems Hollis had in getting along at his former school. Hardly a week went by when he hadn't gotten into at least one fight. That's not even mentioning the many pranks he pulled every day. "Mystique is a lot different than any other place," she told him. "Around here, violence in any form is not condoned. Organized sports such as Little League seem to encourage undo competition and profanity, so we do not sponsor such activities. What is available for children at the park is wholesome, well organized activities to teach and encourage cooperation and growth. Virtually every child participates in the arts and crafts sessions! While the people where you came from might consider such activities to be 'sissy junk' as you called it, in Mystique it's a way of life. I strongly suggest that you change your opinions and interests if you hope to get along here."

"I don't wanna change," Hollis snarled as he slammed his spoon on the table. "I wanna play baseball, I wanna play football, I wanna have fun! You won't catch me messin' around with no sissy junk!"

Kathryn's face grew hard. "Hollis, you're being rude and loud. I will not tolerate that kind of attitude in this house! Now I expect an apology this instant!"

"An apology... for what," questioned Hollis in shocked disbelief as he pushed his chair away from the table and stood defiantly before his great aunt. "I didn't do nothin' wrong! I didn't ask to come live here! You invited us! Why should I have to bow down to your high and mighty ways! You can stick this whole place up your skinny as..."

"SLAP!!!"

Kathryn had moved with a speed that surprised Hollis. His head flew to the side before he could even complete his last word. A bright red imprint of Kathryn's hand glowed on the surprised boy's cheek.

"Go to your room," Kathryn growled with barely controlled rage. "We'll discuss this further when your mother comes home."

Hollis gingerly placed a hand against his cheek. He could readily feel the heat of the bruise. For an old lady, she really packed a wallop! With eyes blazing, but not willing to continue the confrontation, Hollis turned and stumped off to his room.

Going to the window he peered out, judging how difficult it would be to climb out. Not too hard, but why bother? There was nothing out there to do! Never had he seen such a dull place! The guys had to be dorky wimps! No baseball! How did they exist? The tears that had threatened ever since his father died in that adrenalin packed hail of gunfire while he cowered behind a bullet riddled police car with a wounded officer and his mother once more moistened his eyes. It took several deep breaths before he was able to regain control.

As he calmed down he wondered what would happen when his mother came home. She'd whine and cry, like she always did when she thought he was being too tough. Heck, he could handle mom... but Aunt Kathryn... that was another story! She didn't whine... she acted! The slight tingling in his still red cheek reminded him of that! For an old lady, she moved quickly and had hidden strength. She wouldn't be easy to handle.

With a sigh he flopped upon the bed. Brushing an unruly lank of his scraggly blond mop from his eyes he stared at the ceiling, thinking about the kids he'd seen... a bunch of sissy girls doing arts and crafts! And his aunt expected him to join them! Baloney! He wasn't about to be the only guy doing that crap! But where were the guys? What had he missed? There were lots of girls, but no boys. Then he recalled his aunt saying that virtually all the CHILDREN participated in the arts and crafts sessions! But there hadn't been any guys, just girls...

Then a very unsettling thought hit him! At the time he thought there were no boys at the park. But now that he thought about it, maybe some of the kids doing the arts and crafts had been boys... sissy boys! All the kids had hair well past their shoulders, shiny and clean, brushed into ponytails, pigtails, or braids tied



with scrunchies or ribbons. All wore clean coordinated outfits in bright colors, not one wore a raggedly pair of jeans or cut-offs! All had pierced ears and polished nails! His entire body shook with fear and dread as he realized that all the girls wearing skirts had pink ribbons or scrunchies in their hair while the ones wearing shorts had blue ribbons or scrunchies in their hair! The kids in skirts with pink hair ties had to be girls, but what if the kids in shorts and blue hair ties were boys!

That had to be it! The ones with blue hair ties had to be boys! Revulsion and disgust swept over him as he remembered that his aunt had the nerve to tell him the local boys weren't sissies! Ha! Well, they'd never catch him looking like that! Oh, if only dad hadn't been so damn dumb! Anybody with a brain knew you didn't try to shoot it out with the cops! If it hadn't been for his old man's drunken swagger, he'd be back home raising hell with his buddies! He silently damned his deceased father... because of him he was stuck here in this sick dorky place!

When she arrived home from work Linda was not surprised as Kathryn related the incident at lunch. "Well, you can't say I didn't warn you Hollis would be trouble," she stated sheepishly to her stern aunt. "I always liked it here when I was a kid because of the very things Hollis hates. I just don't know how to get him to see this way is better."

"There is only one way to make a boy like Hollis see things differently," Kathryn stated with surety. "Tough love... deny him everything he uses to make himself feel like a man while jamming the things we want him to do down his throat. It's the way things are done here."

Linda looked at her aunt with undisguised surprise bordering on awe. While she knew Aunt Kathryn was strong, she had never seen this side of her. "What do we do," she softly asked in a neophyte to master manner.

"To begin with, we give everything he has to charity," Kathryn stated. "Then we provide him with what we want him to have. He's actually made this part easy for us since most of his things are still in the garage, unpacked, since he didn't feel responsible enough to carry them to his bedroom. I've already loaded it in the back of my car."

"Oh," Linda uttered as she completely yielded control of her wayward son to her feisty aunt.

"Now we go up to his room and read him the riot act," Kathryn continued seeing that Linda voiced no objections. "We tell him to take a bath so we can go shopping. While he's bathing we lay out one set of underwear, a pair of dress pants, shirt, socks and tie shoes, then pack up all his remaining clothes. Once he's dressed, off we go. The first stop will be to drop off all his packed up possessions at the Salvation Army mission box. We'll make sure to have him do most of the work. Then we tell him what we did and what we're going to do. He might scream and fight us but he'll have no choice."

"He won't like it," Linda stated with a shiver as she foresaw the temper tantrum he'd throw.

"He won't have any choice," replied Kathryn with a satisfied smile before she grew quite serious and stared at her favorite niece. "Linda, you have to be stronger than you ever have

been. Hollis will be trying every trick he's ever used to cajole you into letting him escape this. You CAN NOT give him the slightest hope. You have to be hard and cold to the brat... but soft and loving to the child. Never blend the two."

"I understand," Linda stated softly. "This will be my last chance to save him from growing up like his father."

Moments later they knocked loudly on his bedroom door and entered without waiting for a reply. "Hey, what the hell do you think you're doing barging into my room," Hollis snarled as he was startled from his nap. "Hollis, I will not tolerate such language in my home," Kathryn stated in a frosty tone that left Hollis know he would pay for his transgression.

"Aunt Kathryn told me what you did at lunch and now you curse at us. I will no longer tolerate such behavior," Linda scolded the somewhat groggy youth. "You will apologize to her this instant!"

Hollis wiped the sleep from his eyes as he looked with surprise at his mother. Fear filled his gut as he realized the whiny hand wringer was gone, never had his mother been so adamant in her reprimands, but then she had never had Aunt Kathryn to back her up. One look at the stern visage of the old woman behind his mother and he understood that now was not the time to assert his independence. "I'm sorry I swore and insulted you, Aunt Kathryn," he stated softly deciding that it was better to live temporarily as a coward than to die an unsung hero. "But if there were boys with the girls doing the arts and crafts, I still think they're a bunch of sissies!" This last he added louder in a firm voice to let them know he was willing to play their game only to a certain point. Now he'd have to see if they'd let him get away with it. It was difficult for the boy to judge where the lines were now drawn. He had no concept he'd already irrevocably crossed the one line that existed in Mystique

"I accept your apology," Kathryn stated firmly. "But for your sake, I sincerely hope you NEVER are so rude and crude again!" She stared right through the boy until he had to lower his gaze from her withering glare. "If you ever use that sort of language in my house again, I'll wash your mouth out with soap!"

Hollis shivered, he had no problem visualizing the old lady taking him in hand and shoving a bar of soap into his mouth. There was no way he ever wanted to see if she could do it!

With a smile of smug satisfaction upon seeing his fear, Kathryn went on. "Now, to show you there are no hard feelings and to give us a new start, I'll take you shopping after you take a bath."

Hollis looked up, the offer was totally unexpected and had taken him completely off guard. He'd expected a much harder fight about his flapping mouth. The expression upon Aunt Kathryn's face was one of genuine eagerness to go shopping. Maybe she wouldn't be so difficult to handle. "All right," Hollis replied. "It'll only take me a few minutes to get ready." With that he slipped off the bed and padded to the bathroom.

As soon as he was out of the room, Linda laid out his seldom worn dress pants and shirt. Kathryn opened the garbage bags she'd had hidden behind her back and they proceeded to put every piece of his clothing, every toy, and every comic book into the bags. Just as Hollis

finished showering, they carried the bags out to the car and stuffed them into the trunk with the other boxes and bags.

Naturally, Hollis protested when he saw the clothes they'd laid out for him, but one look at Aunt Kathryn convinced him not to argue any further. Quickly, he dressed. While he did so, his mother gathered up the clothes he'd haphazardly discarded in the bathroom. In minutes they were driving down the main thoroughfare of the small town. The few people they saw were friendly and waved.

"There's Helen James and her son," Kathryn stated as she waved at a young mother standing at a corner waiting to cross the street while holding onto the hand of a child. "They live just down the street from us. Kyle is your age and would be a very good first friend. He can show you around town. I'll call later tonight and discuss the matter with Helen."

Hollis stared at what he had been told was a boy in disbelief. The cute freckle-faced child wore yellow shorts, a simple yellow shirt with French cut sleeves, yellow anklets, and yellow sneakers. Blue ribbons held his vivid red haired bouncy ponytail in place high atop the back of his head. Gold earrings dangled smartly from his pierced ears, and his nails were coated with a bright pink polish! To make matters worse, he recognized him as one of the kids he'd seen doing the arts and crafts at the park! His suspicions were confirmed! If what Aunt Kathryn had said about the boys being at the park with the girls, then all the guys had been dressed like Kyle. ALL the guys were sissies! There was no way he wanted to be shown about town by that faggot! But the tone of voice that Aunt Kathryn had used in pointing out the boy and his mother left him know that now was not the time to state his feelings. Glumly he settled back in his seat, refusing to look at anyone else for fear of seeing more sissy boys!

