

CONTEMPORARY
TV FICTION

“FRENCH DRESSING”

A SHOCKING TALE OF CROSS-DRESSING
IN PARIS IN THE 1920'S!



FULLY ILLUSTRATED

Volume #10

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MAGAZINE

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By TECLA

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Introduction

Mystery surrounds the source of the original manuscript of our tale. There are those who believe that it is an accurate journal of events in the "Gay Paree" in the golden years following the First World War and into "The Roaring Twenties." Others insist that it is pure fiction. We make no claim either way

We simply find this chronicle to be a charming, somewhat innocent look at the phenomenon of cross-dressing in a different time and place among people who looked upon it as a unique opportunity to salvage some happiness in circumstances that might otherwise be difficult at best; catastrophic at worst. We present it for your enjoyment and leave you to draw your own conclusions.

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The characters, companies, and incidents
in this book are entirely the products of the
author's imagination and have no relation
to any person or event in real life.

FRENCH DRESSING

Text and Artwork Adaptation
by TECLA

When my father was given the most severe sentence allowed under French law, disgrace descended like a dark cloud on our proud name. Monsieur Claude D'Argent would never again rule over the hallowed halls of the family banking firm that had inspired confidence and respect for generations. Now that was gone; he was a common prisoner. Embezzler. Gambler. Doomed to consider his wayward life for many years in a distant prison.

Of course, my mother was devastated. She was a slight, genteel older woman of fine breeding who could not understand his betrayal of all we held sacred and she soon took to her bed. When her condition failed to improve, doctors recommended a long rest at a sanatorium far removed from the wagging tongues and unkind gossip of our Paris of the 1920's. In a few days, she was bundled into a private railway car for the journey to Switzerland where, it was hoped, she would regain health.

In another week, I faced a lonely eighteenth birthday, following which, the family home on the Avenue Victor Hugo was to be closed and I would be dispatched to a boarding school in Lyon. This was not to my liking for I harbored wishes I could tell no one.

My mother's younger sister, Marcella lived not far from us in a bright, spacious townhouse which I always preferred to our own formal residence. Hers was such a glamorous, happy life that I envied her and her dashing friends and longed to be part of it. Could our family tragedy somehow be turned into the chance to realize my dream?

"Oh, Emile," she cried, when we had our

first talks. "And what is to happen to my sweet thing?"

I sobbed. "How can I go on being Emile D'Argent when that very name brings shame and ridicule? At school, they will all know who I am and life will be unbearable."

She moved behind me and ran her fingers through my rather long hair. "Do you recall the party several years ago for Monsieur and Madam Balfour?"

How could I ever forget? As a lark, Marcella insisted that it would be so amusing if she were to dress me as a girl that evening and introduce me as her friend Emilia who was visiting from Rouen. I agreed without question for I was enthralled with her mysterious aura of femininity and quivered with delight at the thought of escaping the boredom of my maleness, if only for one short evening. I thrilled as her long fingers gently patted and brushed makeup on my face, arranged the unspeakably soft slip and gown about me and gently drew the long silk stockings to garters at my thighs. Oh yes, I remembered!

As the Balfours were a somewhat rustic couple from the wine country who loved to pretend sophistication, it was a great joke to those who knew the truth. Husband and wife fawned on me and invited me to their villa to meet their son.

My parents were not quite as amused as the others but it was a wonderful occasion for me. I thrilled at being dressed in the silky things from Marcella's wardrobe, prancing about in those adorable heels and teasing the gentlemen who were not told the secret. I even caught M. Balfour sneaking an extra long look at the top of my low-cut silk dress. It was still a fond memory and I freely admitted it to Marcella.



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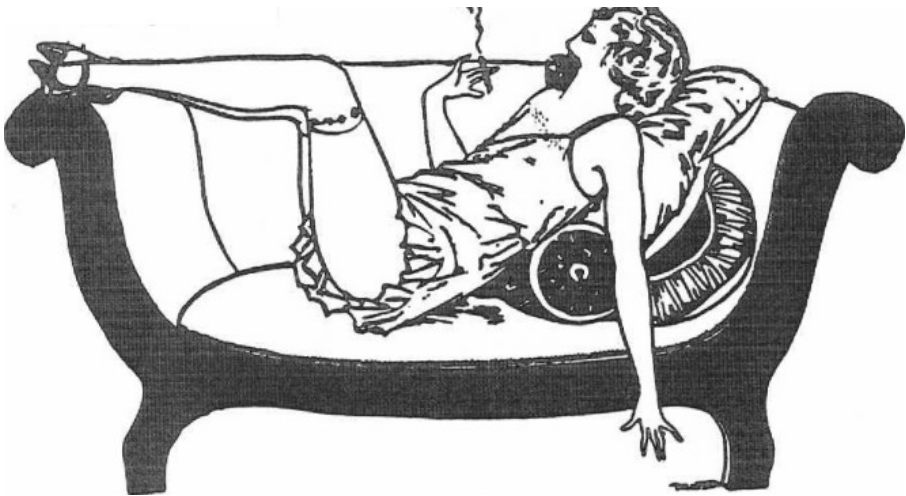
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"And that was not the only time, was it?" she teased knowing full well of the arrangements we made in secret when she travelled and I was asked to stay in her apartments to tend her dog, Gigi.

When I arrived for the first day of my stay, a fresh rose greeted me from her hall table. In a pink envelope, a note, "In the bedroom you will find something sweet for sweet dreams." And I did.

Lingerie shimmered with the tint of Champagne in the faint light. Beyond might be a long lacy gown, sheer silk stockings, satin petticoats, panties; it was a wonder-world of femininity. Soft perfumes filled the room. She knew my ways and my great desire to be as she was.

For hours I would play with makeup, darkening my eyes, broadening my lips, tinting my cheeks, trying hair styles -- imitating her



every gesture.

Stretching on her chaise longue, I closed my eyes and dreamed of being the belle of the ball, enchanting all with my grace as I swept about the floor to a grand waltz in the arms

of an unsuspecting young suitor. With her ivory cigarette holder, I affected the languid pose that seemed so appropriate for the young lady of my fantasy.

These were wonderful times that Marcella and I whispered about often, much to the bewilderment of our puzzled elders.

Many years younger than my mother, Marcella confided that she often felt lonely in the rather severe society in which her circumstances as a wealthy young heiress placed her. Beauty and money attracted many men to her doorstep but, so far, none to her heart. Often I would blush at the intimacies she revealed: a gentleman's hand beneath her skirt at a restaurant table or fumbling at the buttons of her blouse in the back seat of a taxi. At first, I felt awkward hearing of these very private incidents and then in time as our closeness broadened and became such a part of our relationship; I would be disappointed when a nighttime tour of the cafes of Montmartre brought no new adventures.

"So, you are anxious to hear of my scheme?"

Marcella snapped me from my reverie.

"Of course, you will not go to the awful boarding school that has been selected by Monsieur Huber and his staff of overdressed lawyers," she stated emphatically.

"But what choice do I have?"

"I have written it all out for you --- and them --to examine."

"Let me see," I exclaimed.

"Surely, but to hear my ideas, I would like to see you in more appropriate attire. In the bedroom, I think are a few items you will be more comfortable to be wearing. You will change, add perhaps some makeup, fix your hair and you will be in a much better frame

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of mind to understand my plans for us. While you do that, I will prepare some espresso; we will have some cakes --- and much talk. Now go!" Oh, my heart beat faster!

Such precious little items of lingerie awaited me! Silks and satins. Stockings and garters with little bows. Shoes. How I delighted in their touch as I toyed with my makeup and brushed and combed my hair so I would not disappoint.

Returning, I settled into a comfortable position on the spacious couch and began reading from the large sheet which Marcella placed there for me to see. It felt so natural to be dressed so. My little panties slid slightly on the smooth cover. I leaned against the cushions.

Delicate feminine handwriting filled the page, explaining that she would now assume guardianship over me, relieving the law firms and accountants from any responsibility for my care and upbringing. In that she was my only living relative, it was quite proper that this arrangement be established until such time as my mother was capable of resuming her proper role.

"How wonderful!" I cried as Marcella returned with a tray of delicacies.

"Do you like my plan of battle?"

"It's perfect! It's just what I wanted but could find no way to suggest it. I know nothing of how to bring such things about." I answered.

Placing the tray on the small table before us, she sat next to me and explained that many details were to be completed, papers signed, large sums of money to be transferred and approvals to be granted. In time, all would be accomplished and we could live as we wished.

"As we wish --- ?" I repeated slowly.

Her eyes twinkled. "And, how do we wish, my little niece?"

I threw my arms about her and we both fell backwards on the couch laughing with joy at her outrageous idea that I should live with her as a girl. You do it so well, my little one. And I know it is what you want. For so long, I have known that you are better as a woman. You are so slight, so petite. And you have in you the ways, the manners, and the feelings." She spoke softly and earnestly. "You will learn so much more, see so much more and feel so much more. It is the only way!"

I was moved by her sincerity.

"Look at you, my sweet," she smiled. "How could you be anything else? Would you wish to grow into one of those awful men who smoke black cigars and talk of nothing but business? "Of course not!" she answered for me.

She fingered the silk of my camisole. "You should wear fine, delicate things and smell of exotic perfumes. You will walk with bearing, proud of being Mademoiselle Emilia Monet."

"MONET? But, my name is----"

"No longer D'Argent, the name of disgrace! When we have completed the papers, you will have MY last name and be a true niece."

She hastened to reassure me, "There is much to do, my Emilia. Trust me. All will be well for I will guide you into a wonderful life. You will be my creation." Pausing for a reassuring smile, she kissed me on the cheek. "Now, to rest. Away!"

Alone by my bed I pondered my new circumstance. I knew that Marcella's plan had been considered for some time, for this beautifully decorated bedroom was new. It was vacant only last month. In the closets and drawers was clothing that I had never seen before. So feminine! One item lovelier than the other. A subtle scent of wild flowers lingered over all.



As I lie on the brink of sleep, I wondered of the others who knew of the deception. As an insignificant boy, I would hardly be missed by my classmates; my teachers would take little notice as my name was already in disgrace; the servants in the other home were soon to be dismissed. Who else? Attorneys? Bookkeepers? Did it matter what they thought or suspected?

My poor head was swimming as it sank into the soft pillow. I pulled the covers about my face, inhaling the newness, sensing each touch of the sensual material, feeling a tingle in every nerve. My hands caressed the texture of my gown.

