

CONTEMPORARY TV FICTION

MAGAZINE

"GOING TO THE BALL"

One young man's journey exploring
the feminine side of his life. . .
with his aunt's help!



Volume 3

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“GOING TO THE BALL”

by JOANNE

Published by

SANDY THOMAS ADV.

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QUOTE BOARD

“Corset’s Law: Most things are easier to get into than out of.
Then again. . .”

Going to the Ball

by Joanne

“Have you finished ironing your dress yet, Annemarie?” my aunt called in from the kitchen.

“Almost, Aunty,” I responded, as I moved it along the board, pressing away its last wrinkles.

It was my first ball gown and I adored it. It was lovely indeed. Of pale blue satin and white lace...its full skirts were deeply flounced with a delicate edging of antique lace running round the skirt just above the flounce. The deep rounded neckline was gorgeously and widely ruffled in the same lace which, when the sleeveless frock was on me, touched delicately at the top of my arms. From the bodice rose netting to the neck where it formed a pretty collar of net and lace. I know that some girls might find the dress almost too feminine, too girlish, too virginal - they prefer a sleeker more glamorous look - but not me, not for tonight.

For my first dance, I wanted to be girlish, virginal, a swirling vision in pale blue satin and lace. Any boy who danced with me would know he had the most feminine of girls resting in his protective arms. I sighed.

My aunt came in from the kitchen. “I was getting supper for us, dear,” she said, to which I smilingly replied, “I think I’m too excited to eat.”

“Nonsense, Annemarie; you need to get a little something in your tummy,” she said, somewhat distractedly fingering the flounce of my frock. “There,” she pointed to a place where I had missed a wrinkle. With a sibilant swish, the fabric was moved by me to where I could get to the spot.

Neither of us, at the moment, looked a bit glamorous and I imagined our dates would be disillusioned if they saw us now. I said something to that effect to my aunt who merely smiled understandingly. Both of us had our hair in plastic curlers, mine pink and Aunt Ruth’s yellow, and each of wore a hair-net over it. Ruth was wearing a cotton duster, while I was in my old pink chenille robe and fuzzy slippers.

Each of us wore just our bras and panties underneath. Yet that was one of the nice things about being a girl, I reflected. You could get ready for your evening out in your old robes and with your hair in curlers and cream on your face, as was true auntie and me, and yet, in an hour or two, you could be beautiful. Wearing my lovely dress, my hair carefully coiffed, made-up, perfumed, high heels clicking, that was a wonderful experience to look forward too. But at the moment it was also pleasant to

be ironing that dress in my old robe in the comforting and comfortable presence of my supportive aunt.

"Girls are lucky in so many ways, Aunt Ruth," I said.

"Yes, we are," my aunt responded as she seated herself on the couch and lit a cigarette. I noted how her lipstick touched the cork tip of it. "Of course, men have it better so many ways. As you well know."

I nodded and smiled. "Yet men don't know what it is like to wear a beautiful gown. They have no idea what it feels like to have one's skirts swishing about one's ankles. I think it is the most lovely feeling in the world."

"I know you do, dear," said my aunt with an affectionate smile.

My ironing, at last completed---it had taken me nearly an hour--- I carefully removed my ball gown from the board and carried it up to my room where I hung it on a hanger on my door. I ran my hands down the material, and shivered. Turning reluctantly from the gown, I caught sight of my creamed face in the mirror. I don't look like much of a girl of any kind right now, I thought a bit worriedly. When I returned to my aunt, she nodded toward my hands. "Your nails look nice, dear," she assured me.

I glanced down at them. The red varnish glinted a bit in the sunlight which streamed through the living room window. I remembered the first time I had tried to polish them, I had managed to smear my fingers almost as much as my nails, but my aunt had shown me how to do it, and I had to admit that they had come out well. "I see you painted your toenails as well," my aunt commented.

"Yes, I suppose it's silly of me," I said, "since I will be wearing closed-toe slippers. But I wanted to do it. I never have before, you know. I'm not quite sure why."

"Well, even if no one sees your toe polish," my aunt said, "you will know about it, and I think it will make you feel better."

"More feminine?" I asked, raising my eyebrows.

"That's it exactly. After all, I know that's why I paint mine," she said with smile. Kicking off one slipper she showed me that she had painted hers as well.

"Oh, aunty!" I said, feeling strangely voluptuous at that moment, and rushed into her arms. She hugged me warmly as I whispered into her bosom, "I'm scared, too."

Kissing me on the forehead, assuring me I would just fine, she helped me to my feet and arose, too. Claspng my hand in hers, our prettily enameled nails joining in that fashion - hers just a shade darker than mine - we walked to the kitchen together.

"Now we'll just have soup and a salad, darling, and then we'll get ready." She smiled at me again. "It's so nice having you here, Annemarie."

Two hours later, I was standing at my mirror, screwing my silver circle earring into my lobes. That was something else men didn't know about, I reflected; how delicious it feels to have pretty earrings swinging, touching your cheeks with a tiny brush, with every movement you make. That task done, I studied myself anxiously. My hair had come out nicely. Although it wasn't nearly as long in the back as I would have liked - I dreamed of the day when it would be falling almost to my waist - it did swirl becomingly around my face, thicker on the right side than the left, where a silver pin held it in place. The shampoo and conditioner had made it delightfully soft to the touch, though I did fret that it was coarser in texture than it should be - my aunt assured me no one would even think to notice that - and for a moment I wondered if I should dye it blonde. I giggled at that impossible thought. Impossible for now.

Happily, I fluffed out the lace that rose from my bosom and circled my shoulders, made sure the lace of the collar was standing up all around. I smelled myself, wondering if I may have put on too much perfume. I ran my hands down my bare arms. I wasn't used to having bare arms - at least not when in a ball gown - and I felt quite exposed, and hoped no one would think they were muscular. I shivered with dread at that thought. Gathering up my skirts, I gloried in the rustle I made with each step I took, and gazed fascinated at the merry sway of my flounce, observed the shadows appearing and disappearing and reappearing at different places with each step I took. "You look perfectly lovely, dear," my aunt said with such delight that could not doubt her sincerity, as I entered her room.

"So do you, aunty," I replied.

Truthfully. My aunt had pulled her dark hair back severely from her forehead, and wore it in a bun at the back, glamorously set off with diamond encrusted barrettes. A diamond necklace, in a single strand, glistened around her throat. Her frock, of a heavy silk grosgrain taffeta, was pink, with an enormous puff of material rising petal-like from her bosom, with a matching bustle effect at the back in pink flounces of material; her skirt straight in front but with a modified train in the back. From beneath it peeped pink patent leather slippers that matched in their fabric my pale blue ones.

"Let me fix your sash, dear," she offered. I stood with my back to her while she re-tied the self-belt of my dress into a pretty bow. Once she had completed that little feminine task for me, she returned to her dressing table where she picked up her diamond bracelets. While she completed her ornamentation of herself and studied her makeup in her mirror, I seated myself on her satin-covered bed. As I did, the skirts of my dress swirled around me, completely covering my feet. It was a voluptuous feeling as I smoothed my hands along the soft shiny fabric. I

thought how unfortunate men were that they could never know what it was to wear a lovely ball gown such as the one that I had on. The formulation of my thought made me smile, a little wryly. My hand leapt to my lace-covered bosom, felt at my breasts. They felt soft, too.

The doorbell rang from below, and I looked up at my aunt, my mouth opening in sudden terror. She saw my expression through her mirror, and turned to me. "You have nothing to fear. You look beautiful."

I didn't think I looked exactly beautiful...but...but I did think - I didn't finish the thought. Squeezing it, Aunt Ruth took me by the hand, and drawing in my breath, I accompanied her out of the room. As we descended the stairs I noted how she held up the skirt of her dress, and realized, with comfort, that I was holding mine up in exactly the same practiced ladylike way. With a final glance at the hall mirror, she opened the door.

There were our dates, both in tuxedos. Greg was in his mid-forties, a bit older than my aunt. He was graying at the temples, with flecks of gray in his moustache. "Wow," he said, "you look great, Ruth!" He then turned to me. "And this must be Annemarie. What a lovely girl you are, dear," he told me, and I lowered my lashes becomingly. Behind him was his son, my date for the evening. A callow-looking youth with lighter brown hair that his father, and a not very successful blondish moustache. He was, I was relieved to see, an inch or two taller than me even with me in my heels. I didn't think he could be much more than in his early twenties, and I understood he was still a college student, like myself. "Hi, Annemarie," he said,

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taking my hand, "I'm Perry."

Although I was used to dating, it had never been quite like this before. I gave Perry a flustered smile and then busied myself looking about for my purse, a flat white one with a gold button. Glancing in it, I make sure it contained my cosmetics, my hanky, a change purse with a few dollars and coins. "Always carry mad money," my aunt had told me jokingly. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed that Greg was helping my aunt into her pink taffeta shawl that went with her dress, and Perry, copying, saw my lace mantilla and picked it up and awkwardly helped drape it about my shoulders.

"Thank you, Perry," I said demurely. My aunt put her now gloved arm through her friend's. I drew on my sheer white gloves with a lace ruffled frill at the wrist and smiled at Perry a bit tremulously. He held out his arm. I put mine through it. He is my escort, I thought, as I rustled in step next to him, knowing he could hear my rustling (a girl one dates does rustle in satin and lace), and with a side-glance I could see my red nails through the gloves as they rested on his arm. I thought, 'I am now a young lady who is being taken to a dance; I am being escorted.'

I had, of course, been to dances before. Just a year earlier. Her name was Gwen, a lively girl with a mass of black curly hair, wearing a lovely gown of white lace with white chiffon skirts. I had liked Gwen. She could be a lot of fun to be with, but I had never seen her "dressed" before. She had taken my breath away. Much as I hoped, I had taken Perry's. I had complimented her lovely frock, and I suppose most guys are likely to tell their girlfriends how pretty they look and even compliment them on their dresses. But I knew, even as I held Gwen in my arms, as I felt her soft chiffon cling against my trousered legs, in my tuxedo, that, unlike other boys, I not only like her dress, I wanted desperately to be wearing it!

I barely remember the first time that I wore a dress. I think I was six, and my mother cross-dressed me with the neighbor's girl to go Halloweening. That's about all I recall, save that it felt "nice". In other words, I don't remember the incident, I've been told about scene; a glimpse of me looking down at myself on a dark street with my little flower print skirt (I do remember that) swinging about me. However, it was a fourth grade homeroom Halloween party that I remember being absolutely entranced a how pretty a little boy in my class looked in his mother's black lace dress with a pink bow pinned to the waist. I knew I wanted to be dressed that way, too, instead of in that stupid cowboy costume, so that probably the dress I wore on the earlier occasion had more of an impact on my psyche than I now recall.

When I was eleven years old I had my first real experience wearing a dress, and it was Auntie Ruth who set me on my way.

It was during summer vacation; my mother was ill, as she frequently was, and my father shipped me off to stay with Aunt Ruth. Five years my mother's junior, she would have been in her late twenties then, recently divorced, a separation that I now realize had left her reasonably well off financially. She lived in a large, handsomely furnished, two-bedroom apartment in a high riser off Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Her only child had died, struck by a car, at the age of four, and it may have been that the loss of the little girl and the knowledge (which I only learned of later) that she could have no more children, both had their effect on the dissolution of her marriage and the way she subsequently treated me, though I have never wanted to intrude on her by asking her about that.

In any event, for a boy from a small town in the interior of Pennsylvania (where my father had an insurance agency), it was exciting and a little awesome to be in the big city, and particularly nice to be staying with my aunt. Perhaps because she lived in the city and had married well, she had always seemed a glamorous figure to me. She dressed much more expensively and fashionably than did my mother - who favored slacks and plain skirts - used more makeup and always smelled sweetly. She had also always been, ever since I could remember her occasional visits, much more openly affectionate toward me than my mother, who not only was frequently ill but had a reserved, cool nature. Aunt Ruth, on the contrary, hugged me and praised me and seemed to genuinely enjoy my company.

To me, that was important. I was an only child and my father was even more distant toward me than my mother, and I sensed he was ashamed of me. A former college football quarterback, he had hoped I would be athletic, too, but I had inherited my lack of coordination from my mother, though from where I got my dreamy nature, my love of reading, and my gentle nature I was far from sure. I don't recall that I was ever thought to be sissyish, but I had few friends at this time in my life, and always was more comfortable in the company of little girls than boys, an inclination of which both parents disapproved and made me feel guilty.

I certainly, however, could have gone any direction at that time. I was unformed, restless, without clear ambitions save that I wanted to do something "artistic" with my life. Thus, when I came to stay with my aunt that first time I was a rather lonely, introspective boy who had already begun to feel an attraction toward wearing feminine apparel. My aunt's dresses - sleek and shiny, slithering or swinging - furthered that sensuous appeal as well as its mystery. Although I vaguely knew how boys differed from girls anatomically, I didn't perceive why the sexes were so different from one another and the main obvious difference, that of their clothes, that the one sex wore makeup and smelled sweetly while the other didn't, fascinated me. I

wanted to know what it was like to be a girl. That is, I didn't then - or now - want to be a girl, I only wanted to know what it was like, to live that life much as an actor might play a role.

There was no certainty about how long I was to stay with my aunt, probably no more than a week or two, and she certainly treated me as one might a guest that one loved and didn't expect to stay long. She planned outings for us almost every day - the zoo, movies, I even went to my first stage play, the art museum, biking in Fairmount Park, dinner at restaurants. As my aunt later told, "You seemed such a lonely, sad little boy when you came to stay. I know you didn't mean to seem that way, and indeed I was certain you were unconscious of how sad you were. It was if you wanted to be someone else. And then again you were so grateful for the little things I did for you, and you were such a polite little boy, too. My heart just went out to you."

One day we went shopping, window-shopping really with no fixed purpose in mind. Aunt Ruth saw a dress she liked in the window at Bonwit's and asked me if I'd mind terribly if we went in so she could have a better look at it. Naturally, I said I wouldn't mind at all. Only rarely - once or twice with my mother - had I been inside a dress shop, and none as glamorous as Bonwit's. We went up in an elevator to a floor which had just rows and rows of dresses and I was quite conscious I was the only boy, the only male, there. I don't think the room was perfumed but it seemed that way to me, all satiny soft and pink and white; a woman's domain, a girl's domain, not for boys like me. Politely, I sat on a little chair while my aunt looked at the frocks - as I recall, they didn't have the one she admired in her size - but she found another she liked and disappeared into a dressing room (and I was wondering how it would feel to try on a dress in a store like that, except, oddly enough, it was me watching another boy, not me, perhaps the boy at the party, who was dropping a dress over his head; I recall that displacement quite clearly). When she came out - I only vaguely recall the dress, it was purple - she smiled at me and asked me how I liked it, and without thinking, in a kind of wonder, I blurted out, "Oh, it's lovely, Aunt Ruth," which caused the saleswoman to look at me, I sensed, peculiarly, and Aunt Ruth merely turned to smile and say, "In that case, I guess I shall have to take it."

While the purchase was being wrapped, my aunt said, "I guess while we're here I ought to see if I can find something Tammy for her birthday," referring to her ex-husband's niece. Either Bonwit's didn't have a girls' department or there was nothing suitable there, because I know it was at Wanamaker's girls' department that she found the dress she was looking for. It was a gingham white dress with a lacy bib of that material and white transparent sleeves and tiny round collar. With it came a darling white nylon petticoat with a ruffle edged with lace, the ruffle band decorated here and there with little pink

rosebuds. My aunt said, "It's too bad you aren't a little girl, Alan; you're just about Tammy's size and we could try it on you to make sure it fits." I don't recall what reply, if any, I made to that; I know I just stared at the dress, almost painfully wishing it were on me.

When we got back to the apartment that evening, my aunt hung up her new dress, and also Tammy's. I was sitting on the edge of her bed, watching her as she did this. I loved to be in her bedroom, a habit I know now she had noticed, and indeed she occasionally (either on that visit or the next one; somehow I think it was the next one) would call me in "for a little chat" even while she was dressing. I have this image of her sitting at her dressing table in her white slip, its soft folds forming and reforming as she moved, while she put on her lipstick, all the while talking to me.

What happened next is vivid in my memory - probably the only vivid memory I have of that whole year - every moment of it. After hanging up Tammy's dress in the closet she immediately took it out again and, holding it across her arm, pointed to the hem line.

"The petticoat ruffle will peep out under the dress, Alan," she said, "and I just love that style. Goodness, how I loved to wear pretty dresses when I was a little girl. I would have simply adored this one. I do hope Tammy will. She's such a little tomboy."

"I'm sure she will, Aunty," I said, my emphasis causing her to look at me peculiarly.

"Why don't we try it on you, Alan?" she asked, very softly.

"On me?" Since then, Aunt Ruth has told me I went quite pale at her suggestion. "On me, Aunt Ruth?"

"Just for fun," she said.

"It wouldn't be right," I said, and I know I must have sounded that I wanted to be contradicted.

"I don't see anything wrong," she answered, caressing the dress with one well-manicured hand. "It'll be just between the two of us, and I won't tell anybody, I promise. Why don't we, Alan? Just to see how you look."