Roused from his fuming state of mind, Hollis was easily coerced into removing the many bags in the trunk of the car. All Aunt Kathryn had to do was appeal to his manliness to get the job done, especially in light of what Hollis thought of the sissy boys of Mystique. Hollis strutted his manly stuff to show he was no sissy as he filled the Salvation Army charity box located near the post office. Ten minutes later they pulled up before a quaint boutique. Hollis quietly shuddered as he read the name: CHERISHED MEMORIES CHILDREN'S CLOTHIER. The display window was filled with cute dresses and hats.

"You're not taking me shopping here, are you," he asked fearing that he already knew the answer.

"Of course," replied Kathryn. "CHERISHED MEMORIES is the finest shop in Mystique. It's the perfect place to get you a new wardrobe."

"But I don't need a new wardrobe," Hollis stated with growing worriment as he slumped in his seat. "My old clothes are just fine."

"Heavens no," Kathryn responded sounding appalled by the very notion. "Besides, the only clothes you have are what you're wearing. Just what did you think was in all those bags you just dropped into the donation box?"

"What," Hollis stated as he sat up in wide-eyed surprise. "You mean you threw out all my clothes?"

"Heavens no, you silly child, you know full well we donated your clothes to charity," replied Kathryn as if she was speaking to a preschooler while she exited the car. "Along with everything else you brought with you! After this your behavior this afternoon, I certainly will not allow you to continue as you were. Starting now, everything will be change! You WILL learn how to fit in here in Mystique!"

Hollis was boiling mad to hear that they had not only thrown out all his clothes, but everything else he'd brought along as well. Now he knew his angry outburst this afternoon was not forgotten nor forgiven! The brief encounter with Aunt Kathryn at lunch had shown him she was in charge. Now he understood she would show no mercy until he bent to her will! The surprised and angry youth wanted to bolt, but there was no place to go. "I'm not going in there and you can't make me," he finally snarled in a shaky voice.

Kathryn opened the rear door of the car and waited for Hollis to emerge. "Young man, you will do as you are told," she told him calmly. "However, you do have a choice. You can do it now... or after I take you across my knee and spank you... right here on the street!"

Linda couldn't keep a straight face as she watched the stubborn duo duel. Not waiting for t outcome of the face-off, she headed inside knowing that Hollis would soon be following.

Hollis looked at the retreating form of his mother and understood this was now between him and his aunt. The gleam in Aunt Kathryn's eyes told him that she was ready and able to give him the spanking she'd threatened... in fact she appeared eager to humiliate him with a public spanking. That terrified Hollis. While he was accustomed to being pummeled due to the many fights he'd been in and had suffered many beatings at the hands of his father, this was something else. Those times had been spur of the moment, angry incidents where the adrenalin pumped fiercely through his veins. The pain, while very real, was dulled. The bruises were born as a mark of his toughness and virility. But a spanking was a cold, pre-meditated action, carefully planned and executed for the purpose of discipline. As difficult as it to believe, never in his wild and hectic life had Hollis ever been spanked!

Now he faced the choice of cooperating or a spanking. He harbored no doubts she'd be able to carry out her threat and then he'd still have to do what Aunt Kathryn wanted him to do. He felt he should fight... yet it would be far worse if he fought and lost than it would be to merely give in. With slumped shoulders and head bowed he slowly slid from the car, frightened and unsure.

Kathryn read his resignation and capitulation and wasted no time. Grasping him firmly by the hand as if he were a toddler, she pulled him into the boutique.

Hollis could feel his heart pounding in his chest. Why hadn't he fought, he berated himself as he meekly and uncharacteristically allowed himself to be led by the hand. Once inside the store, he wet his lips and looked about with nervous apprehension.

"Linda, it's good to have you back with us," the owner, Diane Fairchild welcomed with a hug. "Kathryn, how nice to see you," she added with another warm embrace. Then she turned to face the sullen boy. "And this must be Hollis! My, but you're a cutie!"

Hollis wanted to find a rock to hide under. How could she think he was a cutie! This was going to be worse than he'd feared! Yet this woman fascinated him. Of the women he'd seen

in Mystique, all shared the same trim, athletic yet delightfully feminine physique. Great Aunt Kathryn certainly was spry and strong for her age. Helen James, the mother of the sissy boy he'd seen, was certainly pleasing to the eye. The women at the park had all been athletic and powerful. Now this woman, a simple shop keeper, seemed to be in remarkably fine shape. Maybe it was all the dancing and stuff they did...

"Hollis is in need of some special treatment," Kathryn stated breaking him from the unsettling train of thought. "He thinks that all the boys he saw at the park this morning are sissies!"

"Sissies," exclaimed Diane indignantly. "Well, they most certainly are not! But I'm sure young master Hollis will quickly discover exactly what a sissy is or is not!"

Hollis looked up with fearful eyes to see they were not joking. Panic engulfed him and he turned to flee. But it was already too late. Before he took a step towards the door, Diane grabbed a handful of his long hair and lifted him from the floor so that he had to stand on tip-toe. "Ow! Ow..." he cried as he danced about on his toes unable to shake himself free from her firm, unyielding grasp. Quickly he decided that it was useless to resist so he stopped struggling. Instantly the pressure on his hair eased and the pain ceased.

In seconds he was lead to a dressing room and unceremoniously stripped to his underwear by the three women. Then Diane Fairchild and Aunt Kathryn left to begin selecting his new wardrobe. His mother impatiently gathered up his discarded clothes as he removed his underwear. Then she scooped up his underwear and left him standing stark naked in the dressing room. Before the curtain that closed off the tiny room from peering eyes stopped moving, lace trimmed pink cotton Little Mermaid printed panties and matching camisole were passed into the room. Wincing, and now unable to hold back the tears, he angrily threw them to the floor. Since the curtain stopped a foot short of the floor, his actions were visible to those outside.

"Hollis, either you put these on NOW," Diane stated firmly as she reached under the curtain to scoop the dainty undies from the floor and once more hand the childish undies to him. "Or I'll open the curtain and put them on you!"

Again fear gripped him as he felt terrified that this woman too spoke the truth and that even his best efforts at resistance would prove futile. Reluctantly, Hollis accepted the panties and camisole. Slowly, as his stomach churned, he stepped into the hideous girlishness. The soft cotton lingerie fit his boyish body perfectly, which only added to his shame. Abruptly, the curtain was pulled back and he cowered into the back as the three women surveyed his humbled and humiliated form.

"A perfect fit," Diane stated proudly. "Now, Hollis, let's find you some pretty clothes to wear!" With that, she grabbed his arm and tugged him out onto the floor.

Hollis looked fearfully about, but thankfully there was no one else in the shop. Before he realized what was happening, a cute pink cotton floral print dress with short puffy lace edged sleeves and matching lace trimmed Peter Pan collar was tugged over his head. Feeling a very disturbing, unfamiliar tickling at his thighs, with growing panic he peered down.

"Hey... this is a dress..." he cried out in terror as he saw the ruffled hem that ended at mid-thigh. "I can't wear this!"

"You already are wearing it, my pretty little girl," Diane stated as she buttoned him securely inside. "Now you had to notice that the boys you saw in the park this morning were wearing shorts so they could not be sissies, could they? So who do you think the sissy is now... those boys or you?"

The humiliation was more than he could take. Hollis burst into tears. "Please, I'll be good," he begged as he turned to Aunt Kathryn. "I'll do whatever you want, just don't make me dress like this! Please, Aunt Kathryn, please!"

"Well, this certainly has changed your tune, hasn't it," Kathryn stated with a smile. "I'll tell you what, darling," she stated as she took his chin firmly in her hand to glare into his red, watery eyes. "We'll finish dressing you in this outfit. If you behave like a good little girl, we'll get you clothes more suitable for a boy."

Without waiting for his consent, Diane led the sobbing boy to the footwear department where a pair of lace topped pink anklets were slipped onto his feet followed by a pair of pink and white saddle shoes. As the shoes were being fitted, Kathryn gathered his unruly hair together into a ponytail at the top rear of his head, securing it in place with a blue silk ribbon tied into a dainty bow. "There, now you really look like an adorable little girl," Diane exclaimed as she led him before a full-length mirror.

Poor Hollis could only cry and hang his head in shame after seeing the changes the girlish clothes had made in his appearance. No longer was there any sign of the rough and tumble irascible lad that reveled in mischief. In his stead was a timid, terrified little girl with unkempt blond hair! They had turned him into the biggest sissy he'd ever seen! Yet what could he do? What choice did he have? Numbed by the realization that these women could do to him as they pleased, poor Hollis lost all will to fight. Without offering further resistance, he meekly allowed himself to be led about the store. In moments his arms were heaped with several pairs of lavishly lace trimmed panties and camisoles in various pastel shades. Lace topped anklets to match the lingerie were next. Then came several cute skirts and blouses. Finally came the dainty Mary Jane single strap shoes. Not once did he utter a word of protest as the women giggled about how dainty he'd look in the pretty girls' clothes.

Hollis was growing very uncomfortable as the sensations created by wearing the dress became familiar and even enjoyable! In his experience, wearing clothes had never been enjoyable! Certainly there had been times when he had been uncomfortable such as when he had to dress up, but never had it been fun! Fun and enjoyment were just something he never associated with wearing clothes! Yet now, wearing this dress, that was what was happening! Was he that much of a sissy? Was it the softness and prettiness of the girls' clothes that made the difference? It was all beyond his comprehension.

"I'm pleased with your behavior, Hollis," Kathryn stated as they deposited the selections at the check out. "Although you weren't excited and happy like a girl should be when she selects a new wardrobe, you didn't give us any problems. Since you behaved like a good girl, as I promised, we'll select some clothes that are more appropriate for a boy."

Once more Hollis stoically followed the women about the store as they heaped simple cotton panties and camisoles, cotton knit shorts and matching blouses with French cut sleeves in soft lavender, canary yellow, a brilliant vermilion, orange, and pink. Plain anklets and deck sneakers were selected in matching colors. The knowledge that these all too girlish clothes would be his boy clothes was more than he could take. Again the dejected boy began to cry.

"Hollis, stop crying this instant," Linda ordered. "You're behaving like a sissy!"

"B... but mom," he whined. "These are girls clothes! The shorts have no pockets and zip up the side, and you can tell by the sleeves these shirts are girls blouses!"