Like a miracle, a new life lay before me, where yesterday there was only despair. All about me projected a femininity that drew me into the precious world that I coveted as long as I could remember. Now it was mine.

Visions swirled about me in the dark. Lovely ladies rode on puffy pastel clouds, coming nearer, and then drifting into the mists. They twirled before me as if to be showing themselves, bidding me to make a selection. What was I to choose? The swirling gossamer gowns? The long, flowing hair? The lithe bodies? Themselves? Were they presenting the persons I might be?

It was so confusing. When I attempted to ask who they were, no words came forth. I wondered if I were seeing myself. How could this be?

Deeper sleep overtook me and consciousness faded into a vision that was startling and exciting at once. A new face appeared, different from the others. Cool. Seductive.

Dark eyes bade me to pay no attention to the others, to join her. "Be me!" she whispered, waving her feathery head-dress and costume as if to demonstrate the power of her

feminine charms. The slight black satin gown shone beneath the elaborate decorations. Her eyes burned, "Take me. Take this body. Be me. You will find thrills beyond your imaginings."

I fell deeper into sleep. She followed me into the dark, relentless in her pursuit, insisting over and over. "Take me. I'm the one for you. Be me. Me-e-e-e-e-e."

She faded and blackness surrounded me. She was gone but never would I lose memory of all that I saw in her eyes.



CHAPTER TWO

In the days that followed, I met the other side of Marcella's personality when she turned her full attention to the change of Emile to Emilia. The first to be told of our plot was her attorney and long-time personal counsel, the lean and dignified Monsieur Phillippe Lebec, who, understandably, became short of breath and required a touch of brandy before regaining composure. However, when he read the determination in Marcella's attitude, he caught the gravity of the occasion and took to the task with gusto.

Long meetings at her apartment lasted well



into the early hours. I was not invited to participate but could overhear occasional fragments or see M. Lebec keeping his copious notes.

Once, when they deliberately lowered the sound of their voices and I strained to catch their words, I was startled to learn of Marcella's wish to change my birth certificate from male to female! How could this be done?

Silence. Then, Lebec spoke quite deliberately, "What you ask is not impossible, but I believe it will require more than a few well placed francs to accomplish the deed. Perhaps it would be best if you do not know how that is done. You understand, however, that when the ---er alteration is completed, it must be permanent. If there is ever an attempt to 'correct' it again, the scandal could be as ruinous as that which befell the father." Then, almost as a warning, "We cannot conceal too many things, my dear lady."

Did I detect a hidden meaning?

Marcella considered his words before she spoke, "I can assure you my friend, there will be no turning back. The fortune that would come to Emile by way of his mother's estate is in jeopardy if he remains part of the disgraced D'Argent family. I have been told that, if conditions remain as they are, these funds could be lost to him in settlement of the father's considerable debt."

The lawyer nodded gravely, "It is possible."

"Then, this must be done," she concluded. "I seek only his protection."

"So shall it be, mademoiselle," spoke Lebec, scribbling more information in his pad.

With these talks as a background, I sought solutions to my personal matters from the very

first day, for now the intriguing but unfamiliar garments that were formerly part of my fantasy life became my daily reality. That morning a bewildering array of straps and ribbons and clasps confounded me. I so wanted to surprise Marcella by bounding into the breakfast room fully dressed and made up, presenting a perfect picture of Emilia for her to remember. But, alas, it was not to be!

Fruitless were my attempts to fasten the brassiere closure behind my back; the tiny lace handkerchiefs to fill the cups drifted to the floor. While this took place, the thin straps of my pink satin chemise slipped from my shoulder. My silk stockings refused to stay in place. I would be fortunate to be ready in time for dinner!

The chemise fell to the floor. I gingerly stepped out of it, stood before the mirror and determined to make one more valiant try with the brassiere before calling for help. At last, the two clasps joined and I flushed at the startling sense of tightness about my chest, noting also that my tiny nipples seemed to be extending ever so slightly. When I replaced the lace handkerchiefs in the cups, their caress soothed the tingle.

A knock at the door. "Emilia, may I come in, please?" It was Marcella.

"But---but---I'm only partially dressed. You see---er---" I stammered.

"My sweet, that is why I come. Have you begun? Let me see."

Reluctantly, I opened the door.

"Good morning, my dear girl!" She kissed me lightly on the cheek, which promptly turned to a deep crimson hue for I felt extremely awkward to be seen in such a condition of dishabille.



"Now, mon petite, you must not be so shy," she chided. "We will be sharing many intimacies in the months that lie ahead, for there is much for me to teach you about the joys of being my niece. Do you see?"

I nodded shyly.

"You are wonderful to try it yourself but now," she pointed to my bed, "please sit there and let me show you some things I brought for you and how you are to wear them in the manner of proper fashion. We must show your many attributes to their best advantage. No?"

Thus we began the first of many lessons that were to transform a perplexed young boy into a proper Parisian lady.



It still required much effort to conceal my embarrassment when she slipped from her morning robe and stood before me clad in only her bra and panties. My insides experienced a slight churning.

"You must understand how you are to wear these many wonderful new things you have," she spoke as she extracted a fragile waist cincher from a drawer, explaining its use and purpose. Pure white satin glistened at its sides as she wrapped it about her middle to show its proper placement, the ribboned stocking-supporters swayed with her motion. I was enthralled. A black garter belt followed, girdles of a multitude of lengths and designs, each with her demonstration and words telling of its use and care.

With a naughty wink, she offered the small, corset-like waist cincher to me, "This will make you the shape to draw the men," she leered.

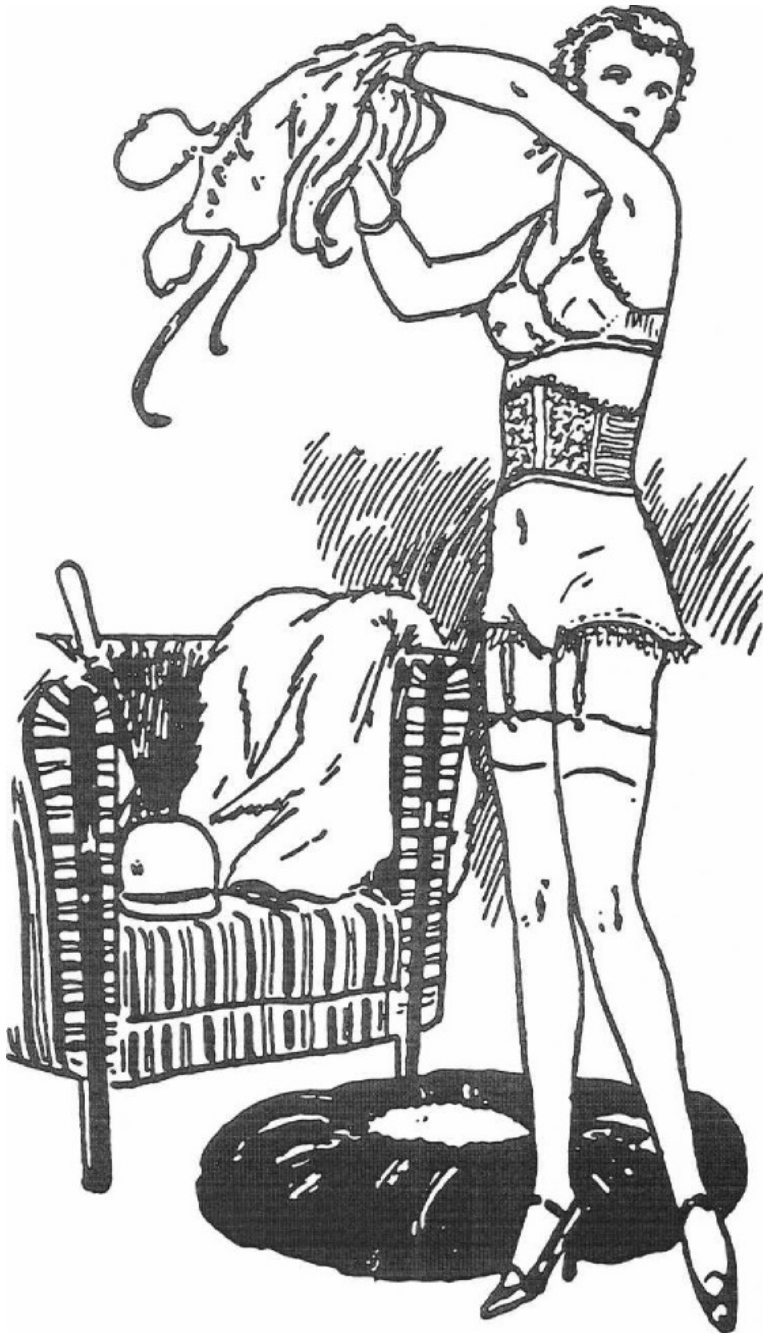
I looked away.

"Emilia, this is the way women think! You will see. Here," she handed it to me. "You will wear this one today."

As I stood to take it, she turned my body to face her and slightly lowered my panties below my hips. My body stiffened and my face turned redder.

"When does this redness end?" she teased, wrapping the cinch about my waist and settling it into place. "Now, you will inhale and fasten the hooks while I watch." She sat in my place. "Do it as I showed you, starting with the bottom hook and going up."

It was surprisingly easy and the wonderful grip about my ribs created a sensation inside me I never knew before. I exhaled, unconsciously running my hands down the sides to heighten the feeling.



Marcella continued her monolog, "You may now raise your parities to where they were and guide each stocking supporter through the leg so you can attach them properly. Gently, my sweet!"

A bit of fumbling and it was done. And, oh, what a delicious sensation it was! The sensual pull when the clasp closed and the Caressing about my calves and thighs so distracted me, I nearly lost my balance stepping into my shoes.

The chemise followed as did words about how to swing it over my head, so not to disrupt my coiffure. But there was little need for concern about my hair for my gyrations of the morning had taken care of that.

When the silky softness of the chemise settled about me, something else descended inside. I felt a shortness of breath and a floating light-headedness. My mind ceased to register what was about me in the room, being able only to concentrate on this extraordinary phenomenon. An overwhelming sense of femininity rose within and for the moment, all other thoughts and feelings disappeared. The soft cologne that surrounded me penetrated like the smoke of a mystic incense, flowing through corridors of my consciousness, opening one secret door after another. Was this what it was to swoon?