"Well..." If she thought it was alright, and I trusted her completely, I remember thinking that, that it must be as it wouldn't have been if I had asked to try it on or had sneaked into the closet (which I had been thinking of doing) and tried it on in secret.

"It'll be fun," she repeated with a giggle and I giggled (nervously) too, and she said, "Just hop out of your clothes. I'll turn my back... But wait here." She reached into her bureau drawer and handed me a pair of white lacy panties. "These shouldn't be too big for you." As if they were alive, but alive in a forbidden way, I gingerly accepted them, and while she primly turned her back, I shucked off my clothes as rapidly as I could

- so I wouldn't have time to think - and drew up the panties which, in fact, did snap into place around my waist, undoubtedly a bet big for me, but I didn't notice that then. "Ready?" she asked when all was quiet.

"Uh huh." I realized I was having trouble breathing.

She came over to me and had me lift my arms and then dropped the petticoat over my head, and tugged it into place. Oh, how nice that feels, I thought. Even as I was staring down at my soft and shiny petticoated expanse - I've never worn a petticoat, I remember that going across my mind - she was unbuttoning the dress in the back and now was slipping it too over my head. Guiding my thin arms, she worked them into the little puff-sleeve holes and drew the dress down me. Expertly, she buttoned up the back from the waist, and then tied its self-belt in a big bow behind me. She then came round in front of me to survey her handiwork. Her hand went to her mouth, "Oh, Alan, you do look... you look so nice."

Taking me by the hand, she led me to the full-length mirror on the back of her closet door. I studied myself. My features looked so pale and yet I was half-smiling. I fingered the sides of my dress. She was right, the petticoat ruffle did show underneath. She was standing behind me, her hands on my shoulders. "How does it feel, Alan?" she asked, and I can still hear the curious undertone.

"It... it feels... nice," I whispered.

Her one hand went up and patted my curly brown hair. It was then she said what I was to think so often in the future, "Girls are so lucky, Alan, to be able to wear such pretty clothes. Sometimes I feel sorry for boys that they can't." Then she laughed. "Yet you are, darling, and you look absolutely perfect."

I think I blushed at that, and I next remember her fussing with my hair, combing it this way and that, and finally managing to tie a white hair ribbon in it. I was delighted by this extra feminine touch, 'Now I will always know what it feels like to wear a hair ribbon,' I thought. As I recall I spent at least two hours in the dress. All I remember specifically was, at bedtime, her telling me, "If you'd like to wear the dress tomorrow night, too, dear, it will be alright."

Trying to sound objective about it, I said, "It was kind of fun."

But tomorrow night, in that sense, never came. The following evening when we got home, there was a message at the desk to call my father. Aunt Ruth's lips began to tremble even as she received it. I now know that she knew what I didn't. My mother had cancer. She had died that afternoon.

I now, of course, realize that most of the distant attitude of my parents toward me was inextricably bound up in my mother's ill health, the breast cancer with which she had lived and which finally killed her after it had spread to other parts of her body. My father's grief was deep - he was a much more

feeling man than my childhood judgment of him allowed - and whether he couldn't cope emotionally with what happened or whether he was simply at a loss of what to do about me, or whether (as I thought) he didn't want to have me around, I was sent to live with my grandparents, his mother and father, who lived some twenty miles away. Less than a year later, my father was killed in an automobile accident. As I look back on it, I see it as a form of suicide. He had always had a drinking problem, but it (I later learned from family whisperings) became out-of-hand after my mother's death. He was drunk at the time he ran off the road and into the tree.

I was not unhappy with my grandparents, once I had gotten over the grief of losing both my parents in so short a time. I must say they were supportive of me, cared for me as best they could, but it must have been difficult for them to try to raise a boy so late in their own lives. At the time of my father's death, my grandfather was already in his mid-sixties, my grandmother nearly that age and somewhat crippled by arthritis. It was logical, therefore, that I be sent to a boy's boarding school - they were comfortably fixed, and my father had left me a fairly decent estate with them as my guardians - where I got along well enough in my reclusive way, but I had a sense of drifting in life, of having no one to whom I could really turn, and not wanting to think about so many things, increasingly I would fantasize myself to sleep telling myself stories in which (for oh such a variety of reasons!) I had to dress and live as a girl. That seemed desirable to me... a pretty, loved girl... and yet I almost always fell asleep while just reaching the part where I donned my pretty clothes for the first time.

Aside from her presence at the two funerals and one visit to my grandparents', I did not see Aunt Ruth. I sensed even then that the relations between them were somewhat strained, though I had no concrete reason to think that. Aunt Ruth has told me she was aware of the vague disapproval, and thinks it emanated from nothing specific but a difference in lifestyles. My grandparents were God-fearing, simple people, my grandfather a farmer who was close to the soil, and they didn't understand and perhaps resented the sophisticated Ruth with her pretty dresses, her expensive hats (she loved hats) and her furs. "I think they may have thought that anyone who seemed to enjoy the material things of life enjoyed only material things, and that person must somehow be evil or at least untrustworthy," she once said to me, and I think she was pretty close to the truth.

Actually their only open quarrel (and it may have occurred at the time of that one visit) was over me. Ruth appreciated them taking me in, but believed I should not completely lose touch with my mother's side of that family. Not that there were that many. My mother's mother was still alive and I was

permitted to visit her occasionally; she tended to cry every time she saw me; it was quite painful. I also had an uncle but he lived on the west coast and I barely knew him or his wife and children. Since Aunt Ruth was not particularly close to her own mother, it was probably mostly herself about whom she was speaking when she urged my grandparents to let me visit "her" family.

Be that as it may, I was nearly fifteen-years old before I had my next visit with Aunt Ruth. During that time, she had re-married and again divorced - this marriage lasting only a year - which undoubtedly confirmed my grandparents' (and, I think, her own mother's) opinion of her. I know she was still fond of me, but I think it was her resentment over their holier-than-thou attitude which kept her on the track of having me come visit her. I don't know how she finally did it, but she eventually wore my grandparents down.

It was in June when I arrived in Philadelphia, met at the station by my aunt who, after all the appropriate comments about how much I had grown - which made us both uncomfortable - drove me to her new home, a double-story house on a fashionable side-street not too many blocks from where she had her apartment. Once there, we seemed not at all to relax with one another. I was to stay a week "if I didn't get too bored."

Now that I am more mature (and some conversations I've had with Aunt Ruth lead me to think I may be right) her comments about my "growth" had more meaning than I then gave them credit for. As I have said, she had not actually seen me since I was only a little more than twelve, and the little boy then had suddenly burst into, if not a young man, certainly an adolescent youth. I don't mean to suggest there was any sexual content on her part in what followed, but I am not sure that she didn't feel uneasy somehow...it was one thing for a 28-year old aunt to take care of a ten-year old, but quite another for a 33-year old aunt to have a 15-year old about. But enough of such uncertain psychoanalyzing.

The strangeness - I can't quite call it tension - continued for the first several days. Aunt Ruth had all kinds of ideas on how to entertain me, but since they were geared to the child I had been, she quickly realized that they would hardly do - another trip to the zoo? - and she really didn't know how to replace them with new ideas. We went to movies together, and I felt a bit awkward, a boy my age, being taken to a movie by a woman who was almost old enough to be his mother but who looked much younger. People must wonder. I'm sure we both thought that.

There were times when Aunt Ruth had to be out. She didn't have a job (or need one) but she was involved in charitable work (or so she said - for all I know, her trips may have been assignations; at time she has had a marvelous active sex life!) or she went shopping, and on those occasions, I would guiltily

steal into her bedroom and open her closet to look at her dresses and even daringly open her bureau drawers to gaze at her lingerie. I never did this when I was home, although the impulse frequently came upon me when I might be visiting. I remember spending a holiday, around this period, at a boyfriend's house and surreptitiously visiting his sister's and his mother's rooms on the same nerve-wracking expedition. But in my aunt's room, anyway, I never touched anything. I was absolutely sure she would be able to tell if I so much as touched a dress on its hanger, or stirred a frilly piece of lingerie. And, for that matter, looking had its own purpose. In bed, I now had actual dresses and actual lingerie that I could fantasize myself as wearing.

Before getting into what happened next, I think I should add here that neither at this time - nor before nor after - did it occur to me that my interest in feminine clothing might mean I was homosexual. By now, I knew what that meant. We even had effeminate boys in my school, but it was always clear in my mind that dressing as a girl was what intrigued me. It had sexual content, and it did not mean to me that dressing like a girl would mean that, as with girls, I would be interested in boys. Indeed, by this time, altogether innocently, I had one or two dates with girls - school dances and football games - enjoyed them, and was attracted to them in that bewildered way that most boys of that age are.

In any event, on the fourth night of my stay, Aunt Ruth suggested we simply stay home and watch TV. I was relieved at that prospect, and I could sense she was too, and as a consequence for the first time we felt some sense of ease with each other. I remember she was wearing a peasant blouse with flower embroidery across the neckline, and a simple dirndl skirt, beneath which I got an occasional glimpse of the eyelet-embroidered white petticoat she was wearing. I was in my usual t-shirt and jeans.

It was ten when we turned off the TV, and she took up a subject she had been alluding to during the commercials, the story of a pretty 10-year old girl whose family she knew and who had made a miraculous recovery from a severe auto accident. (Was she thinking of her own dead daughter then, too?) By process of association, this story brought to her mind another former 10-year old.

"Do you remember Tammy, Alan?" she asked.

All my senses immediately went on alert. The vision of myself in Tammy's birthday dress came back to me with a sudden clarity it no longer had in my frequently-adduced memories of that occasion. "Why yes, Aunt Ruth, what about her?"

"Oh, nothing, really. Her parents have moved to the mid-west. What I was just thinking was that - you know, your mother's tragedy, I never did get around to giving her that dress.

You remember it, don't you?" She looked at me quizzically. "You tried it on, you remember."

"Yes. I did."

Some years later, talking about this, Aunt Ruth told me, "When I mentioned Tammy's dress, it was the first time since you'd arrived that you seemed - how can I put it? - yes, *animated*. You'd seemed so withdrawn until then, reserved, wary, I think. But when I recalled you dressing up in the frock I had bought for Tammy, you got very nervous and ill-at-ease and yet I sensed, at the same time, you were excited. I was quite fascinated by your reaction."

I don't recall my own feeling at that moment any more precisely, so I think I shall let her analysis stand as accurate.

"You looked so cute in it," she went on, apparently merely reminiscing. "You know what you reminded me of, perhaps because Tammy was a bit like that? You reminded me of a little tomboy who has just put on her first party dress and suddenly realizes it might be fun to be a girl instead of just a pretend boy."

The image her description provoked in me left me with a feeling of suffocation. I think I stood up and nervously walked about the room.

"Have you ever thought about that night, Alan?" she asked.

"Oh, no. Well... you know, maybe once or twice."

During the pause that followed, I think I must have reseeded myself, because I have this recollection of thinking, 'I shouldn't show her how much this upsets me.' And based on that memory, I must have been walking about, pacing the floor.

"Have you ever thought about doing it again, Alan?" she asked.

"Doing it again," I repeated, wanting to make it a question, but I don't think it came out that way.

"You know. Dressing up."

From that point on, my memory becomes much sharper, just as it is of the first night she dressed me. I see myself sitting on the edge of my chair and hear myself saying, "Why? Should I, Aunty?"

"I don't know, dear," she answered placatingly. "It's merely that you seemed to enjoy it so much then, that it has often occurred to me that you might want to try it again."

"It... it would be wrong for a boy... I mean, I'm fifteen, and a boy my age... it was different when I was little," I said, probably stammering.

"Well, it's entirely up to you, dear."

"It's... I'd be a sissy."

"But if you ever want to while you're here, just tell me, Alan, and I'll be happy to help you."

"But... but why, why do you think I'd still want to?"

"Because I think you do," she said softly, and added, "Don't you?"

Every fiber of my being wanted to say "yes", but my mind said, 'No, you don't want to be found out. She'll think less of you,' when I knew who it really was I was worried about. I mumbled, "No. No, I don't. Please, Aunt Ruth."

Nothing more was said that night. But I wrestled that whole night long, barely sleeping, wondering why I had given up this one opportunity. After all, I only saw my aunt so rarely... she had put me in a dress once... and she hadn't made fun of me... she wouldn't now, I knew... after all, she had brought it up. Why had I rejected her offer?

She seemed distant toward me the next day, a Friday, or maybe it was me toward her in my misery, and I don't remember much about what, if anything, we did together, but I know that evening she suggested we go to a movie, and I said I didn't feel like it. As a result, we were again in the living room - and now that I think about it, unless she wore the same outfit two days in a row, it was this evening she was in the peasant blouse and full-skirt. Odd how one's memory tricks one about details like that. There was little on TV and conversation was stilted between us and a silence had fallen, one I was hardly aware of as I worked up my courage, for courage is what it took. Finally, with a deep breath, I blurted out, "You remember what we were talking about last night, Aunt Ruth?"

She glanced over at me sharply, then smiled gently. "Yes, Alan," she said.

"Well... well... you were right," I spoke it out too loudly, but perhaps necessarily because my shout seemed by its very unseemly loudness to relieve the weight I felt against my chest.

"I though I might be," she said reflectively.

"But I shouldn't. Don't you see? I shouldn't want to do something like that. It... it's not manly."

"But you do think about it a lot, don't you, Alan?"

"Yes."

"So why don't we see what it's like, instead of just thinking about it? You know, dear, if you don't, it won't stop you from thinking about it."

"And if I do?"

She shrugged her shoulders, and then laughed gayly. "Besides, I think we're both taking this altogether too seriously. I've heard of men who occasionally like to wear women's clothing and they are quite masculine, I assure you. And, dear, if it is something you'd like to do, why not do it? Just because something's pleasurable doesn't mean it's wrong," she added, and I think I realized even then she was referring to my Calvinistic grandparents.

She stood up and automatically I did as well. "We are quite near in size, Alan. I think you're a size or two smaller than me, but we're about the same height, and I bet I have some things that would just about fit you. I have gained a little weight these

last few years. Why don't we go see?"

She must have said all the right things because somehow I no longer felt guilty - I guess it wasn't just her words but her attitude - and feeling almost as though I were watching myself, standing outside myself somewhere, I followed her up the stairs to her room. There she pawed through the dresses in the front of her closet, shoving enough of them to one side so that she could reach to the back. "I hate throwing things away, and I keep hoping I'll lose enough weight... oh, here it is." She extracted a beautiful dress of crepe de chine, rose-colored and with an artificial rose at its high-collared neck. Its skirts were full and soft and gentle, its sleeves diaphanous, dolman, as I later learned the term. "This should fit you," she said, holding it up in front of me. "It's perhaps a bit old for you, but still..."

Without any further ado, she handed it to me. I grasped it by the edge of my fingers, as though not daring to touch it, and watched as she rooted about in her dresser drawers. She came up with a pale pink slip with an ivory lace bodice and hem. "I think I have matching panties for this somewhere," she said a bit fretfully. Finally, she located them. "Now, dear," she said, taking the dress from me and handing me the panties, "why don't you just go into the bathroom and get undressed and put on the panties, and then come out here and I'll help you on with your slip and your dress."

My slip, my dress, I thought. I found myself in the bathroom doing her bidding. My organ, predictably, arose and I had to soothe it back to position with a cold washcloth. Having, for the moment anyway, avoided that embarrassment, I donned the panties. I understand that some men who are cross-dressers have a panty fetish, but that has never been true with me. They are a necessary part of my feminine clothing, but it has always been slips and dresses, blouses and skirts, to which I respond.

When I returned, she made no comment but motioning me to raise my arms as I had on that long-gone night five years ago - would someone die tomorrow because I put on a dress tonight? - she helped me into the slip. "Oh, oh," I said, not meaning to say it aloud, but the feel of it was so... so pleasing that I couldn't help myself. She smiled at that, and patted my wrist comfortingly, before helping me into the dress.

Since I assume that any readers of this story will themselves be cross-dressers, I leave to them to imagine the medley of shame, guilt, and joy with which I contemplated myself in my dress... trying to remember what they themselves would have thought had such an occasion arose when they were 15-year old boys.

Suffice to say that my aunt praised my new appearance, without overstating or gushing over me, and that she added to my similitude of girlishness by adorning my lips with pink, just the tiniest touch of blush to my beardless cheeks, and that she

fussed over my curly hair until it approached some semblance of a girlish bob. As these ministrations proceeded, my guilt receded - after all, I was now in a dress, had done so voluntarily at her suggestion, so in that sense (at that moment) there was no guilt left to feel - and my joy mounted as I perceived my transformation into girlhood, no doubt not so successful a one as I hoped or she assured me had taken place.

Later that evening, as I sat in the living room (my skirts properly draped as she showed me), gently but probingly she went over my childhood with me, and before bedtime had arrived I had confessed to her (and for the first time illuminated myself) the feminine yearning that had played so much of an increasing role in my young life. When I went to bed that night, I felt completely relaxed, it seemed to me for the first time in my life. I had shared my knowledge of myself, understood myself better because of it, and had done so to this supportive, trusted and loving woman who I believed when she told me she wanted me to be happy.