"Almost every boy in town buys their clothes here," stated Diane reproachfully. "They NEVER complain about my selections! I'm sure the boys you saw this morning were wearing outfits purchased here! Look around, Hollis, what else do you expect to find here? I don't carry what YOU would consider to be normal boys clothes!"

Suitably put in his place, Hollis did look about the pleasant store to see that everything was indeed for girls! If the boys shopped here, they bought girls clothes! As he thought back to what he'd seen this morning, he realized the boys he saw in the girlish shorts were wearing coordinated blouses with French cut sleeves and that even their socks and deck sneakers had matched! They had to be wearing exactly what he now carried in his hands!

Poor Hollis remained silent but teary eyed as they went to the lingerie section to select assorted panties and camisoles in colors to match his shorts and tops. The final humiliation, however, was the selection of cute lace trimmed nylon babydoll nighties, one a bright yellow and another hot pink, both with matching sheer nylon robes. Tearfully he stood at the check out and accepted the bags containing his new effeminate wardrobe.

As they headed to the door, Kathryn stopped to look at the display of school uniforms. "Did you notice the pretty school uniforms, darling," she asked the thoroughly dispirited boy. "I can hardly wait to see you in one."

This was the first that Hollis had heard that the students wore uniforms. "I never heard of a public school requiring uniforms," he complained as he looked over the four cute manikins. Reluctantly he had to admit they were quite cute! He even found himself looking forward to seeing the girls wearing the outfits.

There were two sets of manikins wearing the outfits. One set represented about six or seven year old students while the other set appeared to be about ten or eleven year old students. All had hair well past their shoulders. Each wore virtually identical rear buttoning shiny satin blouses, the only difference being that one in each set was baby pink while the other was baby blue. They featured billowing long sleeves that ended in wide, lace edged ruffled cuffs and the snug lace edged ruffled neck featured a lace jabot at the throat. Bib style jumpers of blue/green cotton plaid featured cute knife pleats on the skirts and had shoulder straps criss-crossing in the middle of the back. As displayed on the manikins, the skirts ended three inches above the knees. Each manikin wore cable knit knee socks in colors to match their blouse. Glossy black patent leather T-strap shoes and matching shoulder strap purses completed the outfits. On the younger pair of manikins, the one wearing the baby blue

blouse had a ponytail secured with a baby blue satin ribbon bow while the one with the baby pink blouse had twin braids secured with baby pink satin ribbon bows. On the older set of manikins, it was just the opposite. The one wearing the baby blue blouse had braids tied with baby blue satin ribbon bows while the one wearing the baby pink blouse featured a ponytail secured with a baby pink satin ribbon bow.

"They are pretty, aren't they," Diane stated with pride as she noted how enraptured Hollis was with the uniforms.

"Yes, they are," Hollis admitted a bit sheepishly. Then he naively looked at Diane. "What do the boys wear?"

Diane looked at him as if he were from Mars, then began to laugh. Kathryn quickly joined. "Hollis, you're simply too precious for words," Diane finally exclaimed as she stood by the display. Boys and girls both wear the kilts," she stated as she pointed to the older manikin in the baby blue blouse with the pleated skirt.

With a quake of sheer terror Hollis realized that what he thought was a skirt they called a kilt! Apparently again it was the blue hair ties for boys and pink for the girls! With wide-eyed abhorrence he looked at the pretty manikin representing a boy. A shudder enveloped him as he saw an image of himself with his hair plaited into twin braids secured with blue satin ribbons wearing the all too girlish outfit, carrying a purse and wearing girls T-strap shoes! The next thing he knew he was lying on the floor with his head cradled in his mother's lap.

Looking about, he realized he was still in the boutique, sprawled on the floor before the displays of the school uniforms. Terror once more seized his all too boyish soul. "Please, tell me I'm not going to have to wear that sissy outfit," he pleaded helplessly as his eyes silently beseeched his mother.

"But Hollis," she cooed gently as she dabbed at his sweated brow with a tissue. "It's what the school requires. All the boys wear it!"

"But why," he cried in anguish as he looked about at the concerned faces of Aunt Kathryn and Diane Fairchild. "Why do the boys have to wear girls clothes?"

"It's really quite simple," responded Kathryn. "You're past behavior is exactly what we don't want and will not tolerate. It's all too easy for boys like you to grow arrogant and conceited, to tease and bully girls and boys who don't come up to your expectations of masculinity. Well, here in Mystique we crush those ideas and never give them a chance to grow. Think for a moment, Hollis, how cocky and macho can you be if you wear this school uniform? How cocky and macho can you be when you go to the park to play with the other children when you're wearing the short and blouse outfits we just purchased? Wearing these clothes, you have no choice but to behave and be a good boy. Besides, ALL the boys wear the same or similar outfits, so there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed about. In fact, many times boys will wear dresses or skirts just like the girls simply because they like to do so! No one condemns them or makes fun of them! You'll get used to it, once you stop fighting it. You'll see."

Hollis turned his head into his mother's embrace and let his tears flow. How had he fallen so low? How could the boys of this town let this happen to them? Why didn't they rebel? Yet, what Aunt Kathryn said made a sort of weird sense. If all the boys dressed like this, no one

would tease. There was certainly no way he'd ever want to rough house dressed in these sissy clothes! Despite his misgivings, he was forced to admit their way of dressing boys would force them to behave!

Once his tears stopped, Linda helped her still trembling son to his feet. Desperately he tugged the hem of the dress down to try to cover more of his exposed legs. "Pl... please...," he stammered. "Could I change into a pair of shorts?"

Kathryn chuckled, but not maliciously. "Well, it seems that you're quite willing to wear girls' shorts now. Isn't it amazing what wearing a dress can do for a bratty boy!"

Poor Hollis could only hang his head in shame. Once more the veracity of his aunt's words haunted his crushed masculinity. Maybe it was the all too delightful sensations the dress was imparting to his frenzied mind. Despite his earnest desire to hate wearing the dress, it felt good... too good! No wonder girls always dressed so nicely and gossiped about fashions. In the short time he'd been dressed it had already effected the way he behaved and was beginning to effect his thoughts! If this kept up, he'd soon be a sissy!

"I think it will be best if you wear the dress home," Kathryn added sweetly. "It will help remind you how your life is changing. I'm sure you'll be quite cooperative in wearing the matching shorts and blouse tomorrow when you meet Kyle James to go to the park! I don't think you want to show up in the dress, do you?"

Hollis swallowed back his fears. There wasn't a bit of doubt in his mind that his aunt would indeed take him to the park tomorrow, no matter how he was dressed. It would be infinitely better if he wore the shorts! For now, at least, his fate was sealed. Until he could figure some way out of this mess, he would have to cooperate fully or face even further humiliation. "No Aunt Kathryn," he stated softly. "I'd rather not wear this dress."

"Good, Hollis, that's good," she smiled. "Now you be good for the rest of the night. No arguments or protests. You do whatever we tell you to do. Then tonight, we'll hang the dress up on the outside of your closet door so you can see it. That way it will serve as a constant reminder of what will happen to you if you are bad. We have a saying here in Mystique that I want you to understand so listen carefully. IF A BOY DOES MISBEHAVE, SOON LIKE A MISS HE WILL BEHAVE," she added with a chuckle.

Quite naturally Linda and Diane added their laughter to the cruel joke that served as the Mystique motto.

Thus it was a very subdued and spiritually crushed girlishly clad boy who meekly held on to his mother's hand as they made their way to the car. The soft swish of the hem of the dress across his exposed thighs quite unnerved Hollis.

If Hollis thought his ordeal for the evening was over, he quickly discovered that he was sadly mistaken. Bending over to slip into the rear seat, his exposed panty clad bottom received a smart smack from his aunt. "Youch," he yelped as he swept his hands back to protect his rear while he abruptly stood. "Yowl," he added as he hit his head against the doorframe. There he meekly stood, one hand rubbing his stinging butt while the other rubbed his pounding bowed head.

“Young ladies do not show off their panties when they enter a car, no matter how pretty their dainty undies might be,” Kathryn admonished the cringing youth. “A proper young lady turns her back to the door, gently smooths her skirt across her bottom, then holds it in place as she carefully sits on the seat. Then she keeps her knees together and swings her legs inside the car. I suggest you try it now.”

The words of outrage and anger that threatened to burst forth were instantly tamed by the humiliation Hollis felt for having blundered so in exposing his pantied bottom to his aunt. Now that he thought about it, he had often seen girls enter a car in the manner she described. Never had they shown off their panties. It galled him to admit that once more his aunt was right. The last thing he wanted to do was to show off his panties! So, like a contrite shy little girl, he meekly followed her instructions on how a proper young lady enters a car. To his chagrin, the method worked! Angered and humbled, he slumped in the rear seat, his usual position.

Aunt Kathryn quickly scolded. “HOLLY! Sit up like a proper young lady!”

Instantly he sat up, and just as quickly his skirt slipped up his thighs almost exposing his crotch. Quickly and with a bright red face he tugged the resisting hem back down his thighs. A quick guilty glance towards the front seat showed both women smiling and nodding their heads in approval of his modest action. Quickly he lowered his gaze to the floor, only to be repulsed to see his dainty all too girlish knees exposed beyond the hem of the humiliating dress. With disgust he stared at his legs, wondering how they could betray him. After all, these had been the same powerful legs that had carried him around the bases... or sprinted down the football field... or furiously pedaled his bike so he could go fast enough to clear eight-foot wide Hobbes Creek back home. These soft girlish things couldn't be the same legs... yet he knew they were.

Even worse was the fact that once more his aunt was right! Things certainly were a lot different when you wore a skirt! No wonder girls were so sedate and prissy, they had no choice! Now neither did he! He hadn't missed the fact that she had called him HOLLY instead of Hollis, which only added to his chagrin! In fact, he sadly had to admit that at the moment he looked a lot more like a Holly than a Hollis! But there was nothing he could do about his shame without digging himself deeper. Now he wore a dress, at least if he cooperated they would let him wear shorts tomorrow! The sick joke about being made to behave like a Miss if he misbehaved still rang sourly in his ears and he didn't think it was the least bit funny!. After these unsettling thoughts, all he could think about was his eagerness to get home.