I felt Marcella's gentle touch at my elbow leading me to the armchair where she gestured for me to rest and regain my composure. With a kind, knowing smile, she indicated that she understood, "For you, it is a very special thing to be a woman, no?" I nodded but could say nothing.

"Then, it shall be, regardless of ----" but she did not finish the sentence, leaving

me to wonder at her wistful attitude which seemed to imply that there was much more to our adventure than I knew.

Gaiety returned as we spent the next hours experimenting with makeup, arranging my hair and finally completing my dressing with a wonderful liquid chiffon blouse of light beige and a tight brown skirt that constricted my waist almost as much as the cincher beneath.

From her room, she brought a small purse and her tantalizing fur-trimmed coat that at once filled me with delight and apprehension. Guiding my arms into the sleeves, she commented, "There is a touch of autumn chill in the air today and you may borrow this while you post some letters to Monsieur Lebec in the box on the Champs-Elysees."

"But --- I am to go out on the avenue --- alone?!?" I stammered. "And, why was all this dressing and makeup?" came the stern response.

In moments, I found myself on the walk before the house in a state of near panic. Yet, what was there to fear? I thought of the night of our deception of the Balfours and wondered why this was different. It was not, I decided and so, I allowed myself to enjoy the new feelings of the breezes whipping about me, around my legs and even beneath my skirt. I was glad for the fur collar and the feel of its voluptuous warmth. Yes, to everyone else I looked to be a woman, so I believed it too. Was I fooling myself? Did it matter?

I waved to Marcella who stood at the door and who, despite her confidence displayed a mild concern. Was it for me? Or was it directed at the dark, heavy man who observed from the other side of the avenue?

Like a bird freed from a cage, I want-



ed to soar. At last, I stepped into the world. Emilia was real and my heart was full!

More gusts whipped about me and without thinking, I reached to hold my skirts in a most girlish way. Such a simple act, but notable to one who never experienced it before. How new! How refreshing!

At the end of the avenue, I paused to find the location of the postal box on the main course of the Champs-Élysées. It must have appeared that I lost my way, for a gendarme approached. My heart-beat doubled its tempo.

"May I offer assistance to the mademoiselle?" He towered over me.

More rapid beats. Where was my speech? "Er---Oh yes. Thank you."

He leaned expectantly but more words were not forthcoming. At a loss, I took the letters from my purse and mercifully, when he saw them, he understood. Placing his arm about my shoulder, he pointed along the walk to the bright mailbox.

"Oh, merci monsieur," I smiled, pleased to be accepted by such a figure of authority. Taking my arm lightly, he guided me through the auto traffic of the cross-street. I was sure we were a striking pair! At the walk, he bowed, touched the peak of his blue hat and bade me a gracious "Bon jour."

More people with whom to mingle: the conversationalists at the outdoor cafes, distracted shoppers, sightseers. It was so invigorating to be part of them as Emilia.

Another ping in my heart: a messenger boy studies me from top to toe, smiles, tips his hat and resumes his pace. Flattery!

After depositing the letters, I reluctantly retrace my steps. Oh, how I longed to sit at one of the tables, sip espresso and enjoy

the cool air about my legs but I knew that Marcella would worry. It could wait for another day, which I was sure would come --- soon. At the intersection, I waved at the tall gendarme who smiled back and watched as I turned toward our house. It tickled me to wonder what he thought me to be.

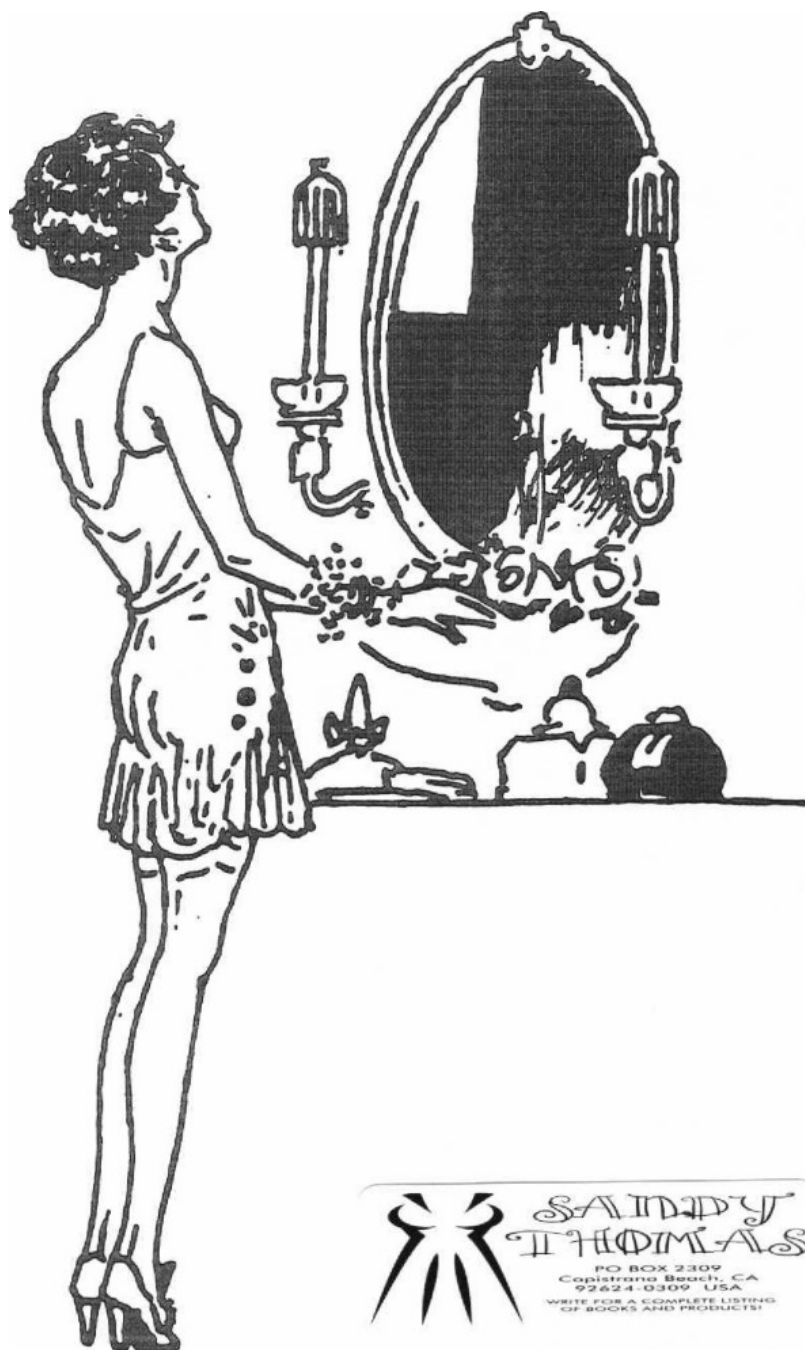
The chill of the day and the blue sky lifted my spirits. I felt as if nothing could diminish my exuberance. Suddenly, a voice beside me shattered my composure. "Excuse me, mademoiselle," it spoke in gravel-like tones.



It was the man who seemed to upset Marcella when I left on the errand. Had he followed me? I turned.

"I am unfamiliar with this place, can you help me?" From behind dark glasses, his eyes probed mine. "I seek the residence of Emile D'Argent. Do you know of it?"

I froze, unable to think or speak. Why did he seek me? He misread my slow response as thoughtfulness. "No, monsieur," I began. "Perhaps the gendarme at the corner can be



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of help." As I turned to gesture, I was overjoyed to see the officer observing us with some curiosity, ready to investigate if a problem arose. A bump at my shoulder and the man scurried diagonally across the avenue to disappear into the crowds.

Somewhat shaken by the experience, I returned home immediately, anxious to tell Marcella of the mysterious man. To my surprise, she was dressing for the evening and invited me to sit and tell of my travels. Seeing her in her under things still made me feel like an intruder, but she tossed aside my objections, insisting again that I should become used to our new situation.

When I told her of the man and his question about "Emile," she thought for a long moment. "So, they have begun the search for the boy with all the money, eh? It was to be expected," she said with some venom.

"Who?" I asked. "Who is looking?"

"There are several who wish to find you, mon cher. All have the same reason --- the funds that are rightfully yours." A quick flash of anger. "Oh, none of this would be if your father----" She stopped and just as rapidly showed a bright smile.

"But, we shall defeat them, my dear Emilia!" accenting the last syllable of my name. "And that is why I must hurry to dine with the attorney, Monsieur Lebec who will help me to complete our final plan."

"Plan?" I wondered aloud.

She swirled across the room in a mist of magnificent cologne to select her dress, leaving me to wonder of many things for I began to see that we were not playing a simple game to satisfy my yearnings. Others had yearnings, too.

CHAPTER THREE

The following morning while I lounged about in a lovely new rose-colored silk gown, Marcella called to me from her room. She was still in bed surrounded by important looking papers that she had obviously been studying. After a warm greeting, she became very businesslike, "My dear Emilia, the time has come for you and me to talk of serious matters." I settled into a large chair, tucking the flowing skirt beneath me.

"I have learned that a search is under-way to find the boy, Emile D'Argent," she continued. "We do not know by whom; perhaps the bank from which your father embezzled the money, the investors who lost it or worst of



all, the gamblers to whom he owed considerably more." I was confused. "Why would they want me?" I wondered.

"They want the boy," she corrected with a smile. "Each has his own reasons. And among the gambling group, kidnapping for ransom has not been ruled out."

"Kidnapping?!?" I exclaimed.

"You are quite a well-to-do young lady," she explained, "but that wealth comes from your mother's and my family. It is the Monet fortune and has nothing to do with your father's situation. The others do not agree. Do you see?" I said that I thought I did.

"So, when I recognized your love of the feminine, I developed a scheme to circulate word that the boy was removed to school in Canada or the United States to avoid the family catastrophe. In time, the girl, Emilia would appear as a distant member of the Monet family to claim her rightful place. It will require ---er 'alteration' of certain legal papers, but I am assured that I can be done." She leaned back into the pillows and considered me quite seriously. "Before I continue," she spoke softly, "I must know if it is your wish to live permanently as a female. Can you do it?"