The following morning, my last full day of my visit with her, having slept well and awakened completely refreshed, I joined my aunt at breakfast. I was back in my "boy's" clothing. After we had finished our repast, she said, "Rather than going out today, Alan, I was wondering if you would mind helping me in a little task I have in mind."

I asked her what it was. "I was planning to do some straightening out of my bedroom," she said. "Going through my drawers and closets, selecting what might need mending, what might be thrown out, what needs ironing or cleaning. That kind of thing. I thought you might like to help me."

With a little jolt of thrill, I divined her intent. "You mean I would---?"

"Yes, dear," she said, and then smiled in a joking way. "After all, if you are going to be helping a lady with her clothes, you should be suitably dressed."

An hour later, I was in a pretty blue pinafore dress - the sleeveless kind with huge ruffled epaulettes and a smart ribbon belt that tied in a big bow behind me. Underneath, I wore a lacy camisole, tap panties, and a white ruffled petticoat. She again did my hair, and tied a kerchief around it in the back much like the one she was wearing. A touch of lipstick finished me off. We then spent most of the day leisurely going through her things, which allowed her to give me basic instructions on the names and functions of various pieces of feminine apparel, fabrics, and even a dress-by-dress description of styles. While I didn't retain much of what she taught me, I found the experience completely enjoyable and in an almost subconscious way; erotic. I felt I was entering a kingdom - or queendom - beyond whose portals few males had ever been allowed to enter.

Later that afternoon, she gathered up the items, mostly lingerie, that needed mending, along with a couple summer skirts and dresses that required ironing. While she did the sewing, she showed how to press these garments properly, so that I had the double pleasure of my own skirts swishing around me even as I ironed others.

That evening we had a dress-up session, in which she had me try on perhaps a dozen of her dresses and blouse-skirt combinations, some of which fit me, others didn't, with the changes occasionally necessitating changes of lingerie as well. It was then that I discovered for the first time how - unlike trousers - every dress feels just a bit different. Each has its own sway, its own softness, its own restrictions of freedoms. That night, I slept for the first time in a nightgown. It was a white nylon, full-length one with lots of lace at the bodice and decorating its tiny straps.

That day was the happiest - the first truly happy - day I had spent in my life. For some reason, even now, when I think of it, what I recall first is not the evening dress-up session or the instructions in the bedroom but rather the declining afternoon hours we spent in the living room as she sewed and I ironed, the sun gently illuminating the room, its beams streaming across the ironing table and slanting across my skirts, so that as I looked down the swaying hems seemed spotlighted by the warmth and brilliance of the moment. It was (unlike the morning in the bedroom and the evening dressing up) also a time of silence. I knew that occasionally, Aunt Ruth gave me suggestions about my ironing, or complimented me when I did a good job, but for the most part we worked together much as two women - a mother and daughter? - might in what was for both of us quintessentially feminine work. The quiet was like the sunshine, calming and enveloping, and filled with love.

Some years later, when I tried to describe my feelings about that afternoon to Aunt Ruth, she told me, "It is amazing and wonderful that you should say that, dear. I had much the same sense of serenity that afternoon, and I was filled with such love for you, I almost felt selfish about it. It was almost like a wish-fulfillment. I had, for those brief hours, gained a daughter in a perfect moment which - with a real daughter - probably never would have taken place. The morning and evening were fun, too, but that was a little different. As I was explaining feminine clothing to you, I was quite aware that you were a boy, and the same when we dressed you up that evening. And while that was nice in its way, it wasn't quite the same. I don't mean that, during the afternoon, I somehow didn't remember who you were, and that you were a boy, but it was the closeness that was the difference. There we were, almost suspended in time and place, not real yet not unreal, and I felt we had, without trying, approached each other and met in a pure way that happens very

rarely in life.”

As it turned out, it was a memory that had to sustain me for some time to come. I have often wondered since - did then - whether that was a good or bad thing. Had my aunt been less accepting of me in my strange desires, had she not been sensitive to them, I might well never have embarked as thoroughly as I subsequently did on the road to femininity. Had the experience been spoiled - by word by her, by word or actions by me - had there been the least hint that there was something ridiculous or morally wrong about what I (no, we) were doing, is it then possible that I would have found the experience distasteful, or shameful, as I had feared it would be when it was first broached to me by her?

So, what I am asking is, had the situation not occurred as it did, what would have been my long term reaction? Having felt ridiculous in skirts, or sensing that she was but hiding her contempt or patronization of me (this sissy boy! -effeminate boy!), had I felt that, would it not have been better? Would I not then have rejected the transvestite yearnings? In other words, did that happiness twist me so that for the future, I could not be happy any other way? Would it not have been better for it not to have occurred at all or better if it had been bad?

I don't know the answers to those questions with any certainty, and in trying to answer them I suspect either rationalizations or obfuscations get in the way of truth. But I think I can answer part of it. I think there is no doubt that if my aunt hadn't dressed me that evening and again the following day, my desires to wear female clothing would have been unabated and would have eventually taken form, quite possibly in the loneliness of a room with the shades drawn. That answer I am confident of. But what if, once launched, for any of the reasons I have given, the experience had been a bad or disastrous one? I don't mean in the sense that I, upon seeing myself in skirts, would say, 'Well, you certainly can't get away with that; you look exactly like a boy, so you better give up this stupid desire.' That's not the way human psychology works, I think. I have, for instance, since met transvestites who are burly truck drivers in their builds, with five o'clock shadows an hour after they have shaved, and that doesn't stop them from dressing - or dreaming of it - either. What I really have in mind would have been the non-acceptance by her that I mentioned, and it could have been quite subtle: 'Well, this may be fun, Alan, but you have to keep in mind that you're a young man and you could hardly expect to continue doing things like this. It wouldn't be manly.' I am not sure, but I think had I been made to feel ridiculous, either by her or myself, it would not have had any effect on quelling my love for feminine clothing but might have added a morbid cast to it. I might have wanted to be ridiculed. My fantasies might have begun to turn to masochistic scenes in which a dominant

woman would put me in skirts and then make fun of me, parade me in public. I know that masochism is a frequent accompaniment of transvestism; no matter how much people like us might wish to deny it, in fact, I think it is present in all of us, to some extent. Recall my feelings of shame. They were not unnatural. It is, in fact, if we are being frank, not natural - certainly not the norm - for men to dress in women's clothing, make up their faces, do their hairs in coiffures. Many people, most people, in fact, would ridicule any male who did that, so by persisting in doing it, we are acting in an essentially masochistic way. We are indulging in an activity that we know (no matter how much we reason otherwise) is shameful in any normally accepted masculine sense. That sense of wrongdoing never completely leaves us, yet to the extent we welcome it (and we do so by doing it) we are acting masochistically. That kind of masochism, of course, is a far cry from the dominant lady with her boots but she (of our fantasies) may be but a displacement of the awareness of the underlying masochism we don't want to recognize.

So do I think then, no matter what happened or didn't happen at me aunt's house that week, that I was destined for a life spent partly in dresses? I think that is what I do think. The impulse was there, somehow bred in me by all I had been, and by itself is neither heterosexual nor homosexual nor (as some people think) narcissistic. (If it were narcissistic, why would we want to look and be so different from the way we are?) So whether by my experiences (which is what I believe) or by inheritance (which I doubt), I became what I am, and, that being the case, I think it is good it came out the way it did, supportive and lovingly through my aunt.

As I have said then, that memory for good or for ill, had to sustain me for a long time to come. When I left the following day, my aunt assured me she would be in touch and see if we couldn't arrange other get-togethers, and we both knew what she meant without it having to be said. I know she meant it, to, but her life was a busy one, and she was a very attractive woman, both in beauty and wealth, and she soon was involved, as she later told me, in a new love affair. Within three months of my visit to her, she was married again to the man she had been seeing - Aunt Ruth tended to marry lovers - and this one lasted four years. Although she occasionally wrote me and when I was a freshman and the University of Pennsylvania I visited her and her husband once, that portal to femininity was apparently closed to me.

As for myself, despite the happiness of that weekend, as the years went on, I continued to fight against my transvestism. With increasing frequency, I ended my fantasizing, deliberately, by masturbating, because I had discovered - when that happened accidentally - that my desires would be dissipated by the dissipation itself. But even when I didn't use that crutch, as it

were, there were often weeks, sometimes months, that went by when I didn't even think of dressing. Somewhat to my surprise, I had become rather popular in my last two years at the private school, was even elected class vice-president and to the student council. I think that basically what had happened was that my contemporaries by then were beginning to take their lives and consideration of their futures more seriously, and so a serious lad like myself, who was a good student, was no longer considered an anomaly or someone to shun because he was scholastically apt. But I think I also matured; I was more accepting of other boys, or, more precisely perhaps, sufficiently mature that I no longer tried to make friends, as used to be the case, now that I was no longer trying, people made friends with me.

I also began to date. Unlike some of my peers (or at least in contrary to their bragging), I never "went all the way", but I enjoyed occasionally going to dances, movies, or sports with one or another of several girls from an academy that was sister to our own.

These ventures produced an ambiguous response in me. While I was on a date with a girl, I only thought about her and me as, I think, any average boy might. I was conscious I was with a girl, the whole emotional and uncertain panoply of responses that any teenage boy is likely to feel under such circumstances - the groping, the gaffes, the sudden odd moments of happiness and empathy, the tremulous approach to the goodnight kiss and "should I try more?" --- the fear of rejection - whatever have you. I think I was perfectly 'normal' in these efforts and, I suppose, as they say, the relationships helped me "grow" and become more "mature", whatever any of these three quote-marked words might mean. Although I had no long-term or intimate (in the emotional and intellectual sense) relationships with any of the girls I dated, I certainly thought about each one in turns a great deal when I wasn't with her. Much of that was ego-centered: the constant wonder about the impression I was making, not much thought about her as a person. But what I am really getting at, in context with this story, is that I don't recall any instance during my teenage dating period when, while I was with the girl, I thought about and desired to wear girls' clothing. (The episode with Gwen which I mentioned earlier occurred much later when I was in college and at a time when, as the reader will learn, I was again occasionally dressing.)

I was still a little shy of my eighteenth birthday when I entered the University of Pennsylvania, living in a dormitory on campus. It was shortly after that I had my visit with Aunt Ruth and her husband. He was a handsome man in a muscular macho way, a successful advertising agency executive. I detested him. It was probably several months after they broke up, a little more than a year later, that I received an invitation from

Aunt Ruth to have dinner. It was only then I learned her marriage was ended. Although there was no dressing that night, just as I was leaving, she said to me, "I thought you might like to come visit me Saturday afternoon a week from now, Alan. I thought we might just spend a relaxed day together. Getting to know one another again." She smiled at me and I understood her meaning. I blushed.

"I think, um, I, ah, would like that, Aunt Ruth."

She kissed me on the cheek. "Good, darling. I think it'll be a lot of fun. I'll see what I can find that might fit you."

Over the next fourteen days, I had a great deal of trouble keeping my mind, my imagination, off that coming visit. Four years had gone by since I was last in a dress and by the time that Saturday arrived, I was almost physically exhausted from the desires that had been raging through me since her last magical words.

As it turned out, she didn't have a dress that fit me. Four years earlier, I had been her size, but since then I had grown several inches and added about twenty pounds. However, she was able to deck me out in a camisole and petticoat, both of white nylon, the petticoat delightfully narrow-skirted, and a white nylon blouse (just a bit tight around the shoulders and a little short in length), and an elastic-waist, very full-skirted soft brown skirt. Wisely, she made no attempt to repeat the magical Saturday of five years before. Rather, we spent most of our time simply talking, she quite frankly (and a bit embarrassing to me) about her ex-husband, but mostly through her usual shrewd but gentle questioning, learning from me my innermost feelings about my life, not only as it related to dressing fantasies, but all about my ambitions, my certainties, my uncertainties. We spent the evening quietly watching TV, and she allowed me to stay overnight, loaning me one of her gowns and a wonderfully frilly negligee, the first time I had worn one. But the following morning, shortly after breakfast, I had to leave.

That was the beginning. Over the next eighteen months, I visited her perhaps a dozen times, usually just for a Saturday or Sunday but once or twice for an entire weekend. It was now accepted, without comment by either of us, that I would get into my feminine clothing immediately upon arrival. As time went on, she bought me a few things in my own size, a couple of blouses and skirts - a peasant skirt, and a lovely knife-pleated white linen that I thought looked particularly nice on me - and a paisley print, long-sleeved dress which, because she bought it at a tall shop, fit me particularly well and felt just great on me... and made me feel quite a mature young lady, too.

Now that I had this regular if sporadic outlet for my dressing, for a while I was able to compartmentalize it. That is, as I went about my classes, my social activities - including dating - I didn't think about dressing, or, if I did, I would sternly order

such thoughts from my mind: You can think about that when you visit Aunt Ruth, was my formula to myself.

At the same time, while at Aunt Ruth's, I became increasingly desirous now of not only wearing women's clothing, but also learning about makeup, a subject which increasingly interested me. We spent many hours at her dressing table, as she showed me the techniques, and I then applied them to myself until I became (or so she and her mirror told me) fairly adept. In my paisley dress, for instance, with golden earrings, a gold bracelet, my face carefully and delicately made up, on my head her auburn, curly-haired wig (I loved the way the curls tickled the sides of my face, my neck, the bangs touched my forehead), I could almost see myself as a real woman. There was, however, no effort on her part nor any desire on mine to learn to walk as a woman did, modulate my voice to a feminine register, and certainly no desire (fear indeed!) to venture forth in public, even though she frequently assured me that "no one would doubt you" with a few lessons in walking. By now, too, I was regularly wearing nylons, though I sometimes liked better the feel of my skirts against my bare legs, and she had set aside for me a pair of open-toed high heels which, perhaps a half-size small for me, fit me well enough and in which, almost from the beginning, I had little or no trouble navigating.

During these visits, we didn't just chat. Saturday was her cleaning day - by now, she had taken a job with an interior decorating firm where a friend of hers was the owner - and I was delighted to pitch in and help, usually in my peasant skirt and wearing a frilly white starched apron which I loved.

In this way, I learned the rudiments of house work and of cooking and became more adept at ironing, and even took a couple of lessons in sewing. As for our conversations, we might talk about almost anything, not necessarily my interest in dressing, though she encouraged that thought she rarely raised the subject herself.

Life might have continued this way all through my university days and our sessions come to an end when I graduated and - as I planned - went on to law school. I could have gone to the university's law school, and I had not decided against that by any means since it was a good school, but there were other options open to me and no matter how much I loved my occasional visits with Aunt Ruth, I had the sense that I should call them to an end and get on with the business of my professional career. As I saw it, I eventually would marry, have children, somehow the dressing would either have to stop or be accommodated in an entirely different way. To accomplish that, to stay in Philadelphia with the siren call of Aunt Ruth always easily accessible to me would be too much of a temptation. It is difficult now to understand this reasoning, it was as if, to me, my occasional visits with Aunt Ruth were like little vacations and

also part of my growing up. When I was grown, i.e., graduated, I would put away childish things. I don't think I really thought I could do that (certainly not when I was with Aunt Ruth) but I sensed it was what I would have to do. It as almost as though I were saying to myself: I enjoy this too much; and when you're grown, you shouldn't enjoy things. But that may be a simplistic analysis. In any event, while I recognized I was a transvestite (I'd only recently learned that term and preferred "eonist", which I had picked up from my avid reading of Havelock Ellis's book on the subject), I think I thought I was "handling the problem," which I recognized to be a problem. Several times, I even discussed my thinking with Aunt Ruth and she seemed, thoughtfully, in agreement with me.

That I didn't see her more often, I might add, I'm afraid had nothing to do with my own self-restraint. She still led an active social life - during those eighteen months she had at least two boyfriends on a regular basis, though she had, she said, now sworn off marriage - and it was actually a fairly rare weekend that she didn't have an engagement of one kind or another. She was fond of me - I know, with my special desires, I intrigued her - but I was hardly the main interest in her life, nor should I have been.

Despite my resolves, however, I found when I was away from her and my opportunities to dress, the thought of dressing was with me much more frequently than before. Whereas, even a year or two before, and even during the early months of my occasional visits with her, I could go weeks and sometimes months without thinking about my favorite subject (the favorite subject I really still didn't want to have), the more opportunities I had to dress - far from satiating me - made me want to dress more. I think I should add here, too, to give a complete picture that while my fantasies had often led to masturbation and the fantasies themselves would cause the erections that led to the masturbation, after the first few times at Aunt Ruth's I did not have that problem even at the beginning. Rather, in a suffused way (that's the only way I can describe it) I was sexually aware, had a sexual feeling in the groin area, when dressed at Aunt Ruth's, yet I had no desire to masturbate. Certainly not while I was there - that never occurred to me - but even afterward when I was back in my dorm room. My sense was I didn't want to "spoil" things by doing that, and gradually I also found, during the period of my occasional visits to Aunt Ruth, that while my fantasies increased in their frequency they were now only rarely accompanied by self-gratification.