But instead of heading home as he'd expected and hoped, they pulled up before another small business. Still sitting daintily upright, he fearfully peered out the window to read the sign ENZMANN TRESSES HAIR SALON. Once more his boyish indignation urged him to bolt or at least fight. But the memory of his father's bullet riddled bleeding body drove home the fact that it was sometimes hopeless and downright stupid to fight. Unhappily he understood that now was one of those times. Totally defeated, he meekly put his hand in the proffered hand of his stern aunt as she helped him to daintily exit the car. He was very careful to reverse the process he'd learned to enter the car to exit, including smoothing his skirt.

"Very good, Holly," Kathryn praised her blushing faux-niece. "I'm delighted to see that you're learning."

She'd called him HOLLY again! Poor Hollis bit his lips. Yes, he was learning... to act like a dumb girl! How humiliating it all was for the formerly rough and rowdy lad, yet what could he do other than to submit. Tears trickled down his cheeks as he allowed himself to be led into the upscale beauty salon.

As soon as they entered, the owner, Claire Enzmann greeted them all with hugs. "Linda, it's so nice to have you back with us," she enthused as she greeted her former childhood summer friend.

"Kathryn, it's always a pleasure to see you," she greeted the older woman in turn. "It's so nice of you to invite Linda and her pretty daughter to come live with you."

Then she turned and swept the weeping sullen child into a warm embrace. "What's your name, darling," she asked as she grasped the lowered chin to raise the youth's face to meet her gaze. "And why on earth are you crying? I won't hurt you."

Hollis eventually realized that hugs were virtually mandatory when greeting acquaintances in Mystique. The upset lad could do nothing but mutely accept the well-intentioned hug, but the anguished tears would not subside. By her words and actions, he realized that this woman obviously thought that he was a real girl! Afraid to give his name and thus reveal that he was really a boy, fear of being ridiculed and humiliated kept him from answering the woman's inquiries. After all, how could he explain that he was a boy dressed up as a girl? What choice did he have but to let her think he was a girl? Then a scary thought entered his bewildered mind. If she thought he was a girl, all the better, as long as he cooperated enough to keep her thinking that way, he'd avoid the humiliation of being exposed and treated as a sissy boy!

Claire still firmly grasped the recalcitrant chin before her. "Now why would a pretty little girl be crying when she's obviously here to have her hair done," she asked the sullen child when a response failed to be forth coming.

"Holly is quite shy and upset because she's discovered that tomboys are not allowed here in Mystique," Kathryn responded. "You can see by the slovenly state of her hair that she hasn't had much experience with the finer aspects of girlish life."

Hollis only winced and pinched his eyes closed as he tried to keep from bursting out in loud sobs. His body began to tremble as he fought the urge to scream his indignation and prove to one and all that he was a boy! But once more he saw his father lying in a pool of blood, eyes glassy and staring off into nothingness. Horror and fear that such a fate awaited him etched itself across his tear-streaked face. The only saving thought he held on to was that Claire thought he was a real girl.

"Holly," Kathryn stated as she slipped the trembling youth from the grip of the bemused beautician. "HOLLY! It will be all right, darling, everything will be all right. No one is going to hurt you, we're only going to make you pretty." Reaching into her purse she pulled forth some tissues to give to the child. "Now blow your nose and pull yourself together, young lady." Then tenderly running her fingers through the cowering youth's hair. "Claire needs

your cooperation to clean up this mess. Now, be a good little girl. You do remember what we said would happen if you don't behave? Now apologize for being unsociable and ask her nicely to fix your hair and show you how to keep in neat and styled."

The fear of being revealed as a boy was now compounded by his anger about Aunt Kathryn's insidious comments. Just before he burst into defiant rebellious action, the image of his dead father being slipped into the body bag leapt into his fevered mind. The vivid image quickly crushed the incipient rebellion. Then the threat as to how he'd be dressed in the morning if he didn't behave like a good girl hit home. Sadly, he decided to keep up the facade of a being a soon to be ex-tomboy rather than a humiliated sissy boy. "I... I'm sorry for appearing to be ungrateful, Ms Enzmann," he finally uttered in a soft, contrite voice. "Will you please fix my hair and show me how to take care of it?" To his surprise, he didn't throw up

for uttering the damning apology and request. Then a fearsome thought struck him... maybe he was growing accustomed to behaving!

"You're forgiven, sweetie. I'll be delighted to do your hair," Claire stated with a broad grin as she ran her fingers through the disheveled blond hair.

Hollis was relieved that Ms Enzmann had accepted the apology and request for aid at face value. Thus began his humbling submission to the ministrations of the skilled beautician. Meekly and quietly he allowed her to thoroughly shampoo and condition his long golden blond hair. Once that was done he moved to the beautician's chair where he barely kept from shuddering as she trimmed the split ends and evened the length of his locks. His big baby blue eyes were squeezed shut as she created soft, gently curled bangs that whispered gently against his eyebrows. Despite his clammy trembling hands his nails were manicured and polished with a light pink gloss.

During this time, he mutely nodded or shook his head as he thought would be an appropriate girlish response to Claire's continual femi-



nine banter. All through this he managed to keep up his masquerade as a girl. It certainly wasn't easy, but being mistaken for a girl was immensely preferable to being disgraced as a sissy boy!

But his resolve to continue his disguise was sorely tried as his ears were double pierced and four golden studs installed in the damning holes! In a daze he listened to the instructions on how to keep the holes from becoming infected or growing closed. It was easier to nod his acknowledgment of the demonstration of how to brush his darling locks a hundred strokes each day. To his chagrin he even managed to form his hair into a ponytail and tie it in place atop the rear of his head with the blue satin ribbon Claire handed him. All during the ordeal he had to repeatedly smile and thank her as she praised him for his girlishness and beauty. The strangeness of wearing a dress was always on his mind. By then he had grown accustomed to the tantalizing sensations, but they still unnerved him since boy clothes hardly ever created any sensations, and then only bad ones!

When finally finished, they stood him before a full-length mirror. Hollis surveyed the damage they'd done to his masculine image. As he looked at his reflection, he saw no sign of the familiar rough and tumble boy he so wanted to be. Instead there cowered a timid but undeniably pretty girl wearing a cute minidress with soft, golden tresses with a perky blue beribboned ponytail cascading gently about her shoulders. In her dainty ear lobes pretty twin golden studs twinkled in the bright lights. Pink lip-gloss made her lips quite adorable and innocent. Neatly rounded and polished glossy pink nails added immeasurably to the image of soft, delicate girlishness. Then there were the long, soft shapely legs that tapered into the pink lace topped anklets and all too girlish pink and white saddle shoes. There was not the slightest manifestation that a recalcitrant tomboy existed in the image of the soft, delicate, prissy girl! There was no way anyone would ever suspect that she could be a boy!

Hollis now rued the fact that he hadn't gotten the crew cut his father had demanded just before his death. It was far too late, now. Clad in the prissy outfit, he looked like a real girl! A sinking feeling engulfed him. Could he ever have been a real boy if he was so easily transformed into a girl? Why did the dress feel so damned nice... it almost felt as if he SHOULD be dressing as a girl! That was a REAL horrid thought!

If he had to be a dumb prissy girl, at least it was good to be a pretty one! At least no one would ever suspect that he was really a boy as long as he behaved like a girl. If he cooperated with his aunt... behaved... she'd ease up on him... maybe let him play baseball and stuff. But looking down at his all too girlish body and those pretty legs, he doubted that he'd ever have the same confidence in his masculinity that had previously helped him to be so tough and manly. What was he to do? It was all too confusing! The entire bizarre scene of his father's tragic death still haunted him. In the past, the tough guy he'd felt himself to be had enabled him to avoid seeing the truth, seeing the waste and futility of his father's rash deeds. But today his eyes had been opened. The dress had made him see the truth! If being a man made you do stupid things... which the more he thought about it the more that seemed to be case... why should he fight his aunt. But then he'd have to wear the shorts and French sleeved top! In his beleaguered macho mind he believed that he'd look like a sissy even if all the other guys dressed the same. There was no way he wanted to look like a sissy! Wearing a dress and pretending to be a girl would be better than that! After all, in comparing his terrible experiences of being exposed and humiliated as a sissy at *CHERISHED MEMORIES CHILDREN'S*

CLOTHIER with the unpleasant experiences of being thought to be a former tomboy he'd had here at ENZMANN TRESSES HAIR SALON; it was much better to be mistaken for a girl!

These deeply reflective thoughts were interrupted as Aunt Kathryn told him to thank Ms Enzmann. Quietly, like a shy tomboy, he hugged Ms Enzmann, then peered up into her face and forced a smile to his face. "Thank you for showing me how to be a pretty girl," he stated as he gave her a very genuine kiss on the cheek.

"It was my pleasure, Holly," Claire responded as she fussed a bit with the blue satin hair ribbons. "After all, it's always such a delight to totally transform such a pretty boy into a sweet little girl!"

Hollis was horrified! She knew he was a boy! A look of panic swept over him. "Y... you knew I was a b... boy," he stammered.

"Of course, Holly," Claire replied with a delighted chitter. "Only boys wear blue ribbons in their hair. The girls wear pink! I knew the moment you walked in that you were a boy. But you make such a delightful girl I think you should consider changing your ribbons to pink!"

Hollis was numbed by the revelation that his supposed masquerade had been rendered ineffective by the color of his hair ribbons! The lad was in a stupor as the bill was paid. With stumbling steps, he walked back to the car hand in hand with Aunt Kathryn.

The trip home, removing the dress, and donning a cute little pink baby nightie they'd purchased were a blur for the dazed boy. It was only as he was gently tucked into bed with a cuddly teddy bear that he was snapped out of his preoccupation by his aunt.

"Hollis... Hollis...," Kathryn stated as she gently shook the boy until she had gotten his attention. "I'm sorry that your experiences tonight were so unpleasant, but they were quite necessary. All the boys here in Mystique are what you presently consider to be sissies. You'll have to become like them too. Only here we consider such boys to be normal. No one teases or hassles them. Even though it may be difficult for you to believe, they are quite happy to live the way they do and have been doing so for close to a hundred years. I have no doubts that you'll grow accustomed to living that way too, once you get over your ridiculous notions of manhood!"

"I understand how difficult it is for you to accept these changes, but accept them you must," Kathryn went on. "At ENZMANN TRESSES HAIR SALON you experienced what it would be like if you were a girl. Of course, here you can enjoy such pampering and remain a boy inside your frillies. If you remember, we told you that sometimes boys do dress completely as girls, and masquerade as such. Everyone accepts this. It is simply a part of normal development. However, there are a few boys who discover that they would rather be girls than boys. Such boys are allowed to become girls. The MYSTIQUE MEDICAL CENTER has everything needed to physically transform a boy into a girl, at no charge. All a boy has to do is wear dresses and skirts like the real girls, and wear pink hair ribbons instead of blue."