Tears formed at the corners of my eyes and my throat lost all moisture. She waited. I ran to the bed and threw my arms about her. "Oh yes," I whispered. "Oh yes, yes, yes! It is what I want above all!" And I burst into uncontrollable sobs.

Marcella comforted me, stroking my hair, aware of the mad confusion I felt. When my composure returned, she took my hand in hers and expressed her delight at my decision, "Oh, my sweet one, it is a good choice. We shall have such wonderful times!"

She rang for her personal maid to bring

us cafe au lait and as we sipped, the plotting continued with renewed enthusiasm. Checking her notes, she read, "Tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, you will see Dr. Rajid regarding the changes to your body."

"Changes to my body?" I repeated dumbly.

"But, of course," she insisted, "You cannot spend your life filling your brassiere with handkerchiefs and there are --- other things."

"But --- how can this be?" I wondered, feeling strange sensations in my nether regions.

"You need not fear Dr. Rajid. In India, he developed many extraordinary techniques to do remarkable things to the human body. His methods and his potions are known only to him and I have word of his competence and honor from the highest authorities. Believe me, my dear Emilia, it must be this way."

As the only person of authority in my life, Marcella held my complete trust. In this matter too, I knew she was right; the change must be as complete as possible. With a happy heart I agreed, for I was sure I could survive whatever was necessary to cross the line, which is not to say that I did not harbor fears. What was to be done to me?

At exactly ten o'clock the next morning, overflowing with excitement and curiosity, I gingerly opened the door that bore the legend "E. M. RAJID, Internal Medicine." Before me spread an area that appeared to be more of a living room than a medical office. In the distant corner, behind a dark oak desk, sat a round gentleman with dark, curly hair who bounded to his feet, snatched my diminutive hand in his and deposited a formal kiss of greeting. In a melodic Indian accent, he said, "Well now, this must be Miss Emilia about whom I have been told so much!"

He was immediately likeable.

We spoke lightly for several minutes before he mentioned "our work together," as he phrased it. "It will be a remarkable experience for both of us," he reassured me. "Now, if you would please indulge me, may I examine the texture of the flesh at your thighs? It would be of help. Simply lift your skirts, please." This was unexpected. I hesitated for an awkward moment. Then stood and raised my hems.

"Excellent," he said thoughtfully. "As I suspected, there is already some development and that is good." Sensing my discomfort, he



added, "So you must relax. I know of your decision and wish only to help. I am your doctor but let me be your friend, too for we shall be very close in the months to come."

His quiet manner won me over, so that when it came time to remove all my clothes for a complete medical evaluation, I felt no discomfort. He studied me, took profuse notes and pronounced me sound.

I was still unsure of the procedure, so was somewhat taken aback when he released me with the announcement that we would meet early the next morning in my bedroom. "My room!?! " I exclaimed.

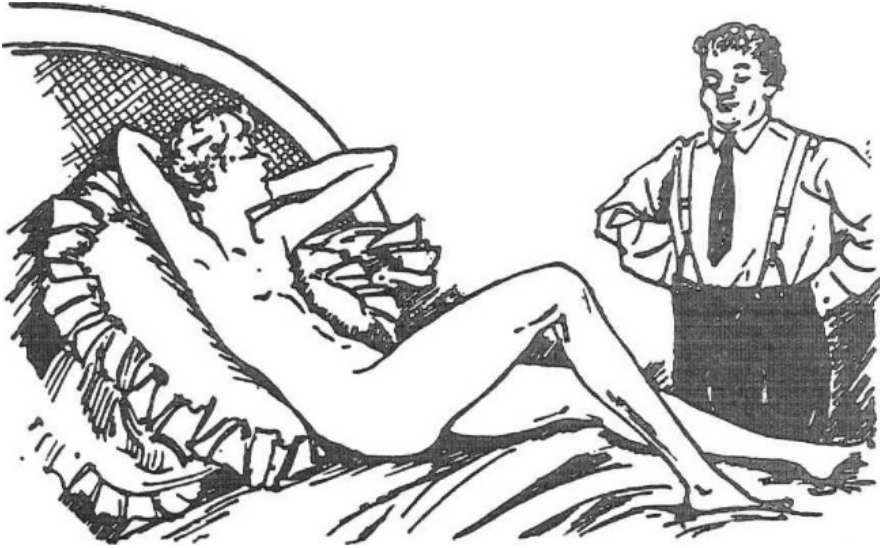
"Oh yes, mademoiselle. The process can be very draining and you must remain in a familiar and comfortable surrounding."

Thus it was that I awakened on that special day aware of the exotic aroma emanating from a steaming tea pot that somehow found its place on the table by my bed. Marcella sat nearby. "It begins, my sweet one," she whispered and embraced me warmly. Pouring the tea into a cup, she continued. "Dr. Rajid is readying his materials downstairs. Meanwhile, you are to drink this."

The spicy flavor of the brew was like nothing I ever tasted before. I traced the path of every sip flowing down my throat and extending to each nerve-ending. A pleasant drowsiness filled me.

"Let me take this for you," Marcella was removing my nightgown. As I moved to assist, my arms reacted as if weights had been tied to them. She smiled and offered more tea. As I drank, my sense of departure increased for I felt no desire to speak or leave the solace of my bed.

In a haze, I saw Dr. Rajid studying me as a sculptor might approach a piece of work,



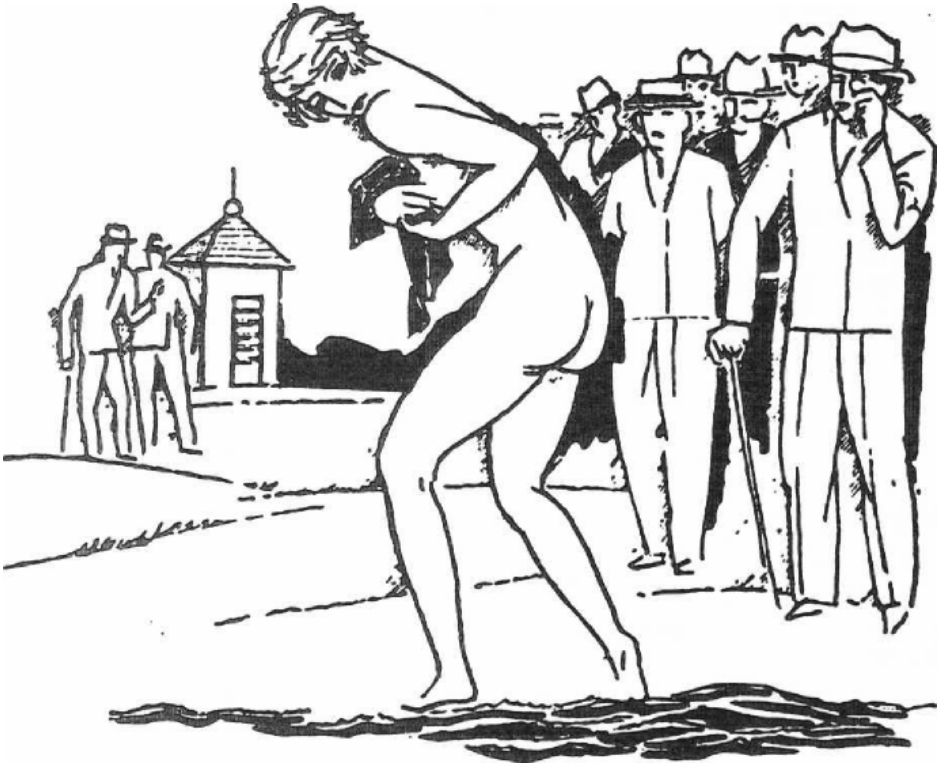
which, in a sense he was. He touched my cheek and whispered, "We commence." Grasping my ankles, he spread my legs wide apart, watching my face intently for a reaction. There was none; I was his sculptor's clay.

The doctor reached to a brown earthenware crock on the bedside table. Wisps of steam rose from its contents. His right hand scooped forth a beautiful soft blue salve which retained its consistency like a handful of fine cleansing cream. He allowed it to cool for a second, then gently placed the entire handful on my genital area, repeating the process several times until my small organs could not be seen beneath the mound. Every pore came alive as the warm sticky substance clung to my sensitive flesh.

Both hands now began a slow massaging motion, spreading the potion about the surface between my legs, strong fingers moving back and forth, slowly and gently across my most private parts, my buttocks and between. As a flowery aroma drifted to my nostrils, his hands roamed over my inner thighs and my lower stomach. Then they repeated the journey, kneading, stroking, urging the cream into every crevice.

A strong forearm pinned my pelvis while the other hand forced more salve between my legs, moving up and down, farther back each time until I felt it inside my body, spreading a soothing numbness. I arched my back in tempo with his thrusts as the relentless motion continued, over and under, round and round, deeper and deeper. I wished it to continue forever.

My mind drifted through a hazy new world filled with fleeting visions that ebbed and flowed like the Doctor's motions. I heard the roar of the ocean and stood naked on the beach surrounded by a group of other doctors who marveled at the new contours of my body. They came closer and I longed to cover myself but my arms moved so slowly I could make no progress. Suddenly, I felt the touch of a warm



cup at my lips. "Perhaps more of my brew will chase away the images," spoke Dr. Rajid softly. While I drank, he soothed my forehead with a towel, patting away the perspiration. He poured another draft and offered it. His words seemed so far away, "We are making fine progress, my dear one." And again he drifted into the velvety black that surrounded me.

But the visions were not dismissed, for the doctor's face was replaced by the girl who had taunted me on the first night of my extraordinary excursion into the feminine. Now, she stood naked, raising her breasts high in the manner of a tease. Her whisper echoed as if in a large cathedral, "These are for you. Will you take them?" She held them higher for me to see, cupping their supple form. My own breasts tingled as if agitated by a light electricity.