What would eventually have happened, I have no idea. But fate took a hand, a very powerful hand: I almost died. I had somewhat accelerated my college studies, by taking a heavy load and also attending summer school - this had nothing to do with Aunt Ruth; in fact, one whole summer she was out of the country

- but it may have had something to do with wanting to be at home in the dull and sanctimonious atmosphere of my grandmother's house. Thus, rather than in May, it was my plan to graduate in January, so that in June of the year before I was at school. It was there I was hit by a series of stomach aches which I stupidly ignored. Then one morning I awoke in agony. My appendix had burst. Luckily, almost by accident, a friend came to my room, saw my condition, and summoned help. The appendix was removed but peritonitis set in. For several days, I am told, no one was quite sure if I was going to make it or not - my own memories are fugitive and nightmarish of that period - and then, just as I was taking a turn for the better, I had an adverse reaction to medication, an very nearly died a second time. In all, I was in the hospital from the end of June until the end of August.

When, weak as a child and still suffering recurring fevers and pains, I was released, my aunt prevailed upon my grandmother to have me stay with her while I was recuperating. That made sense. If I needed renewed medical care - and I certainly seemed to have a full-blown but undefined set of allergies that made that not unlikely - I could get immediate and expert attention of the kind not available to me in my grandmother's town. I think she, now of advanced years and still suffering from arthritis, was relieved that my aunt made the offer and after fretting about it for a while, she agreed. I was fretting, too. I was supposed to start the fall semester, but as my aunt pointed out it would probably be another month or more before I would be able to resume any classes and rather than risk a relapse, it made sense for me to skip the semester, get my strength back. After all, at the most that meant I would be graduating on time in May.

I don't think, initially, because I really was very sick, that I thought about my aunt's caring for me in dressing terms. When you are that ill, the thought of clothes is the furthest thing from your mind, and besides, for the first two weeks, my aunt had a practical nurse on hand to look after me. It was, thus, not until near the latter part of September that I was well enough to be left alone during the day and even then, I spent most of my time in bed, alternately sleeping and reading, grateful to my aunt but not especially thinking about our special relationship.

TO BE ADDED TO OUR CONFIDENTIAL MAILING LIST,

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Even so, it wasn't until, as I recall, the last weekend in September when that day finally came that almost makes it worthwhile being sick: The day you feel better. The day you know you are going to get well, and you can almost feel health, like a ray of sun, re-entering and warming your body.

I was still weak as a kitten, of course; because all my new-born allergies I had enormous difficulty accepting solid food, and had lost thirty pounds, at 5' 10" down to 130 pounds. Still, I now know finally I was going to get well, that I wanted to - as long as the fever had lasted, so had lassitude - and I told Aunt Ruth I wanted very much to take a long, luxuriant bath, rather than the spongings the practical nurse had provided me, and later the enfeebled washing I had subjected myself to. Aunt Ruth offered to run my water for me, and when I got into the bathroom, to my delight I saw she had added bath salts. Into the scented bubbles I gratefully sank, sighing with relaxation, a voluptuous feeling that had nothing really to do - that still wasn't on my mind - that bubble baths are a woman's, not a man's, gift to one's self.

As I emerged from my cleansing, a towel wrapped around me, I cried, "Oh, Aunt Ruth!" For before me I saw that she had substituted for my plain cotton sheets, shimmering white satin ones that I had seen occasionally adorning her bed. Neatly folded on the bed was a dropped-waist nylon/satin tricot gown, in white with a flower print in ivory, full-length, with a square lace-edged top and spaghetti bow-tied straps. While Aunt Ruth, her back to me, busied herself at the other end of the room I donned this gorgeous gown, sighing with contentment. Feeling suddenly weak from my exertion, I sank to the edge of the bed, my one hand caressing my gown, the other my silk sheets. A smiling Aunt Ruth came over to me, bearing a bed jacket.

"I bought this for you as a getting-well gift," she said, and helped me into it.

It was lovely, of white nylon, row upon row of delicate lace, and perky satin ribbons which she tied, one at my throat, and two down my bosom, into perky little bows. She then finished drying my hair, which I had shampooed, with a blow dryer - it felt warm and comforting - and began to brush it vigorously. During my long illness my hair, of course, had grown considerably, and while she didn't set it for me, the blow drying fluffed it out so that it fell naturally about my cheeks and tickled the back of my neck. To keep it out of my eyes, she parted it in the middle and caught the loose strands on either side in tiny silver barrettes. Helping me back into the bed, sweeping the skirts of my gown under with one gentle hand, she pulled the satin sheet an covering soft pink blanket upon me, raising my pillows so that I might sit up to read. She kissed me on the forehead. "Now, how do you feel, darling?"

"Oh, I feel lovely," I answered spontaneously. "Thank you, Aunt Ruth."

She had work to do and, after giving me my book, left me; I read it for a while but then drifted off into one of my most pleasant daydreams of dressing. When evening came, rather than serving me my dinner in bed, she suggested I try to join her downstairs, which I was glad to attempt. For my frilly bedjacket, she substituted a satin, shawl-collared quilted robe, white with a delicate floral design in gold and pink. For my feet, I was offered white satin mules. Clutching her arm, and holding up my skirts, I followed her down the stairs, the first time I had been down there since they brought me from the hospital. The meal she served me was light but nourishing and I was, for the first time since I became sick, ravenously hungry. Even so, by nine, I had grown quite exhausted and she helped me up to my room where I soon fell asleep, not one of illness this time, but of recuperation.

Over the next several days, I continued to progress. My clothes had been delivered from my dormitory and I wore them about the house, rather regretfully - I would have preferred skirts, and looked forward to climbing into one of the four nighties I now had for bedwear. Still, by wearing the boy's clothing during the day, it added a touch of expectation knowing I would be back in a gown when bedtime came. My clothes, because of my loss of weight, felt loose on me and though my appetite had now fully returned, Aunt Ruth kept me on a low-calorie diet, the same as hers.

The following week, the doctor took me off all medication, and pronounced me fit to begin to resume my normal activities, "If you can afford it young man, I would strongly urge that you spend at least a month in some sunny climate, getting back your strength."

When I told Aunt Ruth this - "He must think I'm a millionaire" - she merely smiled but later that evening, as she was brushing my hair for (something she seemed to enjoy doing), she said, "I think, as the doctor said, a vacation is exactly what you need, Alan, and if he hadn't suggested it, I would have. For both of us."

"But... but, Aunt Ruth, I am so in your debt now, I can't possibly let you pay for a vacation for me and I certainly can't afford it on my own."

"Well, what I have in mind won't be any great expense, dear, and besides you do have your check." That was true; I got a small monthly check from my father's estate, part of my inheritance, which I had begun receiving when I was eighteen but which had hitherto gone to pay my school expenses. My medical expenses that weren't covered by insurance had been paid for by my grandmother out of a separate insurance fund from my mother. "I have been talking to Berenice and she has offered us

the use of her villa in Nassau for two months. All we need pay is our expenses in traveling and while there, and I think between us we can manage that quite nicely."

Berenice, for whom she occasionally worked, was Aunt Ruth's best friend and a very wealthy woman. Strikingly sophisticated in manner and clothing, she was a tall regal looking woman, mostly due to her splendid carriage, and the one time I had met her, I had been uncomfortably in awe of her, feeling like a gawky boob in her presence. "I have already arranged with the Andersons (neighbors) to keep an eye on the house while we are gone, so that is no problem either. The only question I have, dear, from which I need your decision, is how we shall go there."

"You mean... why not by plane?"

She smiled. "I didn't mean transportation. My "how", rather, meant whether during those two months we should be aunt and nephew or aunt and niece."

Lifting my eyes from the contemplation of the shimmering folds my gown made each time I shifted my weight, I looked at Aunt Ruth, startled. "You mean... live as a girl?"

She nodded. "I think that would make it a real vacation for you, dear. You have never had the chance to live in feminine clothing as a girl over any extended period of time. And who knows? You might not enjoy it once you did have that opportunity. But haven't you often wondered what it would be like?"

I nodded. "Often," I whispered, "it's been one of my day-dreams."

"So now we will have a chance to make it a reality."

But...but how will that be possible? What if someone finds out? I..they'll see I'm not a real girl."

"I wouldn't be too sure about that, Alan. Look at yourself in the mirror." I did so, and realized she had brushed my hair, this time, in a more overtly feminine style, waves that bounced about my face while my pale features, though boyish, might be thought ambiguous as to sex when, as now, I was in a nightgown or when I would be in dresses...and makeup. "In any event, Berenice's villa is quite secluded, and we will be able to live there privately while I give you the necessary lessons in posture, voice, and the like. I promise you, dear, I will not permit you to go out in public until and if I am confident you can pass without any embarrassment, and that you have the same confidence."

It was, of course, an opportunity that someone like myself could not possibly reject. Over the next week, Aunt Ruth was quite busy taking care of various details including some shopping, while I remained house bound, increasingly nervous over the adventure ahead of me. But eventually the great day came and we began our journey into my feminine future, one I greeted in my male clothing and with my hair slicked back.

As Aunt Ruth had said, Berenice's villa was secluded and like the woman herself redolent of money. Set deep in the hills, we were surrounded by greenery, had our own private swimming pool, tennis court, jacuzzi, and but a two hundred yard walk down the hillside to our own private beach. The villa itself had been built to rise naturally from the contours of the hills, gleaming white stone and sprawling. It had four bedrooms, a huge living room area, bar, pantry, kitchen, a flower garden in the back, a shady veranda, flagstone patio with fountain, and down the way, four guest cottages and in the rear behind the garden, servants' quarters. The main house was furnished in quiet good taste, the bedroom that was selected for me, catching the morning breeze through its lace-curtained windows as they wafted to the double-canopied bed. There was a dressing table, a large closet that took up an entire wall, and soft deep white wall-to-wall carpeting, the remaining walls papered in a flower pattern pink...very much a woman's room. Aunt Ruth's boudoir---for that is what we each had, a boudoir---was similar, a bit larger and with ivory appointments and a pink carpeting.

That evening, Aunt Ruth put up my hair for me, and I attended to the shaving of my body myself. We had discovered, in a previous experiment, that I was not sensitive to a facial hair remover, and that was also applied carefully on me by Aunt Ruth.

The following morning I was back in skirts for the first time since before my illness, a simple outfit of cammy, white ruffled cotton petticoat, a simple pink skirt and white cotton blouse with a keyhole opening, espadrilles. It felt so good to be back in a dress, in that way, that I now was glad I had not done so during our last weeks in Philadelphia.

I did not, of course, wear skirts all the time. The location and occasion hardly called for it. Aunt Ruth had a good supply of shorts which, because of my weight loss, fit me as did her blouse and halter tops. Similarly, I was able to get into a pink latex, two-piece swim suit of hers, and the flowered finger-length robe that went with it. Occasionally, too, I would wear slacks, but female ones, a white duck were my favorite over which I usually wore a navy blue pull-over top. In a way, this was pleasing to me. I didn't always feel like wearing skirts, so that the pants were a mannish substitute yet, at the same time, female, an ambiguous sensation in which I found myself reveling.

Our days soon settled into the routine that she had told me they would, combining relaxation with my lessons, although, naturally, even in my relaxation I was supposed to apply my lessons. For example, on a typical day those first weeks, after breakfast, we were likely to change out of her nightgowns and robes into our shorts and tops and take a stroll about the estate, perhaps tending to a bit of gardening. Afterward, we would

change to our bathing costumes, and go down to the beach, to take in the sun, to paddle about in the waves, or occasionally take a swim. After lunch, Aunt Ruth made regular trips to town for our supplies. When she returned we often would have a game of tennis. We had two tennis outfits which we exchanged. One was a pair of white shorts with red buttons down one side and a stripe down the other with a matching terry-cloth top. The other was a white linen v-neck top with a matching short knife-pleated skirt. It will come as no surprise to a devoted reader that, usually, I preferred the latter. After our tennis, we would be likely to relax on the veranda a bit, still in our tennis outfits, then change back to our bathing outfits either for a swim in the pool or a second visit to the beach. By five, we would be back at the villa, where we would go to our rooms to change for dinner. For me, though not necessarily for Aunt Ruth, this meant getting into one of my three skirts, my favorite was my peasant dirndl—a pretty feminine top, or else into a dress. I had two of them, a soft swishy pink with a deep round neckline set off with frills, or a simple white linen frock with a gloriously straight skirt; it was sleeveless. Each had its own delights, but I probably liked the linen dress best, feeling quite smart in it, with a narrow gold belt cinching my waist, and white kid pumps.

After our light repast, (Aunt Ruth was determined to keep my weight down so that I could continue to wear her things), we would take off our aprons, and begin the evening's lesson. From what she had told me in advance, I had some idea of what this would entail, and that did take place: lessons in posture, holding my hand properly, other gestures. For example, some evenings my lesson consisted of playing catch with a rubber ball. This was so I would learn to throw like a girl and at the same time my non-throwing arm and my limbs would be forced into a complementary feminine stance. I had considerable difficulty learning girl throwing—tennis helped but it was a little different in the muscles used, and I didn't see the point to it...I could probably go through my whole life in skirts and not have to throw a ball, but Aunt Ruth insisted, and I now know she was right. The ball throwing would help train my whole body in feminine posture. Other than for the ball-throwing, I picked up these lessons quite easily. Also, because of past practice, I quickly progressed in my makeup lessons. At the beginning, during the day, I didn't wear any makeup save lipstick, but as my cosmetics lessons progressed, I put them to work by adding shadow, occasionally eye-liner and a very light touch of mascara for my day-time activities. I noticed, and Aunt Ruth confirmed that my appearance grew increasingly feminine once I had learned how to apply daytime makeup. (Evening makeup I was more used to, but within a few weeks I had also improved enormously in its application with a commensurate improvement in appearance.) As the weeks went on, I also learned how

to put up my hair so that the result would be a least an approximation of the look I had selected from one of the many women's magazines and clothing catalogs that Aunt Ruth had brought with her. I also was taught how to care for my nails and polish them, so that by the beginning of the second week through to the end of our vacation, I was never without pink or red gloss on both my finger and toe nails. I loved the appearance of it, sometimes my breath almost taken away as (without thinking) I'd look down at myself and see my varnished nails. For some reason, I was most conscious of wearing makeup and nail polish when I was in shorts or slacks. I remember thinking: A boy might wear white duck slacks like these, even ones with flaring legs, and since these have a fly they're boyish that way, too, but what boy would be able to lay his hands against his slacks and see what a pretty red color his nails are!

There had been a good reason for the introduction of the women's magazines and clothing catalogs, too. Or, actually, two good reasons. First, the garments they showed and in combination with those we had with us, allowed Aunt Ruth to give me refresher and advanced lessons in fabrics, in the descriptions of styles (raglan sleeves, dolmen sleeves, for example). Aunt Ruth would sit next to me on the couch and I would read aloud the descriptions of the dresses or lingerie, and then she would question me on them, having me point out the appropriate illustration for the description, sometimes (where available) following it through with an inspection of one of her or my outfits.

The second reason had to do with my voice. We started those lessons within a few days of our arrival, and the reading, by forcing me to concentrate on what I was reading as well as the way I was trying to sound, proved an immense aide in the development of my voice. We also tape recorded me so that I could not only listen to myself but, as time went on, gain confidence that I did indeed sound like a girl. The reading also got me used to feminine terminology and, after I had become more confident in the voice itself, Aunt Ruth took me the next step by teaching me not just tone but inflection...for instance, the way a woman is more likely to end a statement in a question than will a man, i.e., "Don't you think we should, etc." rather than "I think we should. Words like "dear", "darling", "sweet", "adorable", "pretty", "lovely", began to enter my vocabulary, at first awkwardly and self-consciously, but eventually so naturally that I wondered with some uneasiness if I'd be able to break myself of the habit when, after the vacation, I resumed my male life.

At the beginning, the voice lessons were limited to evenings, but after about a week, Aunt Ruth suggested I use my new voice and my developing inflections and vocabulary all day long. I realized this idea made sense, and I agreed, though I had a

vague but disturbing loss of sense of male identity once I found myself not only dressing like a girl, walking like one, but also talking like one.