"Tomorrow you'll be allowed to wear shorts and be a boy," Kathryn continued. "Of course, you will be a boy from Mystique. If you find yourself unable to do this because of your past, you are free to explore life as a girl, like you did at the beauty shop. We know it wasn't that unpleasant for you. As long as you keep the blue hair ribbons, you can also go

back to being a boy. Once you change your ribbons to pink, though, you'll have to remain a girl. The choices are yours but we want you to know that we'll support you fully no matter what you chose, as long as you fit into life here in Mystique."

As they left him alone and turned off the lights, Hollis understood he'd get little sleep that night. He had to do a lot of deep, serious thinking about his future! In his soul, Hollis felt the boys of Mystique were sissies, no matter if they were all that way. He certainly hated just thinking about becoming like them. It would mean betraying everything he'd felt and believed, even though he knew those standards were wrong. Begrudgingly he had to admit that what Aunt Kathryn said about his experiences at ENZMANN TRESSES was also true. Even though he hadn't liked it, at least the treatment he'd received and his expected behavior had fallen within the parameters that he felt and believed to be standards for girliness. Aunt Kathryn had come right out and told him that they would understand if he couldn't handle being a sissy Mystique boy. But that meant he'd have to become a prissy Mystique girl! That whole business about blue and pink hair ribbons gave him the willies. That the clinic where his mother worked could actually transform boys into girls flabbergasted him, but then the mere notion that a boy could actually become a girl was outlandish and bizarre. He certainly didn't want to do that! What could he do? None of the choices were ones he would normally consider, but his life was no longer normal.

Then there were the damned sensations the girly clothes kept making him feel! Why did they make him feel anything? Boy clothes either felt neutral or horrid. Yet the dress had felt very nice. Now this nightie... well... it made his penis feel real good... in fact, it made it get stiff! Having been a boy of the streets, he knew what a hard-on meant... but he'd never experienced one until now! What was it about wearing girly clothes that was so exciting? This dilemma only magnified his consternation and confusion.

With a sigh of frustration he rolled over to stare out the bedroom window. Looking at things logically, or as logically as possible, there were four options. The first was to run away. But where could a ten year old run and what would he wear? So that was not really an option. The second was to submit to becoming a sissy Mystique boy. That choice was definitely not one he wanted. The third was to become a Mystique girl with blue ribbons. While no more appealing than being a sissy boy, at least while masquerading as a girl he could avoid the humiliation and condemnation he felt for betraying his boyhood, yet everyone would know he was a boy by the blue hair ribbons. The last option, to become a pink beribboned girl, was not within his ability to contemplate. At least as a blue beribboned girl he'd still be a boy physically. This narrowed his choices to being a sissy boy or a blue beribboned girl.

Neither of these was really appealing. With a sigh he decided to try being the sissy boy. If everyone in Mystique was accepting as they seemed, he'd still be able to switch to being a blue beribboned girl if it didn't work out. With that decided, he finally drifted off to a fitful sleep.

In the morning, Hollis awoke to see the pretty dress he'd worn the night before prominently displayed on the outside of his closet door. It certainly did serve as a reminder of his ordeal... and options. Repressing a shudder, he went to toss back the covers only to shamefully realize that he was still possessively clutching the teddy bear. The pleasant sensations created by the all too cute nightie also came back with full force. Adding the fact that his fin-

gernails still glistened with pink nail polish made him almost want to puke! This was all too much for his macho self-image. Yet he understood he had no other option but to get on with his life in these new circumstances.

Reluctantly he slipped out of bed and looked over his choices of typical male Mystique clothes. After removing the nightie, with a sigh of defeat he finally selected and dressed in lavender panties and camisole, shorts, and slip on shirt with French cut sleeves. Plain lavender anklets and deck sneakers finished his ensemble. Then he brushed his golden hair into a high bouncy ponytail, making sure they were tied with blue satin ribbons. Suppressing a shiver, he very carefully took the pink satin ribbons that had been lying beside the blue ribbons and folded them away into his lingerie drawer. The mere thought that he might someday wear pink hair ribbons made his stomach churn.

As he left his bedroom, the smell of pancakes wafted up the steps. Eagerly he descended the stairs as the delicious smell made his mouth water with anticipation. Warm pancakes with syrup was a lot better than cold cereal that had been his normal dismal breakfast! Maybe it wouldn't be so bad here after all. Just then he saw his sissy reflection in a mirror and shuddered. The smell of the hearty breakfast lured him past his repulsion, and soon he was seated before a stack of pancakes. Yet even as he cut the first bite, the anticipation was dulled by the pink polish glistening on his manicured nails to once more make him all too aware of his sissy status. Things were simply too confusing!

Kathryn was pleased to see he had a hearty appetite. "I spoke to Ms James this morning. She said Kyle would stop by on his way to the park so the two of you can walk together." Peering out the window she saw the boy open the rear gate and enter their yard. "Here he comes now," she added as she headed for the door.

Hollis looked up to see the freckle faced red head enter the house with a polite greeting to his aunt. Today he wore a red outfit and Hollis still felt Kyle looked like a cute girl. Deciding that he had best be on his better behavior, he stopped eating and wiped his mouth on the napkin as the lad was introduced.

"Kyle, I'd like you to meet my grand nephew Hollis," Kathryn stated with a smile. "Hollis, this is Kyle James."

"Hello, Hollis," James stated as he smiled broadly and crossed the room with his hand extended.

"Hello Kyle," Hollis responded as he stood and reached for the offered hand.

"Would you like some breakfast," Kathryn asked the visitor as the boys shook hands.

"Just some orange juice if it isn't too much trouble," the boy responded amicably.

Hollis was amazed at the strength in the boy's grip. This was certainly no sissy gripping his hand! The boys silently sized each other up as Hollis finished his meal. When they were done, Hollis dutifully hugged and kissed his aunt, then the boys headed off to the playground.

Once they were clear of the house, Hollis looked at his companion. "Don't get me wrong," he began. "But aren't you ashamed to be dressed like this?"

Kyle laughed. "Not in the least. I saw you at the park yesterday, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. We all knew you were looking for some action, but you'll never find that here. We figured you were just a frustrated visitor. We get them all summer when someone from outside comes to town for a visit. You'll get used to dressing like this. Despite the way we dress, we're not a bunch of wimpy sissies."

"So I noticed from your grip," Hollis replied seeing that the boy was quite open. "But if don't you feel like a sissy dressed like this, what about that horrible school uniform?"

"No, it's the same thing. All the guys wear the same uniform," Kyle laughed. "Sure, we get a lot of stares from people when we leave the area on a field trip, but we just ignore them. I know if it ever came down to a test of endurance and strength, I'd beat virtually any boy my size outside Mystique. Most of us guys would."

"But how," asked Hollis bewildered.

"Simple," replied Kyle. "We dance."

"Dance," asked Hollis in disbelief.

"Sure," answered Kyle. "Ballet, tap, jazz, folk, square dancing, we do them all. They keep us limber and quick. Look, it's ten blocks to the park, let's race there. I bet I'll beat you easily and be a lot less winded."

Such a challenge was just the thing Hollis needed to perk him up. "You're on," he called out as he broke into a sprint leaving Kyle behind.

Kyle laughed and joined pursuit. Within a block he caught up to the amazed Hollis. For the next two blocks, Kyle easily paced every spurt that Hollis attempted. Then he easily jogged ahead. By the time Hollis covered the next two blocks, Kyle was a full block ahead! Instead of continuing, Kyle turned about and ran back to Hollis who had staggered to a stop, panting for breath.

"See what I mean," Kyle laughed as he patted Hollis on the back. "I'm hardly even winded and I beat you with ease. Don't get me wrong, I'm not condemning you or teasing, but I'll tell you now that even the slowest of us could have beaten you. It's all the dance training. It makes us strong, builds our leg muscles, and increases our stamina. There used to be a show on TV called FAME, it's about students at the New York School for the Performing Arts. The local cable runs reruns regularly. There was one show where the Board of Education insisted the school institute a physical education program. The staff of the school said their dance classes were more than adequate to meet the phys-ed requirements. In the end it boiled down to a competition between one dance class and the top football team in the system doing exercises like jumping jacks and running in place, that kind of stuff. All the football players were worn out and collapsed before any of the dancers. The Board of Education backed off. You'll see the difference once you start dancing."

All Hollis could do was collapse against a rail fence and pant. The boy was equally amazed by the cheery disposition of his victorious opponent and the apparent veracity of his wild claims. "Dancing did this for you," he finally asked. "I never would have believed it!"

"There's a lot you'll find out once you live here," Kyle replied. "We're not the sissies we appear to be."

Once Hollis had recovered, they continued their walk. Once in the park, the boys joined with the other children their age in the organized activities. Square dancing was new experience for Hollis, but he picked up the rhythm quickly and began to enjoy the friendship and camaraderie. As the morning progressed Hollis discovered that the boys of Mystique were quite athletic and far from being the sissies he'd suspected. They only dressed like sissies. What surprised him even more was the fitness, strength, and endurance of the girls was equal to that of the boys! As the two boys joined the rest of the kids under the pavilion for the morning craft session, Hollis was surprised and pleased by the openness of the greetings and welcomes he received. The instructors made the session fun. Despite his anti-craft mind set, Hollis discovered he was enjoying himself. As he worked, he surveyed the group, noting the trim forms of all. Not one child was overweight. The guys sure looked like sissies in their shorts and French sleeved tops, and the girls were all pretty in their short skirts. All in all, everything seemed quite different, in a pleasing manner, from his expectations.

It was near the end of the craft session when Hollis noted one of the cuter girls had blue hair ribbons! Amazed, he stopped what he was doing and stared. The words of Aunt Kathryn as she tucked him into bed came back like a stunning smack to the back of his head. "If you remember, we told you that sometimes boys do dress completely as girls, and masquerade as such. Everyone accepts this. It is simply a part of normal development."

That pretty girl had to be a boy! Why he'd even been partnered with her... him... at one point that morning during the square dancing! She... or he... it was all too confusing... took the part of a girl and had acted just like all the other prissy girls! Yet the blue ribbons indicated she was really a boy! But then everyone had accepted and treated her as if she really were a girl and not a boy!