I opened my eyes to the blurred form of Dr. Rajid. He held a small jar of yet another cream, bright red and crystalline in texture, which he applied in small circles to the flesh of either side of my chest, tracing ever smaller arcs until he reached my nipples. There, with thumb and forefinger, he pinched and stretched them to points. The light abrasiveness of the cream activated the over-sensitive nerves, creating a sensation that I never knew before. Had I been able, I would have squirmed under

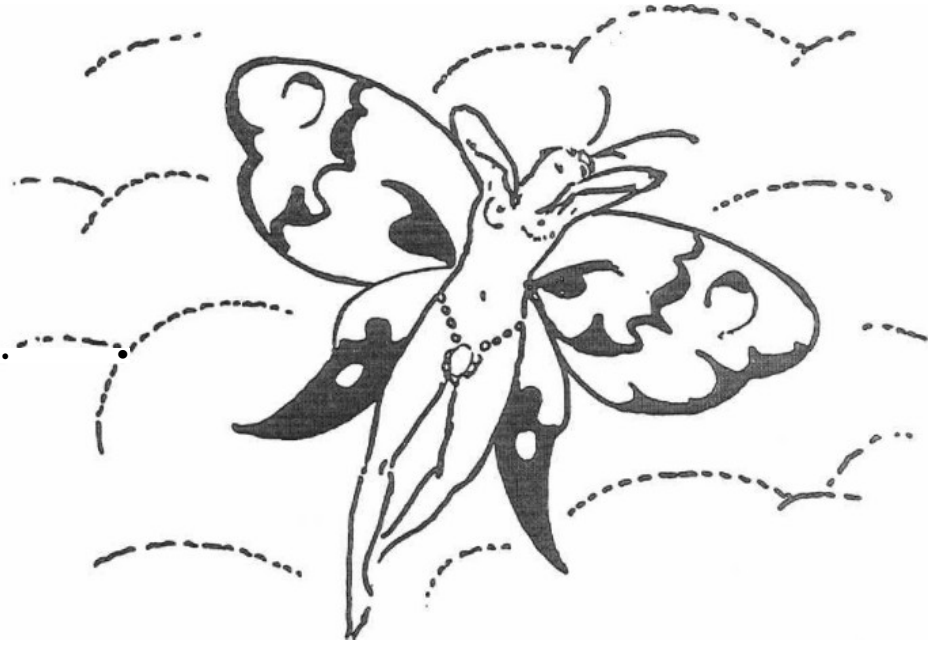
the pressure, but I was limp; physical activity was almost impossible. As before, the doctor's touch was strong yet smooth, steady and relentless. The secret in the lotion activated a tension inside my chest and the entire area beneath my nipples took on a life of its own uncontrolled by me. Waves seemed to pour forth from those tender brown circles. I rose and fell with them as my bed and I drifted through a sky of bright puffy clouds.



I floated without fear, without weight, without direction. My breasts were afire with a magnificent throbbing that came from deep within. So erratic was my logic that I attempted to face downward to provide an easier path for the flow. I could barely turn on my side.

How much feeling could my body absorb? Which was me and which was fantasy? There was no way I could distinguish.

In my mind, I left my bed, sprouting a pair of beautiful wings. I soared far over this room, celebrating my new form, circling high above, observing the scene far below: doctor and patient.



Thus removed, I began to understand the plan. In an instant it came so clearly; the doctor freed me from myself and from what I had been. My wings released me from my cocoon. Were these my thoughts? Or were they ideas transmitted to me by Dr. Rajid through the mystic tea?

I swallowed. The teacup was at my mouth again and I watched a distorted picture of his smile. How had I returned to the bed? In a sudden panic, I wanted to cry out for I feared something had gone wrong. Would I live in this state forever? Thoughts died as the dark blanket descended over me again.

How many days, how many weeks passed? The large, massaging hands of Dr. Rajid became an essential of my life, such as it was. For how many hours did I writhe beneath their magic ministrations, I have no idea. The exotic scents of his potions filled my senses constantly while they enervated my breasts and dulled the flesh of my loins. Vague recollections remain of Marcella's empathy and concern.

I saw needles and small knives, yet felt no pain. I never left the bed; the tea was my only nourishment. I recall being bathed and wrapped beneath my waist in an absorbent diaper-like material, for I knew no control. But few other specifics remain; as my world darkened, I saw less and therefore retained only hazy impressions.

Then, as slowly as it settled, the blackness began to lift. The struggle to raise my eyelids lessened but they moved reluctantly, with much fluttering. A distant wall appeared and seemed to come closer and more in focus. I recognized the framed reproduction of "The Blue Boy."

A cool, damp cloth touched my forehead and I peered into the warm eyes of Dr. Rajid. "Miss Emilia," he addressed me in a low whisper, "You have taken a long, long journey. And now you are returned to us a different, and, I hope you will agree a better person."

My throat was so dry, words would not form. Sensing my discomfort, he offered a glass of water and smiled, "No tea this time. Mere water. Drink slowly."

My mind raced to remember where I was and what had taken place but, to my dismay, I felt as if I had just awakened on that first morning that seemed so long ago.

Slowly the doctor helped me to an upright position. My efforts to move were still sluggish, compounded by an acute awareness of changes within me. On my feet, I leaned on the portly doctor and attempted a few hesitant steps. He guided me toward the large wall mirror, deliberately blocking my view until I stood before it. Then he stepped aside.

I was thunderstruck! The image was me and yet it was not. It moved when I did but I could not comprehend the relationship to the



body that I occupied before this moment. The little mounds on my chest, nipples pointed upward belonged to the girl of my vision. How could it be that their softness was not a part of me? I touched them lightly, aware of a new sensitivity at the tips. Between my legs, a tiny pulsation caused me to extend my fingers beneath my panties to discover that feeling had indeed returned to a miniature version of what was there before. My organs were diminished to less than half of their previous small size.

I breathed in short bursts, equilibrium fading. Dr. Rajid's strong arm extended about my waist to keep me from collapsing in a heap.

"My dear friend," he whispered kindly, "I have put you through many tribulations to reach this point. I hope you are pleased with what we accomplished together."

Completely uninhibited in my partial nakedness, I held him close to me and allowed my tears of gratitude to speak for me.

I was Emilia.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ever so slowly, the fog in which I lived for those uncounted weeks began to clear.

My mind fully registered the great change of direction for the first time and a boundless joy filled my heart. Awakening that morning, I sat alone, surrounded by my soft, sensual world, inhaling the sweet scents, absorbing the aura of the often unfamiliar body that I now occupied.

Marcella brought a tray of delicacies and her jubilation matched mine for now, at last, our scheme moved forward irrevocably. I still harbored circumspect thoughts about the magnitude of my choice and wondered what I would miss of my abandoned maleness, but for now my exuberance forced doubts aside.

The enchanting mounds on my chest constantly fascinated me. I was ever aware of their slightly liquid motion as I walked and



of the need to adjust my movements so as not to brush one of them with my upper arm. When alone, it was difficult to resist the temptation to cup them gently in my hands and watch the little nipples come alive, extending their points.

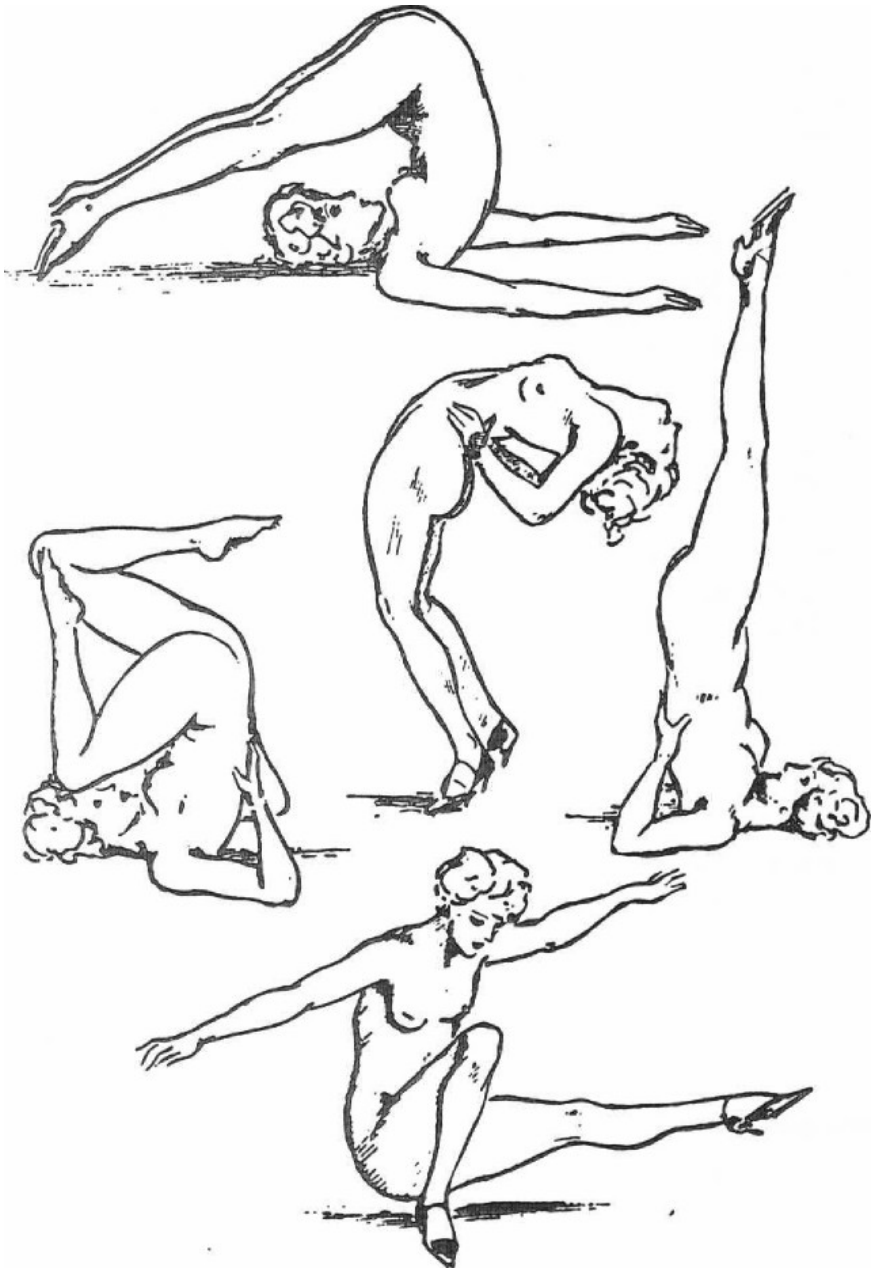
In our girlish intimacy, I could ask Marcella about this phenomenon. She responded like a big sister, "Oh, my sweet one, all young girls enjoy this same fascination when the 'change' arrives. Some good brassieres will calm the turbulence." I blushed with excitement.