But there was another type of lesson as well, one that I didn't at first realize was a lesson, and one which I often found embarrassing: At first it began after our formal lesson for the evening was done and we had repaired to the veranda to take in the night air, but as time went by, such conversations were likely to occur at almost any time. Basically, what I thought I was first listening to was Aunt Ruth's autobiography. While I am certain she censured certain parts of it, she began to tell me, frequently in rich detail, what it was like to grow up as a girl. She talked to me about as much of her early childhood she could remember, how, unlike my mother, she had been considered something of a tomboy who objected to "getting dressed up" and yet how vividly she remembered her first party dress and how, at her sixth birthday party, she in her percale frock and sausage hair ribbon for the first time felt altogether different from the little boys at the party, boys she used to play with in her shorts just as they were in theirs. She had never been much interested in dolls and she remembered how upset her father was when she said she wanted an electric train for Christmas one year. I found these reminiscences delightful, could imagine myself in her place, and also imagine myself as a little boy whose mother, on his birthday, dressed him in a frilly, multi-petticoated party frock. But it was her stories of her adolescence that disturbed me. Now boys entered the picture no longer as playmates but that mysterious "opposite" sex. She told me how she learned to think of boys, from her parents, from her peers, from movies and books. She told me, as best she could remember, how she first tried and then developed the little arts of coquetry, learned how to flatter boys, flirt with them, learned how they were supposed to be, beyond any concerns of developing her own mind and own personality for her own sake, the most important thing in any girl's life. She told me about her first dates in a group, and then her first date alone with a boy, and how she felt when she got her first kiss. She described her erotic desires toward boys, and at the same time her areas of misinformation about sex, pregnancy, her deep ambivalences—"when I was being honest with myself, I recognized I like being with other girls much better."

I soon realized, and indeed as she eventually explained, her purpose was to give me a detailed knowledge of girlhood, the girlhood I had never had, so that I would have a kind of data bank of information that wasn't mine or exactly hers but a sense of girlhood. Even when I realized that was her purpose, I still found these conversations both bizarre and uncomfortable. By that I mean, I was suffused with the realization that I was being given knowledge that no boy ordinarily learns, much less from his aunt, but that while I was receiving it, I was a boy in dresses

in makeup, with a feminine coiffure, living a girl's life.

Nevertheless, I recognized that what I was learning would be valuable to me should I ever find an opportunity to live as a woman for any period of time. Part of what I received was impressionistic, my understanding of her descriptions of her feelings, but also some of it was quite practical should I ever need it. She told me what she had learned about how to fend off boys, to prevent them "from going too far," how to judge how much a boy had to spend on you so that you, without seeming to know, never tried to force him into what he couldn't afford "unless, of course, you didn't like him." I, who had dated many girls, found this aspect of her confessions fascinating. It was though, like the ancient Greek Tierisas, I was in both sexes simultaneously, as I listened to her knowing how I, as a boy, reacted and at the same time adopting, as my own, her point of view. I had never directly thought about, for example, how girls feel about boys spending money on them. I certainly didn't want to go out on a date with a boy, yet across my mind came images of myself, frocked prettily, daintily clasping my handbag, while across the table from me some faceless young man took out his wallet to pay from my meal as well as his. I didn't know why, but that image was erotic in a, how can I put it?-non-erotic way. By that I mean, the content of the scene (I as a young lady having my way paid by my escort) was erotic but not the thought of the escort himself.

During these first four weeks, when I moved from a boy in dresses to a young man who was learning to be feminine (and I mean feminine, not effeminate), my spirits, as might be expected underwent many changes. I remember one evening when suddenly feeling disgusted myself and afraid of what I was doing to myself, I told my aunt that I wanted to give up on the experiment, that I would like to return to my male apparel (of which I had only the suit I had come in). My aunt did not object but did suggest I give it another 24 hours, and I agreed. I didn't in the least feel like doing it---on the contrary---I forced myself to wear my white linen for dinner. No sooner was the dress on me and I could feel comfortable with the luxurious cloth against my skin, I felt almost excruciatingly relieved, as if it hadn't been a matter of hours, but years and years since I'd last worn it. Oh, how good it felt on me!

Despite odd moods like that, for most of the time, I found myself entranced by what was happening to me. I had no exact goal in mind, other than to see if I could succeed at it as a girl for a while. I certainly had then, nor ever since, any desire to be a woman even though I knew sex-change surgery was possible. I remember once in bed thinking: Suppose someone came to you and told you that you had to decide which it was going to be for the remainder of your life, live entirely as a man, never to wear a dress again, or else you will have to have the operation

and live the rest of life as a woman; which will it be? I was honest enough with myself to know I'd have the operation, and that frightened me, but at the same time I knew the situation would never come about. My real choices were more ambiguous than that.

I think it was sometime in the third week when the subject of my name came up. We were lying on the beach, me in my two piece bathing suit, and a straw hat to protect me from the sun. "I was wondering about your name, dear," Aunt Ruth said breaking a long and comfortable silence between us.

"Why?" I asked, uncomprehending.

"The time is coming soon, Alan, with the wonderful progress you have been making, that we will start going out, and I can hardly be calling you 'Alan'."

This was only the second or third time she had again mentioned going in public and I was absolutely sure I was nowhere near ready for that; in fact, in my heart of hearts, I was pretty sure I never wanted to be ready; this here, right now, was all I wanted. I said something to this effect to her, and she shrugged her shoulders, responding: "Well, you know I would never force you to do something you don't want, don't you? Still, suppose the time comes? I could, of course, call you "dear" or whatever, but it is possible, one never knows how things happen, that I might have to introduce you to someone and for that you do have to have a name that goes along with your appearance. Don't you see?" I nodded. "Haven't you ever thought about a girl's name for yourself?"

"No," I said truthfully, but now that I was I had to admit it gave me a kind of thrill.

"Well, if we have to, let's see...is there a feminine of Alan?"

"Alana."

I pondered that a moment, thinking how just the addition of one letter changed my name from a boy's to a girl's. "I...don't know," I said.

"I agree," she said, apparently taking my answer for disapproval. "It's nice, but...let me see, this is fun, what else could we do with Alan. Al-Alice?" Was I about to become an "Alice?" Al...an. Anne. I've always loved Anne as a name...Queen Anne's lace, I always think of that. Do you like Anne?"

"I guess so."

"Anne. Yes, I think Anne's a lovely name for you, but...I just wish we could come up with something even more...more feminine. After all, if you're going to be living as a girl for a little while, why shouldn't you have an especially sweet name? I wonder...your middle initial M, that stands for, goodness I forget...what does it stand for, dear?"

"Mark," I told her; I never used it.

"Mark. What could we do with that? Mark...Mara...Martha...ugh! No, wait a minute. Mark...Marie.

Darling, I have it!" she cried joyously.

And that's how, on a beach on the Bahamas, I became Annemarie.

From that time on, though she slipped once or twice at the beginning, for the remainder of our vacation, I was Annemarie. I found, once I had gotten used to the concept, being called by a girl's name added to the pleasurable of my new life. It was nice to hear myself called Annemarie and know it was I who was Annemarie. I am no longer young Mr. Alan Talbott, I thought to myself, but Miss Annemarie Talbott. I loved thinking of myself as a Miss. No boy can be a Miss. Except I was a boy and I was a Miss. A Miss Annemarie. It was a heady, erotic feeling.

As she had predicted, by the time we had been living at the Villa for three weeks, I was becoming anxious to try my wings. While I was still petrified at being found out, I had to admit to myself the chances weren't great. I knew I sounded just like a girl, had a girl's hairdo, wore makeup and girl's clothing, walked like one. In fact, if I were being frank with myself, I knew that what I should worry about was how I could act like a boy again when that time came!

Even so it was with a great trepidation that Monday morning that I set off in the car with my aunt to do some shopping for groceries in the nearby town. She had suggested we dress casually, and she, in fact, was in slacks, but at the last minute I changed from mine into the pink skirt and a loose-fitting white blouse top which somewhat hid my mammary deficiency. My bra had an under-wire uplift that gave me a semblance of a bosom and between that and the blouse, Aunt Ruth thought I looked endowed enough in keeping with my slender form. I didn't, but I acceded to her judgement. "Nothing looks more artificial, particularly in someone as slender as you, than falsies, Annemarie. We want you to look as pretty as possible in a completely natural way."

She assured me, and I had to admit as I studied myself in the mirror, that I did look rather pretty. My skin by now was well-tanned, and my dangling silver earrings (I had really come to love wearing earrings, did so almost constantly) and matching single strand necklace contrasted nicely against my tan as did the white of my blouse and the pink of my skirt. I was wearing sandals, and Aunt Ruth had given me my first purse to carry, a pink soft-leather one with a long strap which she showed me how to slip over my shoulder—I loved the way it patted against my hip as I walked, and knew that from then on I'd enjoy carrying a bag like any lady does—the color of which came close to matching the hot pink of my lipstick and that of my finger- and toe-nails, the latter visible through my open-toed sandals.

Considering my worry, perhaps all the greater was my pleasure when I realized that I was quite unquestioningly

accepted in the store for who and what I appeared to be. I knew that my aunt had casually let the village storekeeper know that her niece was staying with her, recuperating from a serious operation, so my sudden appearance with her was not a cause for suspicion, on the contrary, the proprietor told me "how well you look, Miss, our sunlight must agree with you," to which I blushed an affirmative response, delighted to hear my long practiced feminine voice coming out as it should...and "Miss" she had called me. I was accepted as a Miss! It was a heady moment.

From the time we left the villa to our return only an hour had gone by, but it was a much greater period in space and time for me. I was no long a feminine young man who hoped some day he could appear in public as a woman, but now one who had actually done so! It was no surprise, therefore, that I readily acceded to my aunt's suggestion that we take a trip to Nassau the next day.

That day was one of the most exquisitely happy ones I had had until then in my life. Dressed in my white linen frock and wearing a white straw hat with a wide brim and sunglasses, as I tapped about the marketplace in my heels, I felt almost exultantly feminine, my tight skirt and high heels forcing my mince, my earrings touching back and forth against my neck and cheeks, from me wafting the delicate perfume with which my aunt had daubed me, my purse slapping gaily against my side...no one could ever think that she was not the she he appeared to be. (The "he" part of that equation was important; I never lost sight of that; it was part of the happiness.) As we strolled amidst the tourists, each buying ourselves a new skirt, a new blouse, a shawl for me for the cool evenings, I was also especially conscious of men. There they were, old and young, fat and thin, black and white, all in their trousers and their shirts, many with moustaches, smoking cigars or pipes, hairy of arm and (when in shorts) ugly and hairy of leg...these men, I almost felt sorry for them that they could not wear a pretty dress such as the one I had on, the pretty dresses other women wore, and yet felt my own separation, the he she, as a kind of specialness that I embraced. But my oddest feelings, the moments when I felt uncomfortable, when I knew I shouldn't be wearing what I was, looking and talking as I did, came with the men. The waiter at the outdoor cafe who called us ladies, that delighted me, but I also felt vaguely that I was a cheat, a fraud, and was aware of the contempt he would feel for me, he and the other males, if they found out who I was. Would they beat me up? Later, that evening, I expressed these uneasy feelings to Aunt Ruth who made me feel better by assuring that she would have been surprised if I hadn't had such reactions. "But, on the whole, you enjoyed it, didn't you?"

"Oh yes, Aunt," I said, for as a girl I called her that rather than "aunt", and paused with a frown: "In fact, I even enjoyed the moments I didn't enjoy. Does that make sense?"

She said it did.

I shall pass over most of the last four weeks of my vacation briefly. Although we continued to have our days alone at the villa, now most of the time we were out. As with any tourists, we did sightseeing, not only on the main island, but took boat trips to other islands, went to the gambling casino (where I actually won \$30.00 which I immediately spent on a new dress), frequently had dinner in town, went to night clubs. I even became used to appearing in public in my slacks. I had been afraid I'd look "male" in them, despite Aunt Ruth's assurances to the contrary, and actually I guess it never crossed anyones mind that this young suntanned miss, in her form-fitting slacks, her loose tops, her earrings, carrying her purse, walking in her pretty sandals, her wavy hair swinging, could be anything other than she appeared to be.

It was only about a week before we were due to return to the United States that just as we were seated at the restaurant in the Princess Xanadu Hotel, I in my new turquoise dress which fit me most becomingly, a rose at my waist, two middle-aged men came over to our table. The one who appeared the older of the tow, with a moustache and beard, knew Ruth and they embraced. His mane was Robert Plummer and, I later learned, had been a friend of her first husband. He and his companion, Jack Bishop, a blond with a handlebar moustache, were in the Bahamas on some kind of business trip. They were in the investment banking business, I learned, and when the two men continued to chat with Aunt Ruth, she realized they hoped for an invitation to join us and, to my considerable unease, she extended it. Under the circumstances, I was left with Jack as my companion, the first time in my life that I had a male companion when I was in a dress. I think I almost panicked. I was absolutely sure my voice would come out in some horrible baritone, and in fact I was virtually tongue-tied, answering his questions in monosyllables, thinking I was making myself (and was) an idiot. I never felt more like a man than I did at that moment, in my perfume, my makeup, my dress, my lingerie, and my heels. A man until I remembered Aunt Ruth's recipe and began to ask Jack about himself.

As I finally began to relax a little, he might have thought me shy, I realized, but he had no doubt I was a girl. I realized two things: first, despite his jaunty moustache, he was a rather self-absorbed, stuffy man. He was probably no more than in his early thirties, and I wondered if an original idea had ever come across his mind in all that time. Secondly, and I was quite dense about this having (despite Ruth's lectures on the subject) no first-hand experience of it, I finally realized he was coming on

to me! He was attracted to me!

At first, I was terrified by this realization. What if he tried to kiss me or...or worse? At the same time, I knew I was feeling just a little trickle of self-satisfaction.

After dinner, the men suggested we take a horse-drawn carriage ride about the island, a romantic idea that petrified me. Although Aunt Ruth tried to discourage that, the two men, as men will, were insistent and had their way. To my relief, the carriage was wide enough for the four of us, so that I wouldn't be alone in one with Jack. Actually, nothing remotely improper occurred on the little jaunt. These weren't men given to necking in cabriolets, and when I realized I was safe, I even allowed myself to enjoy it a little. I remember, particularly, at one point gazing down at my dress, my hands clasping my little purse demurely folded on my lap, and aware of the male trousers on either side of me. I in a dress, these other men in trousers...

When we got back into town, the men suggested a night club and since it was only about ten, Aunt Ruth, who seemed to be enjoying herself, she only later told me that she was keeping a close watch on my plight, ready to come to my rescue if need be, agreed and put her arm through Plummer's. Bishop offered me his, and I had no choice but to do so, exquisitely aware as we strolled down the cobblestone street of the clicking of my heels, the sway of my dress, the smell of my perfume, and over all of it the staggering fact that I was on the arm of a man. My escort!

Because I had not the faintest idea how to do so as a woman, I begged off Jack's suggestion that we dance, but that left me alone with him while Aunt Ruth and Plummer did so, leaving me to listen to him tell me what a pretty girl I was, putting his hand on mine, I drawing it away, he putting his arm around my waist, I unable to shrug free. I don't know what might have happened, but after an hour or so, Aunt Ruth told the "boys" as she called them, that we would have to be going. At that, Plummer said something to me about my health, which told me that Aunt Ruth was using my recuperation (long since a thing of the past) as the excuse for our departure. Both boys were quite willing, I am sure, to accompany us back to the villa. I'm sure they would have been glad to walk home the next day if need be if they got some sex in the meanwhile; I had no doubt what they had in mind, but Aunt Ruth somehow, without for a moment stopping being gracious, even obsequious toward the big charming men, (that's how she made them feel), managed to get us safely away, and I suppose it wasn't only until some-time later that they realized they'd been brushed off.

The next day, upon my query, she explained to me, and it took her a little while to figure it out herself, it had been virtually instinctive, how she had done it without offending them (and it had been important to her not to offend them; Aunt Ruth didn't like offending anybody, it wasn't ladylike, and especially men).

On the way back to the villa that evening and again the next day, she queried me closely about my own feelings during that encounter, and I described them to her mush as I have here concluding: "I think for the most part, Aunty, I was almost too scared to feel anything else, except I was also...excited."

What I meant by that was that I was scared as I had a right to be in the company of Jack Bishop, a real live flesh-and-blood human being who might do anything, but it was exciting to be a young lady in the company of a man.

By now, my aunt and I had begun to discuss the future, not the long-range one, whenever I broached that, she avoided the subject: "it'll take care of itself," was the closest she would come---but the immediate one. Upon our return to Philadelphia, it would be the beginning of December and I still had another six weeks before I would have to register for my final term and the question was whether I should continue to live as a girl until then. I had thought that was impossible. A number of people, neighbors, Berenice, knew that Aunt Ruth had a nephew who had been ill and had been staying with her. As Aunt Ruth pointed out, only Berencie had ever met me and she only once, and the neighbors, unless they were watching the morning we departed or the day I was brought in on a stretcher to the house, had never seen me and could not know what I looked like. Neither, Aunt Ruth pointed out, had she told the Andersons, our house-watchers, that her nephew was accompanying her on her vacation. As far as they knew, I was only going to the airport with her. Obviously, if I were to continue to live at the house during those remaining weeks, save the one I would have to spend at home at Christmas, it would be best I not be introduced as her niece, but perhaps as a daughter of a friend of hers whom she had met in the Bahamas, perhaps a relative from an earlier marriage. My only real worry, therefore, was that if we went out during that time, and she certainly didn't think I should remain house bound, I might run into people who knew me from school. Aunt Ruth didn't think that was a problem. "You should look at yourself carefully, Annemarie. You no longer look at all like Alan."

In the end, of course, despite the dangers, because I wanted to, I agreed. (Though I hardly admitted it even to myself, the clincher was Aunt Ruth's casual comment about how nice I'd look in nice winter wools and in her fur coat!)