"Hollis, don't stare," Kyle chided softly as he nudged the stunned lad with his elbow. "That's Andrea... Andrew Mairer when he dresses as a boy."

Hollis blinked and blushed, glad that no one else had noticed his staring as he turned back to his project. "But why is he dressed like a girl? I even danced with him this morning!" A note of disgust was clearly evident in his impassioned whisper.

Kyle smiled sadly and shook his head. "Back off, Hollis," he cautioned his new friend. "When any of us dress like a girl, we are, for all intents and purposes, a girl. Everyone accepts us as we appear, no questions are asked, and no one looks down his nose. Besides, Andrew is in trouble with his mother. As long as he remains Andrea, he won't be punished."

That no one questioned why Andrew was being Andrea was quite evident, as was the fact that no one condemned or even commented on the opposite sex masquerade. Hollis was mystified by the ability of everyone to accept such things at face value. It was, he realized, something he'd have to learn to do as long as he lived in Mystique. But what Kyle had cryptically added about Andrew being Andrea to avoid punishment intrigued the boy. "What did he do to get in trouble with his mom," Hollis asked quietly.

Kyle nervously looked about the table to see if their talking was attracting any undue attention. Once assured that they were not being observed he leaned close. "Andrew just moved here in March. His parents had just divorced and he and his mother came here to live with his grandmother. Back then he was a lot like you and all the new boys that move here. When he found out he had to wear a uniform to school he threw a fit. When he saw what we wear, he went ballistic. Let's just say he had a lot of trouble sitting when he finally arrived in school wearing his uniform. Anyway, he was still cocky and belligerent, which, intending no offense by the way, are traits I see in you. Like you, he thought we were the biggest bunch of sissies in the world. It took him a few weeks but he found his old clothes. Late one night in April he stole every penny he could and, wearing his old boy clothes, ran away, hoping to reach his father."

Kyle licked his lips and looked about before continuing. "He never made it out of Mystique. A boy... especially a boy from outside... just doesn't hitchhike through Mystique at one in the morning. The man that picked him up called the police and turned him over. Andrew was in big trouble. His mother spanked him worse than the one he received for not wanting to wear the school uniform. Then she gave him a choice, he could either receive a similar spanking every day for a month or agreed to dress and behave as a girl for the next year. Well, just like most of us, Andrew just couldn't face all those spankings. He's been dressing and behaving like a girl ever since."

Hollis shivered and made a face of disgust. "I guess I can't blame him," he whispered. "I sure wouldn't want a spanking every day for a month! But to dress and behave as a girl for a year... I don't know."

"It's not so bad, being a girl," Kyle confided. "Every guy here has spent time dressing and behaving like a girl."

That revelation really floored Hollis. "All the guys... including you?"

"Sure," replied Kyle with a chuckle to see the anguished expression on Hollis' face. "It's not like we intend to stay as girls. But it does help us see things differently. Outside Mystique, boys and girls don't really get along too well. The guys are just too stubborn to give up or bend their ideas of how to behave. You know that! Look how much trouble you're having! But our way is better. You think we're a bunch of sissies, yet any of us could outlast you in almost anything. I'll agree we certainly don't look tough, but we are. We know how girls think, what they like, and what they dislike. Guys here have no problems getting girlfriends. We talk openly about everything... including sex. I really doubt any virgins graduate from high school. Yet no one ever gets pregnant. No one ever drops out, quits, or is expelled from school, we all graduate. What's even more amazing is that there is virtually no divorce between couples where both have grown up in Mystique. That's what dressing like this and spending a bit of time as a girl does for us."

"So boys and girls get along better here than outside because the boys sometimes dress like girls. You make it sound like you sometimes dress as a girl just for the fun of it," Hollis stated still not fully able to accept the logic of the explanation.

"We do," replied Kyle with a nervous laugh. "Look, be perfectly honest. Weren't there times when you were envious of girls? You know, the way they can laugh, giggle, cry, or just

hug? Heck, if you're really honest, even they way girls dress... we all like to get positive attention simply for looking nice."

"Well, I guess," Hollis answered with a deep blush. "But I never wanted to BE a girl!"

"Neither do we," rejoined Kyle. "But outside of Mystique you could never explore those feelings and desires without feeling like a sissy, a traitor to your boyhood. You had to be afraid of being teased and humiliated. But that's not the way it is here in Mystique. We accept those things. If a boy wants to experience those things, he can do so. Even to the point of temporarily being a girl. Basically the way it works here, if you dress like a boy, and behave like a boy, you are a boy. If you dress like a girl and behave like a girl, you are a girl. So, if you are a boy who is dressing like a girl and behaving like a girl, you are girl; therefore, you can't be a sissy!"

Hollis was really confused. Despite all he'd ever thought about what it took to be a real boy and sissies, what Kyle said made bizarre sense! If a boy was being a girl, he couldn't be a sissy! "I'm still not sure," Hollis stated shaking his head in confusion. "I mean, you... we... all LOOK like and are behaving like sissies right now!"

"Hollis," Kyle stated with obvious exasperation. "To outsiders we probably do look and behave like sissies. But who decides what makes a sissy? Society makes that decision. The people of Mystique think the way we dress and behave is normal for boys, so OUR community accepts us like this and laughs at the idea that we may be sissies! You can only be a sissy if society thinks you're a sissy!"

"So what you're saying is that the way you dress and behave is the way people accept you, without making any judgments," Hollis asked.

"Exactly," Kyle responded brightly. "You've already experienced it! Your aunt told my mother all about your shopping trip last night. You were embarrassed at CHERISHED MEMORIES CHILDREN'S CLOTHIER because you felt like a sissy. But no one treated you like a sissy or teased you for the way you were dressed. No one accused you of being a sissy, you felt that way all by yourself! Then when you were at ENZMANN TRESSES HAIR SALON, you weren't nearly as embarrassed because you thought Claire Enzmann thought that you were a girl! As long as you behaved like a girl, you didn't feel like a sissy! It was only when you discovered that she knew you were a boy that you felt like a sissy. That's the way it is here. You can only be a sissy if YOU make yourself feel like one! Otherwise, you're simply being you, and that's how every one treats you... whether you're a boy... or a girl!"

"This is going to take a lot of getting used to," Hollis replied thoughtfully. "This is so wild it's giving me a headache trying to figure it all out."

"So stop trying to figure it all out," Kyle stated. "Just accept it as a fact and get on with your life! That's what we all do! Heck, if you worried about everything like that, you'd drive yourself crazy!"

"Yeah," Hollis answered as he rubbed his temples to ease the pressure he felt inside his spinning brain. "I guess you're right."

"Now don't take me wrong, but I've seen several outsiders move in and they've all had the same problems adjusting. You know, what you should do is spend a few days being a girl," Kyle replied seriously. "It'll help you get over your macho hang-ups so you can enjoy being a boy here in Mystique."

"You want me to spend a few days as a girl," Hollis stated loudly as he stood up in horror.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at the indignant boy. Hollis quickly blushed and sat, nervously wetting his lips.

"All right, everyone go back to work," stated the leader, Jane Harner, as she approached the table where the boys sat. "Please tell me what that rude outburst was all about."

Kyle quickly and softly explained everything, making sure to apologize for the disturbance.

"I accept your apology, Kyle," Jane stated as she turned to Hollis and glared at him.

After several awkward seconds of silence it dawned on Hollis what she was waiting for. "I... I'm sorry too..." he finally stammered.

"Your belated apology is also accepted," she added with a smile that instantly relieved the tension, yet let both boys know more was expected of them than a simple apology. "I think Kyle's suggestion that you spend a few days as a girl is the most sensible way to make the transition to life here in Mystique. By outside standards, the local boys do appear to be sissies, but that is most definitely not the case. The men who've grown up here, in Mystique, are more masculine than anywhere else I've ever been. They are not so insecure in their manhood that they cannot enjoy the gentler aspects of life. I also understand the revulsion you feel at the prospect of spending time as a girl. But again, that's simply because you still look at things from the perspective of an outsider. I think it would be easier for you to do this if you have a friend join you." Then she turned her smiling face to Kyle. "Don't you agree, Kyle?"

Now it was Kyle's turn to blush. "Yes, Ms. Harner, I think that's a good idea." Kyle understood what Ms. Harner wanted in addition to their apology so he turned to Hollis projecting an air of confidence that he certainly didn't feel. "Hollis, I don't think you should waste any time before spending a few days as a girl. When we go home for lunch we'll both change into girls' clothes. This afternoon we'll come back to the park as Holly and Kyra."

Hollis also felt the pressure and realized they'd been trapped. Kyra had to be Kyle's girl name. Taking the hint from Kyle he knew there was only one reply. "All right," he answered softly as he did his best not to get sick.

"Excellent," Jane beamed. "I'll see you for the folk dancing session." With that, she turned back to the rest of the group.

Once more Hollis was amazed by the reactions of his peers. It was obvious that Ms Harner had reprimanded him and Kyle. In his experience, at least one of the nearby kids should be snickering, yet no one even seemed to notice! It really was a lot different here. Even though he'd been publicly rebuked, kindly, but still scolded, he didn't feel the shame, embarrassment, and the resultant anger that such an incident would incur if it had happened out-

side Mystique. Maybe life here wouldn't be so bad after all. This afternoon, when he and Kyle returned as Holly and Kyra, the reaction of the kids would either solidify his reluctant growing acceptance in the life style Mystique engendered or confirm his fears that it was a place of weirdoes and sissies. The main thing that worried him was how he could tell his aunt that he was expected to spend the next few days being a girl without feeling humiliated.

Needless to say, his mind was not on the crafts after that. As the session closed, Kyle and Hollis began the trek home. The first block was done in silence. Finally Hollis felt pressured to speak. "Kyle, I'm sorry for screwing up and getting you forced to be a girl along with me."

Kyle laughed. "Hey, no problem, Hollis. Thanks for apologizing, though. It means you're starting to adjust to our ways. Besides, I was just as much at fault as you were, probably even more so since I knew that we would get into trouble for talking like that. Besides, I don't mind spending a couple of days being Kyra. I was thinking of doing it anyway, heck, I'd have probably done it this morning if your aunt had called last night and asked me to accompany you today."