Dr. Rajid continued to supervise my "process of change" as he called it. With great care, he detailed the procedure that I must perform every night before I retired. Providing me with a large jar of another of his mystic salves, he demonstrated his technique, applying a handful to my ever-shrinking genitals and rubbing thoroughly to be sure the sweet aromatic cream penetrated every pore. Over this, I was to wear a tight rubber garment much like a "G String" which held everything in place and prevented staining.

"You are quite fortunate," he explained after an examination, "from the start, your organs were somewhat undersized. So, our task was not as difficult as it might have been. Soon, they will be quite insignificant and should cause you no discomfort or embarrassment."

I studied myself and must have shown some concern for he quickly added, "Your sense of feeling will return and you surely will be able to experience pleasure. It comes with time. Remember that you are unique. You are neither or both; male and female. Think on that!"

Pink, candy-like pills were also a part of my daily regimen, "to continue nourishment of those most agreeable breasts," he smiled. Stroking his now familiar hands along my bare legs, while he bent to make a close inspection,



he concluded, "The mixture also discourages the growth of unwanted masculine hairs at inappropriate places on the female body. We shall keep watch, but all seems to be under control now, however."

To continue the development of my body in the proper proportions, he also laid out a program of daily exercises. Drawing charts for me, he supervised my initial efforts at stretching, bending and twisting.

"You have been dormant for so long, it is necessary to strengthen the proper muscles for your new role in life. You must perform these every day," he insisted.

And so I did, becoming more proficient at the complex moves while marveling at the subtle changes in the way my body now felt and responded. Additional swaying weight at my chest required compensation for balance while the lack of sizeable organs at my pelvis allowed a freedom of movement between my thighs which I never knew before. It was quite extraordinary!

While I basked in my new femininity, Marcella constantly shuffled about my wardrobe, inundating me with an exquisite array of silks and satins; exotic lingerie and gowns; gossamer stockings and provocative shoes. So enraptured was I, I spent hours with her, relishing the contact of the materials as they caressed and titillated the blossoming Emilia.

"For some, you must be fitted properly," she commented at the awkward appearance of a shimmery pink satin brassiere of my recent past. "With your new development, we must visit Madame Helene for items that will display you to your best advantage. Everything must be just so!"

Madame Helene's Corsetiere on the Rue de la Paix exuded the cool, quiet reserve befitting

one of the outstanding Parisian boutiques of the 1920's. A uniformed doorman bowed and ushered us into the dream world of the most opulent array of feminine under things imaginable in a multitude of subtle colors and shimmering fabrics.

"Oh, Mademoiselle Monet! So wonderful to see you once more!" Bright eyes sparkled as the regal Madame Helene herself approached, extending both hands in greeting. She was the epitome of good taste, impeccably dressed in a simple, sophisticated black dress, moving with the grace of a ballet dancer.

After Marcella and she exchanged pleasantries, Helene beamed at me, "And this is the lovely young Emilia who is now in your charge?" She took my hand lightly. I was enchanted with her style and poise and promised myself that one day; Emilia would acquire a similar charm.

Obviously, Marcella had arranged for our private meeting, for Helene led us to a sumptuous fitting room in the rear. A cluster of tantalizing brassieres decorated a large table.

She turned to me. "Now, may we see, please?" My hands shook as I reached for the buttons of my dress. "Often, there is nervousness at the first fitting," she spoke knowingly. "Allow me." The fluttering of my heart increased as her beautiful hands worked about my breast. She stepped back, bidding me to hold the dress open for her to see.

"Oh, how lovely they are," she purred, causing my face to redden. Her majestically long fingers lightly touched each breast, then cupped and lifted them separately as if to gauge its weight. I closed my eyes for, despite the numbing effects of Dr. Rajid's potions, I felt a peculiar tension in my groin area. "Male and female," indeed!



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If Madame Helene noticed my discomfort, she was too tactful to give any indication, for she now busied herself with tape measure and samples. Holding this cup and then that one against my flesh, she clucked silently, considering many modes until she satisfied her keen eye.

"Here we have the proper size to enhance your natural gifts," she spoke while she removed the tissue from an exquisite lace-trimmed design for the "Young Miss."

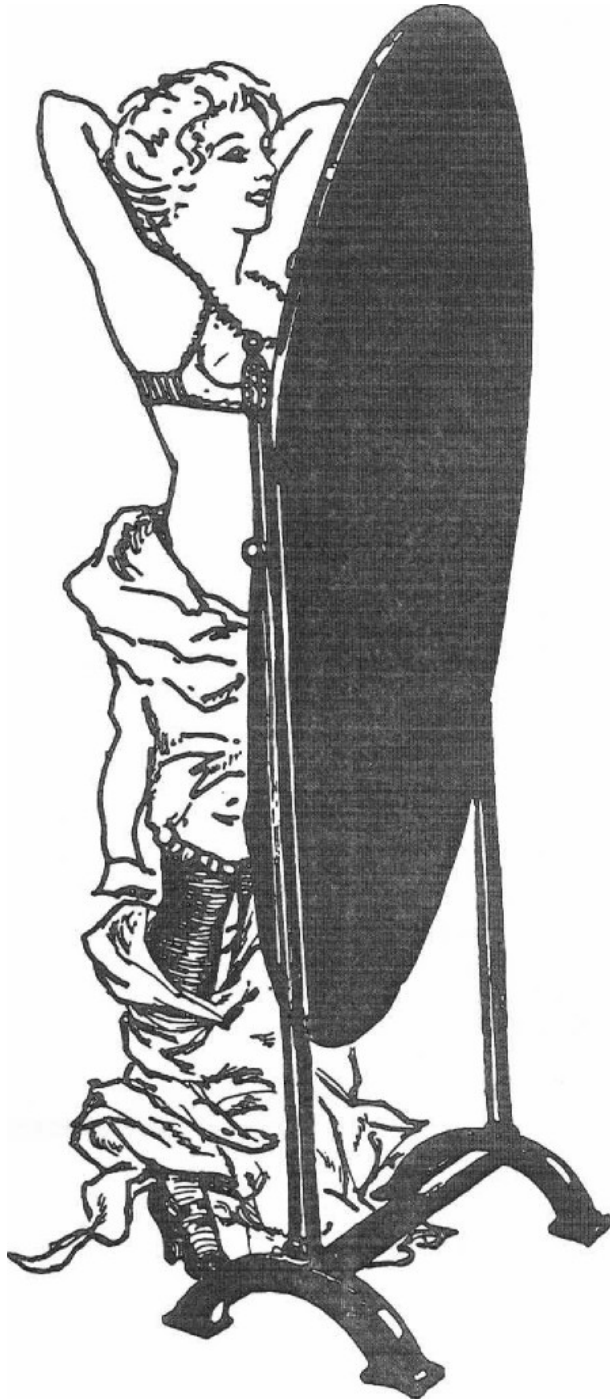
At the mirror, with my dress draped about my waist, she slid it up my extended arms, fixed the clasp behind my back and adjusted the cups about my breasts, altering the strap-length to fit.

"Do you agree this is the one, Mademoiselle?" as she stepped aside.

Now my little mounds of new-found flesh were confined in a luscious web of silk and lace. They were lifted lightly as if to present my nipples to view, the enchanting decorations adding to their femininity. "Oh, I think it is perfect," I sighed rather weakly, looking to Marcella for approval.

She stood next to me and examined my reflection. "Already you have beautiful taste, my Emilia. I agree. But, oh the time? I must leave it to you to select as you wish for I am to meet with Monsieur Lebec to sign more of his papers. You will come home in the taxi, no?" I agreed. She collected her things, handed the proprietor a small envelope, proffered a light kiss and she was gone.

Alone for the remainder of the afternoon with Madame Helene, I was in a heavenly state, trying design after design, being caressed by so many womanly fabrics and reveling in the experience of my own fleshy little breasts attracting so much attention.



The hours passed so rapidly that I was surprised when she excused herself to close the salon for the day, dismissing her clerks and drawing the curtains closed. I thanked her profusely and began to collect my bundles to leave but she gestured for me to sit opposite her at the desk and asked quietly, May we speak for a moment, my sweet one?"

Puzzled, I eased myself into the chair, crossing my legs at the ankles as gracefully as I could, recalling Marcella's instructions.

"Perhaps," she began with a gentle smile, "It would be best if you read this first," handing me the envelope that Marcella left with her. Truly confounded, I scanned a page of the



familiar, sweeping handwriting: "My Dear Emilia: There is much for you to know about being a complete woman and I want you to comprehend it all. But there are some things propriety dictates that even I cannot teach you." Helene looked down at her desktop as the bright blush returned to my cheeks.

I read on: "Madame Helene is an old and dear friend who knows of our plot and wishes to be of help. With your sophistication, I feel you are ready for the next important lessons which she is willing to provide. I would hope that you will stay the night with her and allow her to teach you of the many mysteries a lady carries within herself. You will find her a true friend and a loving teacher." Beneath a thoughtful closing, she affixed her signature.

My pulse pounded as the paper dropped to my lap. A long silence. Then, Helene's softer voice, "It is my hope too that you will choose to stay."

Tiny stars swirled before my eyes. She waited for my composure to return before continuing, "Your aunt is a precious friend whose love and care created 'Madame Helene' and the fine life that I now enjoy. I can never fully repay her and so I begged for the opportunity to bring this fulfillment to you. Will you accept my gift?"

She rose slowly from the chair and took my hand, looking directly into my eyes. Her thin, red-tipped fingers moved to my cheeks as she held my face before her own. We stood without words for a long moment. I whispered, "I think I would like that."

Her living quarters above the shop swam in the soft scent of freshly cut roses. Paintings of beautiful women enhanced the brocaded walls. "You see, I am a lover of the feminine, too," she commented.

A light supper had been tastefully arranged on a small table by the divan, accented by a bottle of fine wine and two long-stemmed glasses.