As it turned out, these three weeks went beautifully. For an early Christmas present, Aunty bought me a lovely gray wool suit with a pure silk bow-tied blouse that felt just wonderful on me and I was told looked just as well. The fur coat was the delight I'd expected it to be, and we went on a nearly nightly whirl of dinner at restaurant, concert theater, movies. Because I hadn't gained back the old weight, I was able now to fit in most of her things, dresses, blouses, skirts...It was a wonderland of

frocks and femininity for me, made all the more pointed by the sudden substitution of my light summery things overnight for the winter ones, new tactile sensations swiftly replacing the old ones.

It was, as the reader can imagine, a regretful Alan who on December 23rd permitted his aunt to crop his lovely long hair into a boyish bob. "It's still long enough that we can do something with it when you get back", and set off on the long bus ride in his male clothes, the first time worn since October, for the long journey home. At least, I could look forward to another ten days in skirts before the new semester began. But it didn't work out that way. On the evening of my return, my grandmother suffered a stroke. At first, It didn't seem serious but on January 2, a second stroke followed and she died the following day. In arranging the funeral, which of course, Aunt Ruth attended, and settling her affairs, I was fortunate to get back to the university in time to register for my final semester. I was my grandmother's only heir. Between my insurance money from my parents' estate and the money she left me, along with the house, I was, if not a wealthy young man, one who was comfortable financially.

At the time, however, my financial situation interested me little, save to the extent it eased my college costs. Although I hadn't been particularly close to my grandmother, I had respected her and felt her loss, but even more so was made gloomy by what appeared to be a relentless loss of my entire immediate family, except for Aunt Ruth, in a period of twelve years. And I also felt guilty. Had I not been enjoying myself with my new life with Aunt Ruth, I would have been home with my grandmother for most of her last months; as it was, she had spent them largely alone and without my company for whatever it was worth.

For these reasons, I had no immediate desire to dress again and buried myself in my studies. Aunt Ruth understood. She simply told me to call her anytime she could help and made it clear, without saying it in so many words, that if I didn't want to dress when I came to visit her she'd understand that, too.

Even so, I did not visit her, and it wasn't until late February or early March, as I recall, that I got a call from her. She told me that something had turned up that I ought to know about and asked me if I could drop by, which, rather uneasy---since she would not tell me the nature of the "problem" as she called it, I did. Hardly had we been seated when she blurted out, "Alan, I'm afraid I've upsetting news for you. It's about Berenice." "What about her?", I asked. "She, well, she knows about Annemarie."

I could almost literally feel my stomach drop and my hands got wet, my mouth dry.

Berenice, she told me, had just recently returned from her own winter vacation in the Bahamas and while there had met Robert Plummer, who apparently visited the islands often on business. She hadn't known him before but since they were both from Philadelphia, it was natural they would search out mutual acquaintances and he had mentioned meeting Ruth Hendricks and her niece. Surprised at the niece, Berenice had asked for a description of her. Although she kept her suspicions from Plummer, as she thought about it, she realized that that tall young woman and the nephew who, she knew, had accompanied Ruth to the Bahamas to stay at her villa were, as hard as it was to believe, quite probably one and the same person. She knew Ruth had no other niece, and had received several cards from her from the Bahamas noting that she and her nephew were enjoying themselves. Upon her return, she confronted Ruth with what she suspected and: "I've always been a terrible liar, Alan, and I don't think she would have believed me even if I'd tried to deny it. After all, who else but you could Annemarie be?"

By now I was blushing furiously and pacing back and forth across the living room. I had visions of being turned over to the police or publicly exposes...I'd be kicked out of the university, my career in shreds, and for a while I either refused to listen to or was unable to comprehend Ruth's words of assurance. But finally I listened to what she was saying: Berenice was a worldly woman, very little shocked her...she was more intrigued than anything else about my ability to live as a woman..she had promised to tell absolutely no one else...she was a woman of her word. "But what must she think of me? She must think I'm some kind of pervert, degenerate, a drag queen, or something like that!" I cried.

"I don't think so, Alan", she seemed very understanding. There is one thing though."

She looked at me quite hesitantly. "Now, please, understand, this was no condition to her keeping our little secret but...but, well, she would very much like to meet Annemarie."

At first, I adamantly refused. I told Aunt Ruth that neither Berenice nor anyone else was ever going to meet Annemarie...that I was putting all that behind me. I had to. And so on, as the readers of this narrative can imagine.

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But Auntie was persistent. She told me that in her judgement it would be politic for me to have a meeting with Berenice as Annemarie. Berenice was naturally overwhelmingly curious, and "under the circumstances" it might be wise to satisfy that curiosity so that she could see "how convincing you are as a woman, that you are feminine not effeminate." As I began to weaken in my resolve, recognizing some merit in what she was saying, she clinched her advantage by reminding me: "Believe me, darling, Berenice is a wonderful young woman and completely trustworthy. Would I have her as my friend, if she weren't? You do trust me, don't you?"

Well, of course, I did, and although there was nothing in the world, at that moment, that I wanted to do less than meet Berenice as Annemarie---indeed, the thought of ever putting on a dress again was loathsome to me!--reluctantly I gave in. She told me she'd call Berenice and invite her for dinner and that way my meeting with her would be in the familiar surroundings of Aunt Ruth's home.

Three evenings later, she called me at my dorm. Dinner had been scheduled for Saturday a week and she suggested I get there at four so that I would have plenty of time "to get ready." The thought of meeting that elegant woman, knowing what she knew about me, well, what she'd see about me, filled me with trepidation and mortification and worry (despite what Aunt Ruth said, could a delectable tidbit about the nephew who posed as a niece not become a juicy bit of gossip within her social circle, hadn't it already?); nevertheless, to my amazement I found myself, for the first time since my grandmother's death, thinking about dressing again. Not at my Aunt's with Berenice which is what might have been expected, but rather my old panoply of fantasies began intruding on my thinking, and I began to notice (painful with desire) how women's skirts looked as they flipped about...the old familiar desire to be wearing them and feeling that myself.

I was, therefore, something of a nervous wreck when I arrived at Aunt's early Saturday afternoon. She immediately had me doff my male apparel, climb into panties, a bra, and my quilted robe, whereupon she gave me a shampoo, set my hair, and (observing how nervous indeed I was!) did my nails for me. "The way your hands are shaking you'll polish your fingers rather than your nails," she told me, with an affectionate laugh and a squeeze of my shoulders.

Berenice was due a seven, and by five, my hair still in curlers, I was helping straighten up the house with Aunt Ruth and the beginning preparations for dinner. By six we were back in her room, and she was taking down my hair, expertly fluffing it out into a bob with a fringe that swept across my forehead. Dimly, I realized I was beginning to look "nice", and when she helped me into my white lace slip the "ah" that spontaneously

came from lips was of the kind that only a cross-dresser can articulate when, after months of not being skirted, suddenly in utter relaxation, the tensions of life at such a moment simply fall away. He again is...he feels "right". We had decided after considerable discussion, to keep my outfit for the evening simple, feminine yet not overly frilly. As a consequence, I donned a soft white nylon blouse with a bow-tie top and full diaphanous sleeves that buttoned at my wrists. Over it, I drew a simple, self-sashed burgundy velvet jumper. With my make-up applied I studied myself, the tiny silver earrings and my black pumps, my nylons shimmering over my freshly shaven legs. "Annemarie," said Aunt Ruth. Dreamily, forgetting about Berenice for the moment, I nodded.

But, of course, Berenice was coming and as seven neared and then passed, all my previous nervousness was back in full force, and when the doorbell finally rang---she was twenty minutes late---my first impulse was to run up the stairs and hide. But even as I was thinking that, Aunt Ruth, looking beautiful in a simple gray flannel skirt and frilly blouse, was at the door, she was opening it, and she and Berenice were kissing each other on the cheek. As Berenice allowed Ruth to help her out of her mink coat, revealing her to be in a black velvet suit with intricate piping and a high-collared white georgette blouse, she took me into her gaze. I flushed. I arose, feeling like some kind of elephantine imposter in my skirts. "I would like you to meet my niece, Annemarie Talbott; Annemarie, my very good friend, Berenice Langford."

Berenice, who was about my height and a bit more slender, came forward to me, smiling. I couldn't interpret the smile, and held her hand out to me. As Aunt Ruth had taught me, I shook hands with her as a woman would, noting wonderingly how, in the clasp, our red-enameled nails joined; for a moment, I thought I was going to faint. "I am delighted to meet you, Annemarie," she said, her eyes sparkling. I had a terrible desire to curtsy to her. "And I you, Ms. Langford," I managed to respond, and actually got it out in my well-practiced feminine voice.

The evening that followed was, as might be expected, a strange and (for me anyway) a strained one for the most part, but it was by no means as bad as I had imagined. Despite its beginning, we did not linger long on the pretense that I was actually Aunt Ruth's niece. Berenice was much too curious to learn more about my desire to dress for that. First embarrassedly but ultimately with some measure of calm, I related to her much of my history as I had once confessed it to Aunt Ruth. Berenice seemed almost avid in her interest in me, and sometimes her questions were sharp and she seemed to be taking me quite seriously; at others, she seemed simply delighted in me,

as though I were a new toy, I must say was one impression I had but not a consistent one---and this seemed particularly true when Aunt Ruth and I told her about my training in girlhood at the villa (only leaving out the part about the intimate stories of her own girlhood that Aunt Ruth had told me) and she actually clapped her hands in amusement and had me repeat several times the events of my "date" with young Bishop. "And I can tell you Bob Plummer was quite impressed by you, too, my dear," she told me with a positively wicked grin. "He described you to me as a marvelously pretty girl, yet a strange one, so shy, demure in a way that seemed to him such a charming contrast to your tall, slender bearing. It seems he usually finds that tall girls are more sophisticated and it was that combined with your modesty that really fetched him." She paused. "And I think I can see exactly what he meant. You are so ladylike and yet so girlish, all at once, my dear. I can see why he found you so charming. I do."

By the evening's end, I could not say I exactly liked Berenice, but I hardly any longer found her as formidable as I had when we first met. Perhaps it was because then I had met her as a "boy", and her elegant appearance, the expensiveness of her clothes and jewelry, had made me feel awkward and...yes, boyish. Now that I was meeting her wearing a dress and jewelry and carefully applied makeup of my own, despite the strangeness of the circumstances, I felt more relaxed. At moments---when the conversation would briefly leave me, and this was particularly true during dinner, I almost felt as though we were three women together. After all, each of us had skirts that swayed about us as we walked, each was wearing perfume, each was in heels, each repaired to the bathroom to check "her" makeup, and when we sat, the six legs visible were equally shining in nylon, and there was one moment I particularly remember, a tiny one, when I hardly thinking about it, pulled the hem of my dress over my knees and became aware that, by happenstance, the other two were doing exactly the same thing...it was like a concert of womanly action, the kind only a woman makes, and I felt almost breathless at that moment that I was part of it.

There was one other oddity. When I first met Berenice, perhaps because she was Ruth's friend and perhaps because of her appearance, or both, I had been under the impression she was a much older woman than I now realized she was. When later I questioned Aunt Ruth, I found that she was six years older than Berenice, which meant Berenice was only twelve years my senior. I know that made me uneasy. In a strange way, I had felt more comfortable, or, at least, less uncomfortable when I had been assuming that Berenice was an older woman. I know that if I had known before the dinner that she was as young as she was, I am positive I would have felt even more

worry than I did, though I am not certain why this is so. Perhaps I counted on an "older" woman being more understanding.

When Berenice left, it was with the hope that we would meet again soon, and she assured Aunt Ruth she would get in touch with her for that purpose. Aunt Ruth pronounced the evening a complete success. I was less sure, and far from certain that I wanted a second meeting, and also far from sure that I didn't.

About one matter, I was comforted. Although nothing was said in so many words, throughout the evening, Berenice seemed to assume that I knew she would keep my "secret", and I sensed both that it would not be gentlemanly, ladylike? to ask her directly and that there was no need to do so.

So it proved. Over the next several months, I met Berenice twice more, once at her high rise apartment on Rittenhouse Square and the second at her family farm. No actual farming was done there, a hundred acre estate near the charming old country town of Reyersford.

On both occasions, I was en femme, and on the second, in May, I sensed I looked particularly nice in my knife-pleated white linen skirt and navy blue top. It was on this occasion, shortly before Aunt Ruth and I were leaving, after spending what was actually quite a delightful afternoon, that Greg Hopper, a cousin of Berenice's arrived, and I learned then that he and Aunt Ruth had occasionally dated. It was from that meeting that events led toward the formal dance in June which I attended on the arm of his son, Perry, and which has been described, in my feelings as I approached it, at the beginning of this narrative.

I shall leave to the reader's imagination that dance itself. But shall I not add that as lovely (there is no other word for it) as it is to wear your first formal in satin, to have your long skirts (your first long skirts) sweeping about you as your arm rests on the shoulder of your partner, his arm firmly but gently about your waist is a dresser's dream that even goes beyond voluptuousness into perfection itself? Shall I add the fear and yet the delighted excitement with which, in your sweeping and rustling skirts, you enter the ladies' powder room and stand at a mirror, evening gowns all about you, in your evening gown, to freshen your makeup? Shall I mention the bizarre, dreamlike feeling you have, but with an edge of startled self-awareness, as you consider all the men in their tuxedos, all looking exactly alike, and all the women in their colorful, lovely flowing gowns and you suddenly realize that you are one of the women in her lovely flowing gown and not, for once, not this time, one of the men in his drab tuxedo!

I shall with that pass from that night—poor young Perry! I think he thought I did not like him, when it was my hand I gave him rather than my lips to kiss at parting; I sense that he, perhaps like Plummer and Jack Bishop, found me almost unap-

proachable...was I too feminine? too ladylike? (yet there was need for that) and go on to what happened next.

For the next three years, I attended law school at Stanford, in part because it is one of the finest in the country and in part because it was a continent away from Aunt Ruth and Berenice and the feminizing influence on me. For, no matter how much I loved to dress and live as a woman, (if anything, Berenice encouraged me more than my aunt did), I was resolved to forge out a professional career for myself as a man. During those years, I would relieve my tensions by occasional visits to my aunt for the usual purpose, but probably had no more than six or seven such sessions each of no more than a day or two's duration.

Upon graduation, I accepted a position at a firm in a large mid-western city where I was paid much more than I deserved writing briefs for corporate clients. The work was utterly boring and possibly, I recognize, because money was not a major issue with me, I left after a year and went to a public interest firm in a large eastern city. I found this work, if much less remunerative, stimulating and I had a sense of using my profession for the public welfare. I enjoyed trying to solve the problems of poor people, and I must confess, I probably had a nobless oblige rationale that did me little credit. Now nearer to my aunt than before, even so, I saw her but rarely, since she was now involved in still another love affair, one that seemed likely to lead to her fourth marriage. Since my clothing remained at her house, I had no wardrobe of my own and for psychological reasons that remain unclear to me, I was reluctant to buy items for myself, knowing, if I did, I would have no opportunity to wear them other than behind the drawn shades of my apartment. Dressing, now that I reason it out, had always been for me (unlike most cross-dressers) a generally happy and open experience and I found the thought of indulging in it in isolation both unpleasant and prospectively unhealthy for my emotional condition. This is not to say that I didn't long to dress, and I frequently bought booklets at adult stores on my favorite subject. But they too, made me more unhappy than not, and I particularly regretted when their content, mixed with my own fantasies, led to masturbation.

Perhaps because of the selfish reason for which I had entered my new practice and perhaps because of the endless procession of helpless people who were---in fact---little better off when I was done with them than when they arrived, I soon wearied of my do-gooder position. I felt ashamed of myself that I felt that way, and even more so in my recognition that my desire to dress and live as a woman was at times so overwhelming that it invaded my mind even as I interviewed a client.

During these years, from law school onward, I dated occasionally, but, difficult as it may be to believe, I had reached the

age of 28 still a virgin. I liked women, enjoyed their company (much more so than most male company), but I felt toward the women I knew more as a friend and companion than perceiving them as a sexual object, and I think they responded---no doubt in some puzzlement and wonder about my orientation to that. The problem, of course, was that I wanted to be her, in her pretty dress, in the freedom of her skirts, enjoying as she did the right to make up my face and do my hair and wear jewelry, to listen to my high heels clicking instead of hers. It was not that I had any desire to change my sex. I had thought about that, wondering if I might not be inevitably going in that direction, but each time I did I realized that wasn't part of my desire: I wanted to be a man but one who was accepted as a woman. In that sense, more than anything else, my educational experiences in the Bahamas had given the ultimate twist and direction to my life.

Thus, at 28, I was faced with several dilemmas simultaneously. I was good at my law practice but felt out of place and unfulfilled in it. I liked women but could not bring out of myself toward them the set of situations that other men so easily seem to be able to produce that lead to "normal" sex relationships. I wanted to live as a woman, but not only didn't I know how to go about it, at the same time I didn't want to, perceiving that as a step which, should I somehow find the way to undertake it, would leave me permanently in a never-never land, neither male nor female, with no function of either sex.