Hollis was shocked. Why on earth would a boy willingly dress as a girl? "I... I don't understand," he stammered. "Why on earth would you want to dress as a girl? How do you tell your mother?"

Kyle realized that Hollis was confused and flustered by his revelation. "Once you're accustomed to living here, you'll understand," he replied thoughtfully. "It's hard to explain. Look, you dressed as a girl last night. You found out how it feels. I KNOW how it feels to wear a dress. You can't tell me it doesn't feel good, can you? It's fun to be a girl for a while, you can giggle and laugh and do almost anything you want in addition to wearing neat clothes! Now don't get me wrong, I don't want to be a girl all the time, after all, I like being a boy. But it's nice to have the freedom to be a girl once in a while. As for my mother, well, I don't have to tell her anything. She's happy with ME, whether I'm Kyle or Kyra. All I have to do is behave the way I'm dressed."

Hollis blushed and bit his lip. How could a boy ask another boy such a demeaning question? But then he had to admit that Kyle was right, it had felt good. With a sigh he slowly nodded his head. "Yeah, it felt good... too good! But a boy dressing as a girl has to be the world's biggest sissy! Besides, it's wrong for a boy to dress like a girl!"

"No, you're wrong," responded Kyle with a laugh. "Outside of Mystique it might be CONSIDERED wrong, but not here. Everyone accepts it, no one gives you a hassle or teases. Look, outside of Mystique no one thinks anything is wrong when a girl dresses like a boy and participates in boyish activities. Yet if a boy dresses like a girl and participates in girlish activities, they think he's a sissy or a real weirdo. That's simply not fair! It's sexual discrimination! In Mystique we don't discriminate. A girl can dress like a boy anytime she wants to, just like outside. But here a boy can dress like a girl anytime he wants to do so! It's simply sexual equality! We can do it here because everyone understands and accepts this simple premise of sexual equality! Outside Mystique there are very few activities or organizations in which males and females can participate as equals. Almost everything is for males or females, or one is superior to the other in unequal parallel activities. In Mystique there are only activities and organizations in which males and females can participate fully on equal levels. Sure,

some activities and organizations are naturally male or female, so it's necessary for those who want to participate to dress and behave as the appropriate gender. But we all accept it, so there is no stigma or shame. Besides, why should a guy deprive himself of the pleasure of wearing a dress?"

Hollis thought about Kyle's explanation. What he pointed out was true. In the outside world no one ever said anything when a girl dressed as a boy and joined boys in play. But if a boy dressed as a girl and played with the girls, he'd be hounded as a sissy. It was sexual discrimination! But what really hurt his old macho self-image was the fact that he didn't want to deprive himself of the pleasure of wearing a dress! It was like eating a potato chip! It was almost impossible to eat just one and stop. Once a boy dressed as a girl, it was difficult not to want to do it again! "All right," Hollis finally admitted. "I can see your point. It does make sense... at least here in Mystique. I hate to admit it, but you're right about it feeling good to wear a dress. Only... I still feel weird about it, you know, despite the way everyone seems to accept it, I still feel like a sissy for dressing like a girl. I can't even imagine how I'm going to tell my aunt about having to wear a dress!"

"You'll only be a sissy if YOU make yourself be one," Kyle explained. "When you wear a dress and behave like a girl, you are a girl. That's all there is to it! You'll see, no one will hassle you. All you have to do is relax and enjoy it! As for being anxious about telling your aunt, I can understand your reluctance since you're not used to our ways. Heck, I'll tell her what happened. After all, I'm your friend."

"Thanks," Hollis stated with a tentative smile. "I guess you're right. It's just that everything is so different here! It'll take a lot of adjusting!"

"Yes, it is different," Kyle replied with a chuckle. "But it's a lot better living in Mystique than anywhere else. We're honest and open here. This is TRUE democracy!"

By then they had arrived home. As they entered the kitchen, Kathryn looked up and smiled at the youths. She could tell by the apprehensive look on Hollis' face that something was making him feel uncomfortable. At the same time, the look on Kyle's face was one of the cat that swallowed the canary. "So, how was your morning?"

"Okay," Hollis muttered as he looked to his new friend for rescue.

Kyle laughed. "Almost everything went all right, but we did disrupt things at the park a bit while we talked about how we lived here in comparison with the outside world. Hollis is having a problem accepting our openness and way of life. I suggested and Ms Harner agreed that he'd have an easier time understanding and accepting things if he spent a few days living as a girl. I agreed to join him as a girl to keep him company so he wouldn't feel as out of place."

"I trust you settled things with Ms Harner about the trouble," Kathryn asked with a smile knowing that it was already accomplished.

Hollis nodded his head as Kyle spoke. "Yes, that's why we're both going to be girls for a while."

"I assumed as much," Kathryn smiled at the duo, pleased to note the unease with which Hollis faced the ordeal. "I also assume you will change after lunch?"

"Yes ma'am," Kyle answered with a smile. "Well, I've got to get home. I'll be back and in an hour." With that he turned to the door.

"I'm looking forward to seeing Kyra again," Kathryn smiled as the plucky boy headed out the door.

"So am I," Kyle laughed as he sprinted out towards the back gate.

Hollis simply stood there, bewildered by the openness and acceptance of their upcoming gender switch. He didn't know what to say. It was all so foreign, yet it served as another example of how things were in Mystique.

"You'd better sit down and eat," Kathryn stated as she smiled at the dumbfounded boy. "I'm sure Holly will want to look her best when she meets Kyra."

Hollis shivered and wet his lips as he sat at the table. This was simply too much to understand. Yet he found himself uncharacteristically looking forward to meeting Kyra and to returning to his Holly persona. In minutes he was in his bedroom where Aunt Kathryn had laid out his outfit while he'd eaten.

With a shiver of mixed anticipation and dread he removed the boy clothes he'd worn that morning as he warily eyed the waiting dainties. First came the soft, sleek pink satin panties with delicate lace trim about the waist and legs. The luxurious fabric seemed to mold itself to his prepubescent flesh, hugging and caressing him sensually. Once he stopped trembling he slipped into the matching pink satin camisole with delicate scalloped lace about the waist hem, neck, and sleeves. Once more he had to pause to catch his breath. The last piece of lingerie was a matching pink satin half-slip that hugged his already pantied bottom only to flare out to mid-thigh where the delicate scalloped lace hem deliciously tickled his thighs. The soft pink cotton blouse had short puffed sleeves that ended in ruffled cuffs about his biceps and featured a lavishly ruffled open scoop neck. His hands trembled so much he had difficulty buttoning the front of the blouse. Of course, the fact that it buttoned on the opposite side from his now departed boys' shirts only made the task more difficult. Next was the saucy black velour circle skirt. Carefully he stepped into it, stretching the elasticized waist over his hips before allowing it to hug his waist. The skirt just covered the delicate scalloped lace of his half-slip as it swirled pertly about his thighs with every movement. Everything felt so... good! It was difficult for his old macho self to dislike what was happening. His newly awakened liberal self was totally enthralled. Suddenly the room seemed to be spinning. Hollis belatedly realized he'd been holding his breath ever since he had picked up the cute skirt! With a quick gasp of air to fill his oxygen depleted lungs, the room settled back down.

Once he'd caught his breath he sat on the edge of the bed and with still trembling hands picked up the delightfully naughty pink nylon anklets with lavish lace ruffles at the top. Crossing his legs at the knee, he daintily slipped first one and then the other anklet onto his feet. Carefully he fussed with the ruffled lace tops until he had them rolled down just right. Last were the white Mary Jane single strap shoes that he buckled snugly about his sissy feet. With a pounding heart he stretched out both legs to peer at his prissily clad feet. There was

no doubt in his mind that they were girlishly pretty. Once more he marveled that his obviously dainty feet and shapely feminine legs had ever endured all the rough housing abuse he'd given them in the past. Suddenly it hit him right in the gut of his stubbornly proud and arrogant macho self-image that he had so easily donned the cute outfit he now wore. That stunned part of his beleaguered mind wanted to scream in outrage at his willing sissification and tear the damning clothes from his boyish body. His new awareness just laughed at his pompous presumptuousness as it quashed any ability to rebel as it lavished in the warm, comfortable feelings engulfing him as the pleasant sensations he'd so timidly endured the evening before once more made themselves evident.

As he stood, the comfortable embrace of the Mary Janes about his feet made him feel so guiltily yet delightfully girlish that he now looked down to admire the girlishness of his legs that had so embarrassed him yesterday. This time he felt almost good about his all so girlish appearance. The simple fact that he'd dressed himself, almost voluntarily, made a big difference in his ability to accept his rapidly burgeoning femininity. However, it only aggravated the repulsion and disgust his old boyish self-felt.

Slowly he walked to his vanity and sat before the mirror to somewhat eagerly brush his hair and fluff his bangs. Once his hair glistened he parted his tresses down the center of his head and gathered the soft, shiny golden locks into twin bunches that jutted pertly from his head just above and a bit behind his ears. Blue satin ribbons tied into sprightly bows completed his apparent transition from boy to girl. Satisfied that he had done as much as his skills allowed to complete his transformation, he stood and walked to the closet to open it and peer at his reflection in the full length mirror mounted on the inside of the door.

With a heavily beating heart, he peered into the mirror to greet Holly. The sight that greeted him took his breath. From the deep recesses of his mind came a primordial scream of outrage, fear, humiliation, and disgust. No sound escaped his lips, however, except a gasp of surprise upon seeing the undeniably pretty girl he'd become. Even his appalled machismo had to admit to that simple truth. Unable to accept, much less handle, this dichotomy, his old, stubborn, pugnacious boyish self collapsed, leaving a powerful mental vacuum that the newly created girl quickly filled.

Holly smiled at her reflection. Then she saucily posed this way and that, admiring her girlishness as she began perfecting her femininity. The more she looked at herself, the more comfortable she felt. A feeling of security in the infallibility of her masquerade grew. It was with a feeling of loathing that she recalled her past boyishly bigoted beliefs and behavior. It was just like Kyle had said, you had to actually make the transformation from boy to girl before you could really understand why a boy would want to do it. It was only the call of Aunt Kathryn that snapped her from this delightful reverie.

"Holly," Kathryn called up the steps. "Kyra is here."

"All right, Aunt Kathryn," Holly called back as she wet her lips and smiled one last time at her cute reflection. "I'll be right down!"