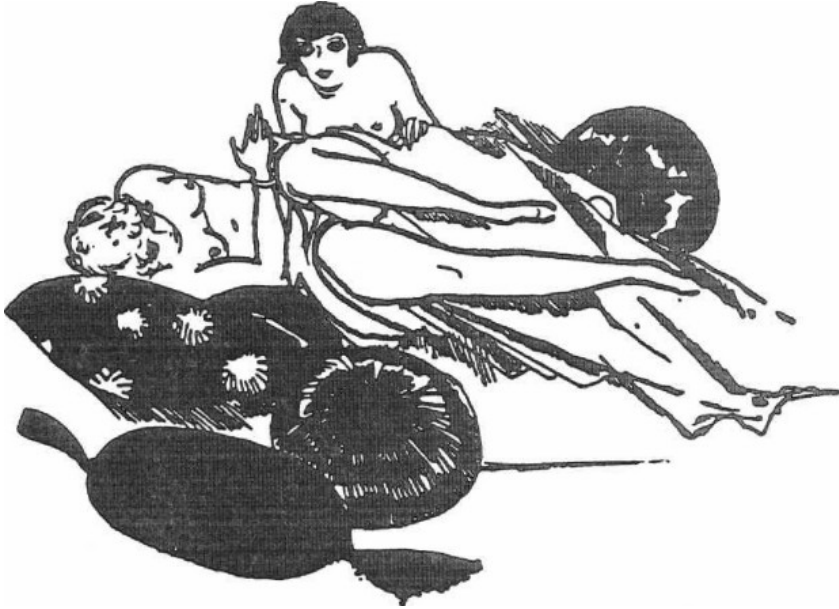
"You will please call me Helene," she said as she poured, "The 'Madame' is an affectation for business and I wish to be your friend."

As we ate and drank, I relaxed in her gentle company, allowing her to direct the conversation to my future as a young lady of means in a France that was full of temptation. "Marcella will always be there to help you make the right choices," she counseled, adding, "And now, you will include me, also. No?"

"That would be very nice. I admire you so much," I responded, trembling somewhat, for her long fingers stroked the back of my neck and toyed with my hair. A light pressure brought my face closer to hers and as I inhaled her perfume, her lips closed on mine. When she folded her arms about me, all resistance faded and I clung to her, pulling her body to mine in a fantasy of blending the two of us into a single form.

"I will teach you everything, mon petite." Again, she was undoing the buttons of my dress and unfolding it gently from my shoulders. "You will know every little excitement, each nerve that leads to ecstasy and fulfillment." Her hand was beneath my skirt, long fingernails teasing my flesh through the fabric of my silk stockings while she continued, "You will learn to be a woman and how to give as well as receive. I will show you how to please a man or a woman, as you desire; it will be your choice. Both can be magnificent."

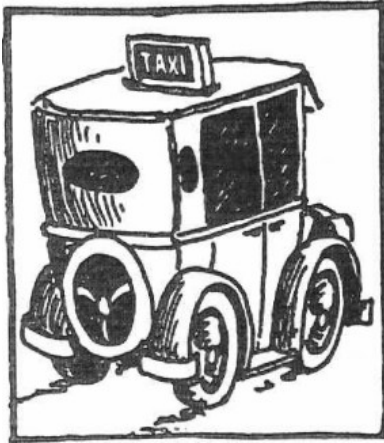
Soon, we were unclothed and on her large, satin-covered bed. At first, I was shy and somewhat reticent because of my diminutive maleness which now seemed so out of place. I turned



away in a childish attempt to cover it. Her hand slipped beneath my arm to caress my breast and turn me to face her. "Conceal nothing, my sweet, for I must know all of you, as you will know all of me," she breathed, tracing her moistened finger across my lips. She stroked my palm against the supple flesh of her naked thigh, "I will show you my body, where to touch, where to kiss, how to use your lips and your tongue, to give and to take pleasure."

My inhibitions swirled away in gusts of passion and I became a willing student, urged on to follow my every impulse with abandon, energized by her words, her lips, her hands, her warm body.

And so the night began. All that had gone before was a mere prelude. In the hours that followed, I was to learn the true meaning of womanhood. This would be the final, glorious lesson.



CHAPTER FIVE

At her doorway, we bade a lingering farewell. "It was a precious night," she whispered, holding me close. "You are a such a willing student. You will return?" I could do no more than nod. She kissed me tenderly and whispered, "I shall wait."

When she reluctantly opened the door, the busy sounds of the avenue broke our intimacy. She waved to a passing taxicab, then smiled, "It is almost noon and Marcella will be concerned. I will call her."

With a squeal of tires, the driver slipped into the flow of traffic. Alone now, I relived the secret hours with Helene. I could still feel the warm touch of her hands on my body; my lips remembered the softness of her flesh; my nipples smarted beneath the silk of my brassiere. I was fulfilled.

Reality returned abruptly when the taxi jolted to a stop unexpectedly. From the corner, two men approached the car. Both rear doors burst open and they slid inside, surrounding me. Before I could utter an objection, a strong hand clasped the back of my neck while another forced a cloth over my nose. Flailing helplessly, I breathed in the pungent aroma of chloroform. A burly hand stroked my leg in rhythm with the bouncing cab. "Fear not, mademoiselle," said one, "You are in good hands." They both laughed.



And then the taxi seemed to be careening into a tong, dark tunnel. It was so black that even the soft internal lights of the car dimmed and were gone. The purr of the engine and the buzz of the tires on the street slowly faded.

Then it was night. Through a tall glass door, the lights of the city twinkled against a purple sky. My head throbbed and my throat was dry and as consciousness returned, I was lying on my back on a Barge bed. Feeling the chill of the air, I realized that my coat, blouse and skirt were gone. Who had taken them, leaving me clad only in chemise and under things in this strange place? Where was I?

Ever so slowly, the events of the day cleared in my memory and I could see the men from the taxi who abducted me. They spoke in low tones as they played cards at a table across the room. Their voices seemed to be far, far away. I was too frightened to move, concentrating on what was being said. Slowly, jumbled sounds became words.

They spoke of "The Baron," a man who would go to any length to get the money that was his, they agreed. "A gambling debt is a debt of honor," intoned the older of the two, "and this little wench will lead the Baron to the boy who controls the wealth!"

My thinking cleared and I began to understand my situation. A wave of relief that they had not discovered my secret dissolved, replaced by apprehension over my fate in their hands. Gesturing to me, he continued, "She is a niece to the older one, Marcella Monet, and she will know where to find him in North America. And once we have the boy, we have the money!"

"But will she tell?" asked the younger.

"Oh yes!" replied the other. "The Baron can be most charming. And, if that brings no results----"

The door from the adjoining suite opened and conversation stopped.

"She is here?" A sharp, nasal voice cracked the sudden silence.

"Yes, Baron. Jacques was in proper position with the taxi and we brought her here without incident." The man gestured, "She lies there on the bed, still unconscious."

"Excellent," replied The Baron. "You may return to the club. I shall deal with the young lady -- alone."

There was a pause and then, in a conspiratorial tone, "Yessir, as you wish." Presently, the door closed.

Fighting the panic inside me, I struggled to maintain the appearance of one who was still deeply sedated. Yet, I allowed my eyelids to remain parted enough so that I could still observe. I must do something! But what? I would wait for a chance.

A shadow approached and the bed sank slightly at my side as the rather slim body eased into a sitting position next to me. The blur of a lean face moved into my vision, dark hair and a thin moustache appeared clearly while cunning eyes studied my features.

I doubled my efforts to conceal my awareness of him as his arm slid under my back to lift me to a sitting position. As he did so, a strap slid from my shoulder allowing my chemise to drop, revealing my breasts. He made no effort to replace it. Instead, with his hand beneath my chin, he raised my face and looked into my eyes. Emitting a soft moan, I attempted to fall back on the bed but his grip was too strong and instead, he lifted me into his arms and carried me to a nearby divan.

With ease, he sat me upright and settled next to me. "I did not expect to meet such an attractive young lady," he leered.

Now what was B to do? The Baron's intentions were obvious and if his hand on my knee wandered farther, he would shortly realize that he had indeed found that elusive "boy who would lead him to the money." He pulled me closer, urging my arm about his shoulder. I moved slowly, pretending to still be in a trance from the chloroform but my mind raced to find a solution to my plight.

His hand circled my breast. "We have much to discuss, my sweet one," he panted in my ear. "First, we should know each other better. Then I am sure you will be pleased to give me the information that I require. I think we can be good friends, don't you agree?" I pretended to drift from consciousness, groaning lightly on my breath. But my passive condition excited him more; he kissed me with great passion!



His hands roamed about my breasts in a frenzy. Pushing aside my chemise, he covered the supple mounds with kisses. In a second, roaming fingers could discover the tiny secret between my legs! My pounding pulse flashed currents of fear to every nerve. Logic left me. Sheer panic remained.

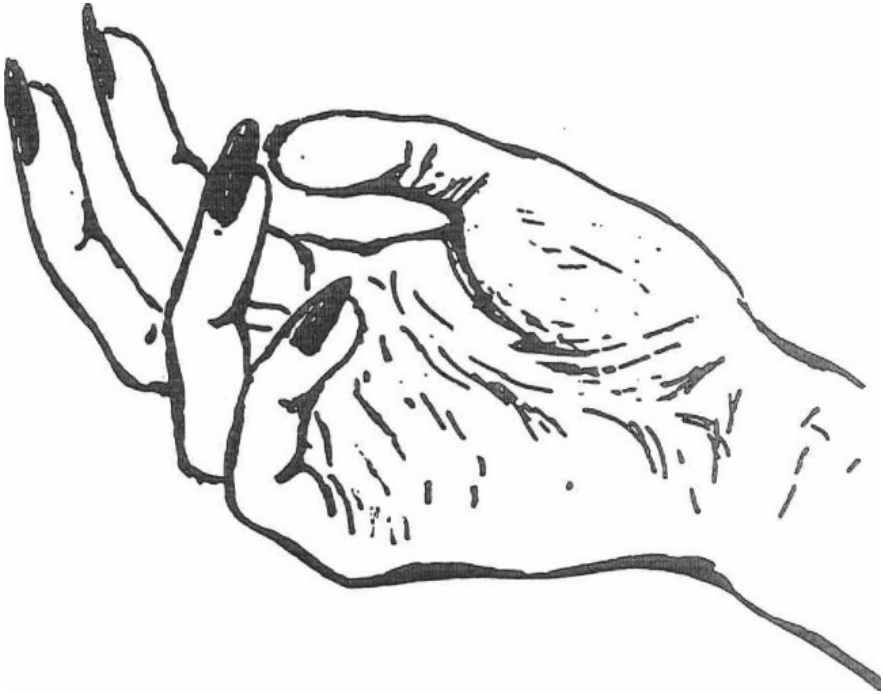
Abruptly, the Baron stood to tear open his belt and un-do the buttons to allow his trousers and under things to fall about his feet. I was thunderstruck by his unspeakable arousal and his maniacal mumblings as he reached to push me down. His eyes resembled globes of unseeing white glass. He seemed to growl, saliva forming at the corners of his mouth.