Soon after my birthday, I left the public interest firm, feeling both a quitter and a failure, but psychologically unable to continue there. I returned to my grandparents' house, which, for no particular reason, I had clung to and kept up during my occasional visits there. There, I stayed in virtual isolation for a month, trying to sort out my feelings and my future.

Often I wished I had Aunt Ruth to turn to, but she was living in New England with her lover, had sold her house. My rather considerable wardrobe she had offered to me, and while I had been sorely tempted to take it, that event occurred while I was still trying to hang onto my belief that I was going to succeed (out of dresses) in my profession. I told her to dispose of it.

I desperately needed someone to talk to, and with my aunt out of the picture at least temporarily, that left only Berenice. After considerable trepidation, our relationship had been based only on her enjoyment in seeing me dressed, it seemed to me, I called her and she (as she later said, sensing how unhappy I sounded) immediately invited me to her family farm for a get together.

I had only seen her a few times since the summer of my dance and the years had treated her kindly. She looked much younger than her years, she was then forty, and indeed seemed younger to me than when I had first known her. (That was probably due to the fact that I was so much younger then and any woman in

her thirties had to seem old.) And I must admit, for I will be candid here even if I haven't often been to myself, that I went to our meeting with half-formed hopes that this time something might click between us. I visualized (stopped myself from visualizing) her saying to me, "But of course, you must stay here with me. We will live as sisters," but then one day...one moment...Not that I was in love with her; it was really only a fantasy. Still, I was disappointed. Even though Berenice had good intentions in inviting me, I'm sure, she remained as she had always been, quite unable to get away from her image of me not as a full human being but as a man who liked to dress up. Berenice had many good qualities; Aunt Ruth wouldn't have liked her if she hadn't, and she did, in her way, accept me which few women, I suppose, would have. But, in the end, she was kind, she wanted to be helpful, but the barrier was still there and she didn't understand me or what I wanted. She proved that by her suggestion that I return to Philadelphia and open a practice there, and "whenever there's no one here, you can come out here and dress to your heart's content."

What became increasingly clear as the day went on was that she wanted me to get dressed then and there. She wanted to see me made up as a woman again more than I wanted to, at least at that moment. Repelled at the thought of the public exhibition inherent in her hints, I managed to remain obtuse to them. When I arrived home that evening, I was even more bitterly depressed than before, but at what had happened, the absence of true communication, and (angry at myself that I would feel that way) disappointed now that I hadn't taken up her offer!

Despite the rebuff, fancied or real, from Berenice and the resentment I felt despite myself that Aunt Ruth had again gotten herself involved with a man, I realized I had reached a decision, didn't really realize it until I found myself thinking about it in concrete terms of not if but how. Despite my past successes as a woman, I knew the course I had in mind was one fraught with danger, possibly scandal, I might even be arrested, my law career ruined, but the compulsion was overwhelming: I would have to live as a woman again and see if, by the prolonged exposure to it, I would finally drive the desire out of my system.

Over the next several months, while I showed prospective buyers about the house I busied myself, to keep my mind off what I was doing, doing research and article writing for the journal of the public interest association I had left. I had promised to do that and did eventually. The articles, I understand, were well received and their theories became the basis for a significant legal action. I began to accumulate a wardrobe through various mail order houses. Although I tried on each garment upon its arrival, that was solely to see if it fit me; other than that, on stern orders from myself, I did not dress. I bought

a tape recorder to practice my voice. It came back to me quite quickly and similarly practiced my feminine walk and gestures for hours on end before a full-length mirror, always in male clothing, which had the salutary effect of indicating to me when I might be going wrong. In a dress, awkward male gestures might possibly be covered up for a while by the viewer's assumption that the person in skirts must be a woman, but by forcing myself to go through the same lessons in men's clothing I, as a viewer myself, quickly spotted what I might be doing wrong. (Or at least, so I rationalized. Certainly another reason was that I was deliberately putting off my new excursion into skirts so that, when the time came, the experiences would be fresh, not worn by the long practicing of them.)

The sale of the house, for quite a good price, marked the signal that I could no longer procrastinate. During the weeks that remained to me there, I finished up the major article. The lesser one had been submitted earlier, and during the time I had free from my feminine studies, I did a great deal of traveling, looking for the maximally secure place where I could live as Annemarie for a year. That was the time period I had determined upon. It seemed to me that if I were to tire of living as a woman, that period wasn't too long. I'd be able to last it out and yet long enough that I would be likely to have the full panoply of experience that would ultimately determine for me my future. My vow was clear: Assuming I wasn't found out, I would live a year as a woman. I hoped that prolonged exposure would either cure me...or not cure me.

Since one of my more pleasant problems was that I made up into a rather attractive woman, somewhat aquiline of feature with a bit too strong chin, but not bad. I knew there was danger of unwanted attention from men. I, therefore, determined that I would be a recently widowed woman whose lack of interest in men, at least for the one year I intended to live female, would be acceptable. My own biography would serve as the basis for my dead husband's.

From one of my former clients, I had learned how easy it was to obtain a false identity, and that turned out to be no difficulty. Finding the right place to live was. I had decided that, no matter how good I was in my impersonation, it would be foolish to do so in Philadelphia or any other city where I was known and I could conceivably be recognized. However, I hadn't the time to do my searching very far afield from my grandparents town. I did my searching by car over about a hundred mile radius. What I was looking for was a small, rural town with a very low crime rate. I didn't want to be found out as a victim of a mugging or a rape attempt, yet one sufficiently large that the advent of a young widow would not make her the subject of the kind of scrutiny I was not sure I could stand up under.

I eventually, just two weeks before I would have to vacate my grandparents' house, found what I was looking for. I shall not name the town or even its state, but will describe it accurately as essentially an old farm town which had a small college which had recently obtained university status. Because it had some of the aspects of a college town, the arrival of a transient would not be any course of wonder; at the same time, I could present myself not only as a young widow but one who, preparing herself for a future without her husband, was intending to enroll at the school for her degree. Although my new identity would not include a high school or a college transcript, I hoped that by presenting myself as a holder of a bachelor's degree who might be interested in a master's, I would be able, upon paying a fee, be able to monitor classes without the transcript problem arising. As it turned out, my inquiries at the school, as a man without giving my name, suggested that was possible, and immediately after I wrote a letter as Annemarie Talbott requesting such permission.

Those who are my readers will readily understand the trepidation with which I faced this great adventure. Even though I was fairly confident of my ability to pass myself off as a woman, had done so successfully, I had never attempted it on a day-to-day basis. And even though I had decided, upon the first indication that I might be about to be exposed, I would flee from the town, not waiting any certainty, I also knew there was a possibility of an accident, illness, or some other situation—a traffic arrest? but no, I was selling my car; I wouldn't risk that—that might forefend the opportunity to flee. Still, I knew I was prepared as well as any man about to become a woman could be, and above all, I knew that if I didn't do it, I'd spend the rest of my life wondering why I hadn't and imagining what would have happened. It was, in a way, that I was doing this because of the consequences that would befall if I didn't.

The actual transition from man to woman presented a logistics problem to which I had given considerable thought. Getting rid of my male clothing was one issue. I could not leave it behind me for the new owners to find, nor could I take it with me. As a consequence, I packed most of it in two suitcases and drove it to Philadelphia where I paid a year's storage in advance; the remainder I dropped in a Salvation Army box. This occurred the Friday before my departure from my male life. A final package, containing underwear and socks, I deposited in a city dump. During the same trip, I transferred into a bank there my holdings from the local bank into one and two-year certificates of deposit, and instructed my insurer to make deposits of the annual check that still came my way to the bank. Meanwhile, I held in my possession a cashier's check for \$40,000 for the sale of the house, made out to A.M. Talbott. With the check and several hundred dollars in cash, financially I was quite ready

for my new life. I didn't know if I was emotionally.

But once a decision is made and events begin to take place, they also take on a life of their own. In an almost dreamlike way, I finished my preparations. I packed my feminine apparel in two large suitcases, along with cosmetics I had purchased during my busy day in Philadelphia. On Sunday evening, wearing my one remaining male suit.

I departed in my car. With each mile I drove, the crazier and more scary my plan seemed to me. I was now seeing all its dangers in a way that hadn't been clear to me while they were still in the safe(maybe you won't do this after all) planning stage. But I kept driving on, toward my destiny. At nine-thirty, I arrived at the medium-sized city I had scouted out some thirty miles east of the college town. There, on its outskirts, I registered at a motor inn and utterly exhausted, though I had done very little that day, went to my room and quickly fell asleep. I was registered as A. M. Talbott.

Late the following morning, after paying for a second night's lodging, I drove into the city, in my trunk the two large suitcases. Back in my room, locked, was my lawyer's oversize briefcase. At the bus depot, I bought my ticket for the bus the following morning and placed my bags in a locker. After lunch, I drove my car to a second hand dealer's lot where I sold it for \$400, out and out theft but I was in no position to bargain. Toward evening, I rented a car which I drove back to the motor inn, where, after flashing my receipt for the night ahead, I stopped it in front of my cabin and entered. I then walked to the rather sleazy bar-restaurant attached to the inn where I had a drink and dinner and despite the work I knew I had ahead of me, I lingered afterward, having a drink at the bar while I watched a basketball game on tv. The men around me, mostly workingmen from the town, paid no attention to me but I felt extraordinarily comfortable in their company. I listened to their casual cursing, eavesdropped on their prototypical male bar-room talk. They thought nothing of me. After all, I was nothing but another man, probably some traveling salesman, just another guy, not a woman whose very presence would change their attitudes in all kinds of ways, subtle, flirting, coming on, want a drink, babe?---how about you and me?---they'd appear as though they liked that but really they wouldn't. At this time, they simply wanted to be men among men, and so did I. The sense of male bonding was almost overwhelming to me, I felt as though I were entering onto some terrible betrayal, not of me, but of them by what I intended to do. The combination of their easy masculinity with one another, and my own sense of being a man among these men, that I was where I belonged, made me feel almost dizzy and I left that place, my second drink untouched, nearly running out of the bar, and for a moment I stood shivering alone in the darkness, staring down at my trousers.

It was at that moment I came as close as I ever had to giving up my plan. It would be easy to do. All I had to do was drive the car back to the rental office the following morning, forget about the one bus ticket and buy another...for Philadelphia and the masculinity I had been trying to put into storage for a year.

Still trembling and feeling ill, for I was not used to having a drink after dinner, so I was also a little tipsy, I made my way back to my cabin. Despite knowing what I should be doing if I were going to do it, for more than an hour I sat on the edge of the bed, almost blank-minded now, letting what images come that might. I think I had, at one moment, decided to give up the plan and as I did I arose and went over to my lawyer's briefcase. For a long time, I studied it. Then, knowing I shouldn't, I opened it. My hand touched the skirt I had been intending to wear. My skirt. I licked my lips. I stared at the window. The blinds were drawn. I went to the door and put on the hook. From there, I went to the bathroom. I began to shave and depilate.

When I came out, in my shorts and t-shirt, my hair in curlers, my brows plucked, I turned out the light. For a long time, I lay staring up at the ceiling, my only company the ticking of my alarm clock which I had set for six-thirty.

I didn't think I had slept, my mind overridden by those kinds of fantasy dreams that drift uneasily between sleep and awakening, but I must have for the alarm went off and it awakened me. I felt oddly refreshed. I arose, showered, and then quickly began to take down my hair. I was glad for Aunt Ruth's lessons. I had not forgotten them. I now had a nice mop of curly hair that fell in an easy sweep across my forehead and tickled at my ears. Into the valise went my remaining male clothing. Quickly now, not wanting to think, I drew on my panties, my bra, and with a sigh of utter relaxation allowed a lacy white slip to encase my male form. Breathing shallowly as I often did when transvesting after a long hiatus, trying not to realize how nervous I must be, I applied my makeup, from memory as it were, affixed a pair of silver hoop earrings and a silver bracelet, then my nylons, my pumps, my conservative white linen blouse with a high round collar and my simple gray flannel skirt. I took my purse next from the briefcase. A simple black patent leather one that one held by the hand strap and put in it my wallet, my cosmetics, my hair brush and comb, some tissues. Finally, I drew around my shoulders a simple white cable-stitch sweater. Drawing my breath, I opened the door, dropped the key on the table, and went out to my car. It was 7:30. No one was stirring. I set the briefcase on the seat next to me. I looked down, observing in absolute wonderment the skirt, finding it hard to believe that it was a skirt on me, and pressed my black pump to the accelerator (yes, my pump to that pump...men don't wear skirts, don't wear pumps.)

I was amazed how moist my hands were, amazed I was driving, amazed I was actually doing it. I am doing it, I thought; oh, your are going to get caught! Oh, the disgrace! I wanted to go back...I could still go back...still get rid of the makeup...still change...soak the curl out of the hair...I was in town. I stopped in front of the car rental agency which wasn't open yet. That was the moment of decision. I opened the door, picked up my purse, still not quite sure what I was going to do...I stared at the briefcase which contained my final items of male apparel...those trousers that had seemed almost sacred to me the night before.

Now I was standing on the sidewalk. A middle-aged woman walked by me. She barely glanced at me. A man coming from the opposite direction, a young one, allowed his eyes to go down to my legs (my glistening bare nyloned legs) and then walked on. I gulped in the air. I locked the door. I walked over to the rental agency. I stared at the key a moment longer. Then, crossing my Rubicon, I dropped it in the return key slot. There was no way I could get at the valise now. When they found it, they would assume I'd forgotten it, would call for it, and if they tried to find me, they would learn that I no longer lived at the address I had given.

Listening to my heels clicking, my mind filled with nothing but that sound, I walked, in the feminine way I had practiced and which my skirts and heels forced me toward, to the bus station. I retrieved my satchels and, delight of delight, a young man, a college student by the look of him, gallantly carried them out to the waiting platform for me. Softly I thanked him. He seemed a bit uncertain. Should he try his advantage by starting a conversation with this young but (compared to him) older woman? And I looked the other way. In a few minutes, the bus pulled in. I watched as my precious bags were put in its hold. I boarded the bus, and suddenly utterly exhausted, sank into the first chair I found, but not forgetting to sweep my skirts under me as I did. I was off to my future.

Now that I look back on it, I realize I had no idea what I was expecting. It was true I visualized myself monitoring classes, as the rationale for moving to the town, and occasionally I had images of myself in conversation with women, shopping, going to a movie, but mostly I was wondering what it would be like to be spending all my time in female clothing for 52 weeks (not entirely in dresses; I had bought one pair of checked slacks and two pairs of jeans).

At the beginning, things went quite well. During my scouting trip to the town a month or so earlier, I had noted that a small apartment house in the middle of the town had quarters available. When I got back home, I dialed the agent and using Annemarie's voice had explained my situation, inquired of rates, and had sent a bank draft deposit for the first two months, signed as Anne Marie Talbott, to match the "A. M. Talbott"

which was the way my check for the house sale had been made out. Thus, when I arrived at the bus depot, I immediately hailed a cab, one of the two the town had, and was taken to the apartment where I produced my acceptance letter and was shown to the apartment that had been reserved for me. It was a small one-bedroom, furnished in a nondescript fashion but did have lace curtains at the windows. The brick building was four stories, with two apartments to a floor, one large one (usually shared by two or more students) and one small one like mine. All the residents (except for me) were women.

Once I had locked the door behind me, I sank into the easy chair, relieved to be away from any possibly prying eyes again. As I looked back over the events of the morning, however, including the young man at the station and the bus trip itself, I realized I had not gotten such prying looks. After putting my clothes away, now quite apprehensive over that fact that I had no male clothes to change into should the need arise, save conceivably the jeans, and buying some groceries, I spent the remainder of my first day as a woman hidden in my apartment, doing some ironing, some washing out of lingerie, putting up my hair and watching tv.

Over the next several days, I only ventured out occasionally. The safety of the apartment beckoned me and I began to imagine the possibility of spending an entire year in it, only going out to buy groceries and the like. In an insecure situation, that had its secure attractions.

Yet that was, of course, impossible. I would become stir crazy quickly, I suspected, and besides if I were to live as a woman, it could not be as a hermit. Consequently, I forced myself out more frequently, made my appearance at the university where I seemed to be accepted for what I said I was, and began to attend my first classes. They however, were only three hours a week. By then, I had also opened a bank account as Anne Marie Talbott.

During that early period, my life was centered on my clothes and my conscious efforts to walk and talk in as feminine a manner as possible. The latter was an obvious necessity, though I enjoyed doing it; as for the clothes, my pleasure in them fluctuated. There were moments when I positively gloried in the feel of my skirts swinging around me, particularly when I was out of doors and I might have to hold them down in a sharp breeze. There were other, frightening, moments when I felt absolutely ludicrous in them, an imposter rather than an impersonator, and each end of my nerves was telling me that I looked like an imposter. At still other times, I regretted, almost desperately, what I had done. At these moments, my memory usually went back to that traumatic evening in the bar when I had been, for the last time, a man among men. I longed again for that male acceptance. I was and should be a guy.