Playfully swirling her skirt about her thighs as she descended the steps, Holly smiled as she reveled in her newfound girlishness. She entered the kitchen with a sprightly spring in her step. Facing her stunned but delighted aunt, she daintily grasped the edges of her skirt

and dropped slowly into an almost perfect curtsey (Thanks to her practicing the act just moments ago before the mirror in her bedroom!).

“Oh Holly,” Kathryn gasped with obvious delight before rushing to embrace her new niece. “I knew you’d be happy once you met your girl self!”

“I love being a girl,” Holly giggled as she returned the impassioned hug. “Thank you, Aunt Kathryn!”

“I can hardly wait for your mother to see you,” Kathryn gushed. “Now greet Kyra and the two of you scoot off to the playground!”

With bright eyes Holly eagerly turned to face her friend. Kyra was even prettier than she’d thought possible, but then so was she! Kyra wore a pink cotton peasant blouse with ruffled short sleeves and neck. A cute pleated navy blue skirt swirled about her pretty legs. Pink lace topped anklets graced her ankles above her white Mary Jane shoes. Her red hair was pulled back into a bouncy ponytail. The two faux girls smiled with matched delight and flung themselves into a giggling, girlish hug. Neither felt the least bit of shame or hesitation for such a blatantly girlish reaction since they were both girls!

Hand in hand, the girls exited the house and skipped playfully out the back gate and made their way to the park. Everyone greeted them as if they’d always been girls. Ms Harner was obviously pleased to meet Holly. Of course, Holly was a bit awkward as they began their folk dance session since she did not know the steps. But as she got into the beat and rhythm of the music, she reveled in her girlishness. The number of boys and girls in the age group was fairly equal, but since several boys were in girl-mode, it was necessary for some of the girls to take a boy’s part. However, no one ever expected one of the blue hair beribboned girls to take such a role. It was always done by one of the pink hair beribboned girls. Holly delighted in the unquestioning open acceptance of her masquerade and laughed and giggled freely right along with the other girls.

After the folk dancing session ended, the kids broke up into groups to talk and play. Holly and Kyra naturally gravitated to Andrea Mairer. Two of the prettiest girls of their group, Susie Gordon and Lisa Drupp, joined the trio and led them to the swings. Holly delighted in the way the back and forth motion of the swings swirled her skirt and slip. The five girls happily chattered about their newest dresses and skirts, what they wanted to be when they grew up, and the myriad other feminine topics that occupy a girl’s time.

During the course of their gossip Lisa and Susie several times urged Andrea to exchange her blue satin hair ribbons for pink ones. It was quite obvious that Andrea was seriously considering doing just that! Holly kept silent, wetting her lips and listening with heightened excitement and trepidation whenever the conversation drifted in that direction.

“Come Andrea,” Susie pleaded as she slipped from her swing to stand before Andrea, forcing her to stop swinging. “You’ve put it off long enough to save face, GIRL!” Reaching into a pocket of her skirt she pulled out several pink satin ribbons. “Let Lisa and I do it for you.”

Everyone stopped swinging to watch Andrea reaction. Holly held her breath and bit her lip. Andrea sat on the swing, her mouth was parted slightly, her lips quivering in an appre-

hensive 'O' while her eyes were wide and staring at the shiny pink satin ribbons. No one spoke or moved for about thirty seconds.

"Go for it, Andrea," Kyra softly urged. "We all know you're going to do it eventually, why not do it now and get it over with?"

With that said Lisa stepped behind Andrea and pulled the blue satin ribbon from about her perky ponytail. Andrea shivered but kept silent as everyone watched Lisa exchange the blue ribbon for one of the pink ribbons from Susie's hand. In seconds, the pink satin ribbon was formed into a pert bow about Andrea's ponytail.

Susie pulled Andrea from the swing and hugged her. "You know this is for the best, Andrea," she stated happily. "You'll never regret it!"

As soon as Susie released Andrea, Lisa hugged the new pink hair beribboned girl. "It's too late now, Andrea, now you're really one of us!"

All Andrea could do was smile timidly, relieved that the ordeal was finally over. Holly was shocked by the ease with which the transition was made. One moment, Andrea was a boy being a girl, the next she was a girl being a girl! The entire concept was still too new for the blue hair beribboned girl to fully comprehend. Kyra's urging of her friend to cross the gender line added to Holly's bewilderment.

As Lisa released Andrea, Kyra stepped up to warmly hug Andrea. "Congratulations, Andrea," she stated happily. "I'm sure Susie is right. You'll never regret doing this!"

While the two were embracing, Lisa reached out and quickly tugged the blue satin ribbon from Kyra's ponytail. Just as she had done with the one she'd taken from Andrea, she exchanged it for another pink one from Susie's hand.

Kyra released Andrea and stepped back and stared at Lisa, obviously stunned by her actions. "Wh... what do you think you're do... doing," she stammered as she reached up to feel her unberibboned ponytail. Then she turned to Susie. "Give my blue ribbon back," she stated indignantly.

"No way," Susie replied saucily as she stepped away from Kyra. "Everything we said to Andrea applies to you! Besides, you love being a girl!"

"B... but," Kyra stammered as she reached out a trembling hand towards Susie. "I... I'm not ready! Please... please give me the ribbon."

"With pleasure," Lisa giggled as she stepped behind Kyra and began to fashion the pink satin ribbon into a bow upon the trembling faux girl's ponytail.

Kyra tried to twist away, but Susie stepped forward to wrap her arms about the trembling girl in a compassionate hug. The look of fear on Kyra's face was pitiful. Holly, totally mesmerized by the bizarre scene unfolding before her eyes, simply sat on her swing clutching the chains so tightly her knuckles turned white.

"Please..." Kyra whispered in a soft voice as tears filled her eyes and threatened to trickle down her rosy cheeks.

“It’ll be all right, Kyra,” Susie stated as she gently kissed away a big tear as it rolled down her soft cheek. “You know this is what you really want. You’re just afraid to admit it. This way you don’t have to ask for pink ribbons. Besides, just think how happy your mother will be to have a full time daughter.”

As she spoke and soothed Kyra’s trembling body, Lisa deftly tied the pink satin ribbon into a perky bow that really set off the newly pink hair beribboned girl’s flaming red hair. Lisa quickly slipped her arms about the trembling Kyra as Susie released her and kissed Kyra on the cheek. Andrea then stepped forward to exchange another hug with Kyra. When the hug was finished, Kyra reached up and gingerly felt her new pink ribbon. A small, tentative smile played about her lips as she looked at her three girl friends. Then she caught sight of Holly nervously sitting on the swing.

When the ribbon exchange began, Holly couldn’t believe that Andrea hadn’t torn the pink ribbon from her hair. Then when Kyra left her pink ribbon in place, she was totally mystified. Sure, she liked dressing like a girl and wearing the soft pretty clothes, but to commit yourself to spending the rest of your life as a girl... well... that was beyond his ability to think. The poor faux girl wondered if she was next, especially when Kyra looked at her so plaintively as she fingered her pink ribbon. What was even more disturbing was that she wasn’t sure if she’d remove the pink ribbon if the girls switched her ribbons!

Then, as if in a dream, Lisa and Susie approached Holly as she sat motionless upon the swing. In seconds, one of the girls stood on each side of Holly and began removing the blue ribbons from the twin blond fountains of her soft silken tresses. Not one word was spoken as the blue ribbons were exchanged for pink. In less than a minute, the deed was accomplished. Holly was now a pink hair beribboned girl just like the others!



While the self-satisfied Susie stuffed the blue ribbons into her pocket, Lisa pulled the zombie-like Holly from the swing and hugged her warmly. "You were meant to be a girl, Holly," Lisa stated honestly. "We knew it the moment we saw you wandering forlornly about the playground yesterday morning. You were simply too cute to be a boy!"

"Yes indeed," confirmed Susie as she took her turn hugging Holly. "Lisa and I began to discuss how we could get you into pink ribbons right away. When we heard you and Kyra would be coming to the playground this afternoon, we knew we could do it! Andrea was long overdue for pink ribbons, Kyra has wanted to do it for years but has always been hesitant. That's why we made sure the five of us were alone after the folk dancing."

"Yes," added Lisa as she stepped back to allow Andrea to hug Holly. "We had to set the mood and make sure you'd all be receptive to the switch."

As Andrea stepped back, Kyra, now a timid lass instead of the boisterous lad, stepped forward for a hug while the others smiled. "I'm sorry this happened, Holly," Kyra stated softly. "I never meant this to happen. But I guess I should have suspected something was up when those two herded us apart from the other kids. I guess I was just too naive."

"It... it's all right... I guess," Holly stammered as she stepped back to survey her girl friends. "I just never..."

"Relax, Holly," Lisa laughed as Susie giggled infectiously causing the others to join in. "Susie and I know EXACTLY how you, Andrea, and Kyra feel! We used to be blue hair beribboned girls too! Just like us, you'll LOVE being a pretty girl!"

Holly was surprised to learn that Lisa and Susie had once been boys too. The rest of the afternoon sped by as the other kids joined the five giggling girls to congratulate Andrea, Kyra, and Holly on their permanent transition into girlhood. The mothers of the three new girls and Aunt Kathryn arrived, having been notified by Ms Harner of the ribbon exchange. After hugs were exchanged, they all piled into the playground van for the short ride to the MYSTIQUE MEDICAL CENTER. They all crowded into a large examination room for a quick physical by the doctor who revealed all three apprehensive girls to be in near perfect physical condition. After the drawing of blood samples, one by one the nurses secured them to the examination table. As everyone watched with baited breath, their pretty panties were drawn down their soft, trembling legs and removed. Their legs strapped into stirrups and spread apart. An injection of Novocain into their scrotum was administered as the doctor set up her equipment. A small incision opened the boyish sack. The small ovoid testicles were pushed out through the opening. Surgical thread tied off the vas deference before they were swiftly snipped off. With that, the testicles and spaghetti like tubes dropped into the curved stainless steel bowl. The entire procedure took less than two minutes! A nurse carefully stitched the incision closed.

An hour after they arrived, the group left the MYSTIQUE MEDICAL CENTER and returned to the playground. Andrea, Kyra, and Holly cuddled against their mothers with the sobering knowledge that it was now far too late to ever switch back to blue satin hair ribbons.

That's the way it often goes in Mystique.