Something snapped within me; I screamed at the top of my voice, "Oh, no! No! NO!"

Suddenly, in a rapid involuntary move, my right hand shot forth, closing tightly on the mass between his legs, my sharp fingernails sinking deeply into every surface of soft flesh in their path. Deeper. Tighter. Violent strength surged from every muscle in my wildly trembling body. "NO! NO! NO!"

A piercing cry originated deep within him. It grew louder and louder. His arms swung weakly about my head. Tears streamed down his cheeks but my hand could not release its grip. He pulled away, dragging me to the floor. He arched his back and tried to kick at my stomach. At last, my hand opened and as he lost his balance, he fell backward, completely out of control.

At the sound of the sickening thud, my senses returned and I saw to my horror that the back of his head landed heavily on the stone flooring at the base of the fireplace. Blood darkened his hair. His eyelids fluttered for an instant. *He* sighed heavily and then there was no more breath. The Baron was dead!

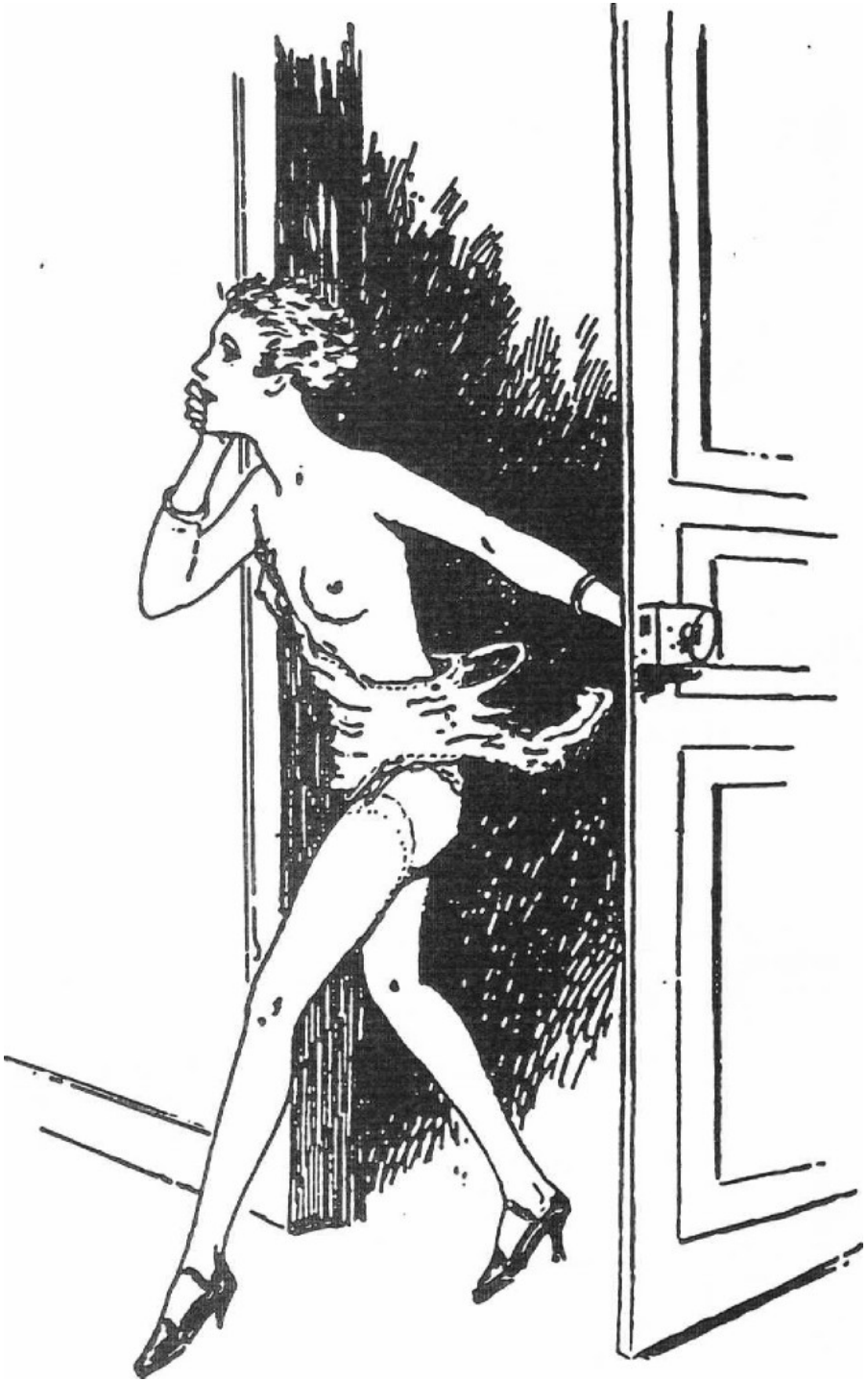


I stood frozen, staring at him. I fought back waves of nausea. My hand quivered before me; fingers and nails ached. My heart pounded and vision was beginning to blur. "You will not faint," I whispered over and over.

Reason told me that this was all a nightmare and that soon I would awaken. Yet the reality lie before me; the one person who could destroy my life was now a grotesque, lifeless form but I could feel no jubilation.

Should I call for the police? No, I could never explain my situation without risking exposure of our entire deception. In the case of a figure with the reputation of The Baron, many possibilities would exist to explain his demise that did not include me. And, for sure, the henchmen who brought me here would hardly come forth to reveal their part in the kidnapping!

"You must leave this place at once," spoke my inner voice. But how? Where were the others? Most important, where were the remainder of my clothes?



For a few moments, I listened for sounds of approaching footsteps, fearful that the noises of our scuffle might have attracted others by The Baron's employ. All was silent. It would seem that we had been alone. If such was the case, I must take advantage of my opportunity.

Torn chemise waving behind me, I dashed to the adjoining room in a mad search for my skirt, blouse and outer coat. A corridor led from the bedroom to a handsome den tastefully decorated in dark leathers. Frowning old gentlemen watched from ornately framed paintings.

My garments were draped casually over the back of the leather divan. Apparently they had undressed me here before removing me to the bed to await the pleasures of their leader. My face flushed with embarrassment. But there was no time for extraneous thoughts, I must escape.

The act of dressing again was somewhat of a comfort for now my presence in the world of the feminine brought new determination that I would never return to the male past. The soft blouse and smooth skirt reassured me.

Hastily reassembling myself, I snatched my purse from the floor where it lie undisturbed and stepped to the heavy oaken door that led to the outside and freedom.

The latches clicked open easily and, as my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I saw that I was in a small moonlit garden, beyond which an iron fence and gate presented my last barrier to the avenue beyond. I prayed that there would be no lock on the gate.

I listened again. Only the sounds of passing traffic.

Silently, I crossed the flagstone walk. The soft squeal of rusty hinges welcomed my world again and my heart sang. No watchmen, no guards stopped my dash to the nearest corner and the safety of an idling taxicab. This time,

to my great relief, the driver was a weary old man whom I awakened from an early morning nap.

Shrieks of joy greeted my arrival at Marcella's apartment as the sun began to lighten the horizon in the east. An all night vigil broke into uncontrolled jubilation as she thrust her arms about me and allowed tears to pour without restraint. Helene covered my cheeks with kisses as Dr. Rajid looked on with approval, finally hugging me and murmuring words of relief. Even the staid attorney, Monsieur Lebec smiled and pumped my hand.

Grave faces greeted my tale of adventure and of the terrible demise of The Baron. Several times, Marcella sobbed.

When all was told, a sense of relief filled the room. Their night had been spent planning and waiting for a message regarding ransom demands. After Helene called and it was suspected that I had met with foul play, they all assembled to wait for instructions before notifying the police.

M. Lebec spoke first, saying that in light of present circumstances, our best course would be to take no action. The threat from the gamblers was gone; there was nothing to connect me with The Baron's death and, as far as the world knew, Emile D'Argent was gone forever, "replaced in the hearts of all by the lovely Emilia. It is my legal opinion that the case is closed," he concluded.

"Except for one thing---" Marcella interjected, studying the group from her place at the table that had served as the center of their council. Now, all looked toward me. They seemed to know what she would say.

"The time has come to put the final piece of the puzzle in place," she began.

"My dear Emilia, this has been a year of



extraordinary change for you and you have faced it with courage and good spirit. And so, you deserve to know the complete truth, the real reasons behind our subterfuge.

"The man, Claude D'Argent, who is in prison, and his wife, who remains in the sanatorium, are not your parents!"

Sitting next to me, Dr. Rajid took my hand in his.

Marcella continued, "The woman is my older sister who raised you from birth to save the honor of the family name. Your real father died in the crash of his experimental airplane before you were born. I loved him very much and we were soon to marry --- but that was not to be. For that reason, it was necessary to create the fiction you have lived. You see, my love, I am your true mother!"

I sat in stunned silence. Yet, for some peculiar reason, I was not totally surprised. Had I always suspected? It explained so much!

With tears in her eyes, Marcella studied me, "Now you know all, my long lost daughter."

The room spun about me. I rose to go to my mother, but the furious whirling in my head was too much and I collapsed into the waiting arms of Dr. Rajid. She is completely exhausted," he explained to the others, carrying me to my room and to bed.

Marcella's news, the death of The Baron, the chloroform and yes, even the evening of earning with Helene demanded rest and repair. In a few days, it was complete. As was I.

How to describe the joy that filled our lives in the weeks, months and years that followed? There are no words. As a woman, Emilia loved and was loved in a way that none could have foretold.

Now, these many years later, I look back on that magic time with disbelief. Could it have happened to me? It did.

And so, I end my humble chronicle of the bewildered lad of another era who blossomed to become a leading lady of the Golden Age of Paris. I responded to an overwhelming need in the only way I knew. What inspired it, I am sure I shall never know. Long ago, I ended my search for answers; I realized that knowing why femininity possessed the boy Emile would mean little in the growth of Emilia, the woman.

I conclude with a grateful heart to all these precious friends and a special love to Marcella, an unforgettable lady who gave me life not once -- but twice.

FINIS --

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