There were still other times, the most frequent perhaps, though hardly a majority of the time yet, when I was aware I was in skirts, walking and talking like a woman, but when my mind was primarily focusing on other matters, perhaps a book or magazine I was reading, a show I was watching, the lecture I was attending. These periods might last for as much as an hour or two, and then would end sharply as almost giddily, I'd recall who I was and what I was doing. Then the fear would re-enter, and I'd feel out on some far edge of myself.

Nevertheless, though I did regret what I had done, ambivalently each instance of acceptance of me as Annemarie was either keenly or softly pleasurable. I delighted in being called Ma'am, or Miss. When a man held open a door for me, I thanked him and felt wonderful. When, occasionally, a fellow student, usually female, engaged me in a brief conversation, and I realized she assumed I was what I appeared to be, the sensation of acceptance could be almost overwhelming.

As time went on, I also entered into a learning experience. I began to understand, as much as a man can, what it is like to be a woman. The early inspections of me had first worried me, fearing that their purpose was to unmask me. Now I began to realize that wasn't so. When women studied me, and they did, it was with a sweeping glance that took in my outfits, the way I did my hair, possibly my makeup, my jewelry, a kind of cataloguing look, brief and perhaps almost unconscious on their part. Their casual up-and-down sweep of me, I learned, was entirely different from that of men. Women took in my clothes, my outward appearance, men took in my body. I had noticed this phenomenon first during my vacation with Aunt Ruth in the Bahamas six years before, but then I had been constantly within her chaperonage, cocooned by it, and I had not been consciously aware at first, until with some amusement she pointed it out to me, of the way men look at women. Oddly enough, my life as a man among men had not prepared me for that. I know, of course, that some men looked at women that way...I'd heard enough crude and joking comments...although I don't think I often did. I was always much more female in my inspections; interested in the clothes, not the form they hid. But it was only now that I became sensitive to those looks, now that I was the recipient of them...the men looking at a woman look. I now understood how women can find this kind of inspection insulting. The man may mean it flatteringly, but the woman sees herself as an object under such stares. She is told by them that she may be desirable but that she is less than he because he feels he has the right, because he is a man, to look at her that undressing way. I remember crossing the campus one windy day. I was wearing one of my favorite dresses, a simple blue jersey that buttoned down the front with little silver buttons, and the wind caught it and blew it up and around me, revealing

my slip, and as I pushed it down, I was being approached by a couple, holding hands. The young man stared avidly at the sight I presented, while the young woman, in jeans, looked away. I thought: How dare he? He's with his girlfriend yet he feels free to stare at me that way, deliberately embarrassing me. Except he wasn't deliberately embarrassing me, he wasn't even being "unfaithful" to his girl; he was just acting like a man.

The mirror image of that, of course, was the courtesy; I have just alluded to it, but it is, I think, part of the same parcel. I remember getting into a rather crowded elevator on the campus. When I entered there were five men aboard, chatting. As I got in, they fell silent, and one, a middle-aged professor, took off his hat in deference to me. When the elevator stopped at the third floor, we all got out, but the men stood aside to let me out first. As I proceeded to click my way down the hall, I could hear their conversation starting up again. They had been talking, I was now sure, about women or a woman, or more likely, an off-color joke and they had stopped in deference to the gender that my skirts, my makeup, my curls represented.

Women, I found, too...and this I had known as a man and even did it myself, get kidded in a way that men don't by men. It is all very subtle, and no harm overtly is meant by it, but it all had to do with the differences between the sexes and an implicit assumption (proof?) by the male speaker of his superiority. What it comes down to, I discovered, was my realization of the profound truth of a lesson Aunt Ruth had tried to drive home to me again and again: Men don't take women seriously, the way they do each other. Oh, they do in a romance or in a marriage, but not in the day to day life with women they know only casually, or who are their fellow students, or who work with them. Their (the women's) opinions are less important because they are women's opinions, and time and again during my life as a woman, I would find myself being interrupted, or watch the same thing happen to other women, the conversation taken over by the man. Often, the subject would have nothing to do with sex. In fact, rarely did it; when it got to sex, the men took the women more seriously. But there might be a discussion in the cafeteria about politics or Kantian ethics or God knows what, just so it was objective, and the men or man would at first seem to listen to what a woman might have to say, but gradually they would muscle in, much as they might use their physical superiority to attack a woman, muscle in intellectually, and even their bodies would lean forward, big and threatening, and I would observe the women, hardly aware they were doing it, rather than leaning forward themselves, sit back, retreating from the attack perhaps but also taking the posture that a woman does in a dance, the passive one, leaning back, in the arms of her escort who leads while she follows.

All these impressions and others came to me gradually, almost entirely at first as an observer or, in the case of the elevator episode and the flying skirts, as the one who happened to be acted upon. I consciously avoided trying to make friends, entering into conversations myself, partly through fear I might reveal myself and partly because I wanted to observe and learn. I wanted to feel what it was like to be a woman but I didn't want to actively participate in that observation.

Because of this diffidence and the reasons for it, I began soon enough to feel lonely. My self-imposed isolation was all too successful. I hadn't been aware of that possibility. For good reason. All my previous experiences in dressing in public, anyway, had been in the company of Ruth or occasionally Berenice. Now I didn't have that security, that company, and I became aware I badly needed some semblance of it.

Nevertheless, over the first month or two of my experiment, I was able to put aside these feelings of loneliness. I found that the more I wore dresses, the more I enjoyed wearing them. Putting on a dress or skirt each morning, doing my makeup, became something of a routine, as it had in the Bahamas and later those few weeks in Philadelphia, but a marvelously pleasurable one, always with me the feeling that here I was, a man and I was putting on a dress, putting on makeup, etc. The thrill of the forbidden, the desirability of the crossing-over, grew rather than receded. At the same time, I enjoyed cataloguing my impressions. The day of the blowing skirt had, for instance, momentarily made me despise the young man (all men?) but at the same time I had thoroughly enjoyed the experience...that here I was a man who had the problem of pushing down his skirts so that his slip wouldn't show!

The ambivalence of my feelings was sometimes frightening to me, I didn't know where I was going, but gave me, simultaneously, a sense of human richness, of a completion, that went beyond anything I had previously encountered in life.

But man and woman was not meant to live entirely alone, I think. I needed some kind of social life, and though I made some acquaintances among the students, my first "friend" as a woman, who didn't know I was a man, turned out to be the young woman who had the apartment on the floor below mine. The three girls who shared the one on my floor, we nodded to one another, but never did become friends, but I think that was because they were still in their teens while I was obviously an older "woman" in her late twenties. That, too, was probably the reason my occasional conversations on the campus never went further. I was much older than any other student, or at least the vast majority of them. Susan, on the contrary, was nearer my own age, actually two or three years older. She was a short, somewhat plump woman, who wore glasses, had lanky dark brown hair, and who was employed as an assistant professor in

the social work school. She was, not to be cruel but truthful, homely, and I was quite aware not nearly as attractive as I was.

We had met on the elevator and she had made a rather amusing comment. I forget exactly what, and I had rejoined in a way that she seemed to like. Later, we met in the laundry room and again she said something witty, sharp, an insight quite similar to my own point of view, and almost forgetting myself I began to talk to her and she with me. We made a habit after that of chatting with each other briefly when we met, though we told each other nothing personal, and one day, an unusually cold one for the season, we were standing outside the apartment house talking and had gotten into a discussion of some major political crisis, and she suggested we continue the conversation indoors. She took me to her apartment, and served me coffee. At the time, I was wearing my nice plaid knife-pleated skirt and a lace-edged blouse, and she was in a white shirt and trousers. I was wearing makeup, she was not. I realized, even as we talked, that were someone to observe us and be told that one of those two women is really a man, that observer would probably say Susan and not me.

Not long after that, I had dinner at her apartment, then I returned the favor, and occasionally one or the other of us would give a ring and we might go to the town movie or attend a campus lecture together. But she never intruded on my privacy, nor I on hers. We were friends, but not to the extent we were intimates. That was the way I wanted it, too. And I suppose she felt the same way. Gradually, we got to know more about one another. She was duly sympathetic about my loss of my husband—"Peritonitis? Oh, how horrible! the poor man!" And I learned, somewhat to my surprise, that she had been married when she was only eighteen, had seen her husband through graduate school, after which he left her for a student... "a god-damn empty-minded, pretty one." I really liked her. She may have been plain, as a man I would not have been attracted to her, but as a woman I liked her, tart, tough minded, unfrivolous, yet (despite those supposedly masculine qualities) sensitive, caring, and...well, what I had always thought of as feminine. (A femininity I would not have seen as a man, because of her physical plainness.)

What might eventually have happened in my experiment, what I would have been like at the end of a year and what that might have meant for my future, I shall never know.

It all came clattering to an end in November, only a little more than two months after it had begun. It was on a Saturday evening and I had joined Susan for dinner at a restaurant. We planned to go to a movie afterward, but during the course of the meal I began to feel decidedly ill. For the past several days previous, I had been fighting a cold and now I began to suffer from chills and a fever simultaneously. Our food had not yet

arrived when it became apparent to both of us that I was sick, and although I said I could make it back to the apartment house alone, I was sure it was just a touch of the flu, she insisted on driving me back in her car. When we arrived, my teeth were chattering and I was shivering, and she helped me to my door. I told her I'd be all right, and when, after turning down her offer to help me undress and get into bed, she left, I started across my living room, feeling suddenly faint.

The next thing I was aware of, the sun was coming through my window, and I was in bed. I didn't remember getting there, and was a little surprised to see that I had managed to take off my clothes and get into my full-length white nylon gown. I realized I was feeling a good deal better. To this day, I don't know what caused the illness or why it passed so quickly; probably some minor virus, and as I was thanking my lucky stars that I hadn't passed out while Susan was present, I realized that my body and gown were covered with sweat, the breaking of the fever. I started to get out of bed, planning to wash myself, and looking vaguely around for my negligee when I heard Susan's voice: "Are you feeling better?"

I looked over at her. She was standing in the doorway to my bedroom calmly wiping her hands on a dish towel. She looked at me and I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that she had not left before I fainted. She had undressed me. Vaguely it began coming back to me. She knows, I thought. "You know," I whispered.

She nodded. "I was never more surprised in my life," she said a little wryly.

"And...and what have you done about it?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders slightly, and seated herself in the hardback chair next to the door. I felt, strangely, more embarrassed than frightened, and in an utterly feminine gesture, sitting up, I pulled the sheet and blanket up over my bosom. The gesture might have been feminine, but the reason wasn't...I didn't want her to see what she now knew to be a male breast covered with soft nylon and lace. "I thought you ought to tell me," she said. She seemed more curious than angry. "Are you planning to get the operation?"

That would have been an easy answer to assent to, it might have made me more explicable, but it was her attitude, strangely open, non-accusatory, that made it impossible for me to lie to her. "No, no, that's not it." I shook my head, aware of how my curls pressed damply against my cheeks. "I...I don't want to become a woman. I...I like living as one."

She nodded, and arose. "Do you feel like eating something?"

I was hungry. Blushing, I said, "I'd like to wash up first, if I may."

"It's your apartment, Annemarie...or, what is your name?"

"Alan," I mumbled. Feeling absurd, I reached for my lacy negligee and drew it on.

She watched me as I arose, then stood up herself and went to the door. "Why don't I put on some broth for you? Perhaps some tea?"

I stayed in the bathroom as long as I could, taking a long bath. I felt both enervated and yet better because of it. When I came back in my room, I noticed she had thoughtfully closed the door behind me. I opened my lingerie drawer. I drew on a fresh bra and panties and then hesitated. Shouldn't I put on jeans? She was wearing jeans. No, that would seem too obvious! Almost angry that this problem should face me on top of the larger one, I took out a slip, quickly donned it, and then buttoned myself into my blue dress. I gave a quick brush at my hair, but decided against makeup. Slipping my stockingless feet into a pair of high-heeled open-toed shoes, even in that moment enjoying the slap of my skirts against my bare legs, I went out into the living room where she was waiting in the kitchen alcove. She looked me up and down, nodded again, and poured me the soup.

We spent most of the rest of that afternoon and well into the evening talking, or, rather I did most of the talking, and she was a sympathetic, non-judgmental listener. I sensed she still didn't understand why I or any man, would want to live and dress as a woman. But she was willing to accept that I did. She had learned about transvestism, as separate from drag, both in college and through occasional conversations with friends but she had never met anyone like me. She knew we existed, yet, she had not really believed in us. We were case histories in textbooks, not full-fledged human beings, and that was difficult for her (just as it had been for Berenice) to accept. By that I mean, she could accept that I liked to dress in women's clothing and even was, as she assured me wonderingly, marvelously convincing as a woman, but I was not a separate self. As she later put it, "I wanted to think of you as a person, a man, but I kept getting stopped by the fact of your clothes." I was a man but a man in a dress.

Of course, eventually the question came up of what was going to happen next. Whatever her problems were, she was convinced of one thing: I was no sex maniac. I might be a danger to my own security, but not to anyone else. As far as she was concerned, she told me, that if I wanted to continue living as I had been, she would keep my secret. I was sure, relatively sure, she would, too. I told her I didn't know what I was going to do. And I didn't.

But I really did, I soon realized. Even though I argued with myself that I could keep going as I had, that perhaps something might even develop further between Susan and me (did I want that?), I knew it was at an end. I wasn't quite sure why, but my

plan had always been based on no one knowing...that was its purity...that the experience of acceptance was what I wanted. Whether that was the real reason or not, perhaps the awareness that the next time I was unmasked I wouldn't be so lucky in the person who discovered me, I left. It was two days later, dressed in male clothing I had bought the day before. With my suitcases beside me, (no one offered to carry them for me this time!) I stood waiting for the bus. No one seemed to recognize me as the young woman who had lived in the apartment house. The bus arrived; I departed, having left behind in Susan's mailbox a long (and I'm sure) quite incomprehensibly complex letter.

That was two years ago. For a long period afterward, six months, nearly a year, I found I had virtually no cross-dressing impulses at all. My feminine clothing was all there; all I had to do was put it on, but I had a renewed sense of my masculinity. It was the night in the bar come back to life. I couldn't understand at all now why I had gone on the mad venture, and it seemed symbolically correct that it had ended when the fever broke. I established, very slowly, a small practice, and worked at it hard, as I did several new articles in the field of law in which I was specializing. As my earlier ones had been, these attracted favorable attention, and despite my youth I was offered a contract to do a book on my field which would be published by one of the companies that specialize in that work.

But, of course, the desire to dress came back. It's been with me now for almost a year again. For a while, as I have sometimes in the past, I fought the good battle against it. I worked extraordinary hours, deliberately wearying myself, to stop myself from getting back in skirts. But, of course, I gave in. I am wearing a plaid skirt and nylon blouse with dolman sleeves as I write this. I guess the crucial event was the return of Aunt Ruth, the lover gone. She is back in Philadelphia now, as am I. Tomorrow we leave for a vacation. Together. To the Bahamas.

Oh, Annemarie, what is your final future?

THE END

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A college prank traps Pat into becoming Patti...coed. Pat is helped by his wife and in-laws to dress as a girl for a college dance. Then, things just got out of hand: double dating with his wife and getting a job as "Patti".

CHEERLEADER MASCOT #6

The fraternity needed a mascot and they all thought it would be cute to have a "cheerleader". None of the coeds would do it, so two of the brothers were drafted to become cheerleaders. Cheerleader Mascot takes you behind the scenes for an intimate look at their transformation into lovely young girls.

PASSPORT TO FEMININITY #7

(Previously titled, **MISS-ING PASSPORT**) Shelley loses his passport. The replacement has a small mistake. It says he's "female". All of their reservations for a summer in Europe were made for two girls, not a husband and wife. Something would have to change.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON #8

"His mother had plans for his hair. With its new length, she had several options:

fancy French braiding, or perhaps and elegant upsweep." All because he wanted to let his hair grow a little longer.

A daughter and son, all in one child.

JUST LIKE A WOMAN #9

In search of a big story, an investigative reporter goes "undercover" and enrolls at the Chrissy Institute. (Where they train boys to live as girls.) Would he ever be the same? This is a tale of a reporter's search for a sensational story.

SKIRTING THE ISSUE #10

His boss forced him to join a women's social club hoping they would discriminate against men. Thompson heard the rules: "We expect you to maintain a high level of hygiene. Included are legs smoothly shaven, bras and nylons worn...." Could he face this challenge?

NOT ENOUGH GIRLS #11

Chris has to find two boys who are willing to be girls for their fraternity.

ALL DOLLED UP #12

Bill's sister Lilly needed a model for her beauty school training. Kelly, a neighbor boy, was willing to help. A few pictures later all their lives would be changed. Could Bill resist this "dream girl?"

ACTING LIKE A GIRL #13

Ken was accepted into a Shakespearean drama college. He quickly learned that during Shakespeare's time, boys played the girl's parts!

MAID UP #14

John's wife has a few ideas to make him help around the house. He's soon a dapper domestic.

FLIGHT OF FANCY #15

Some men think they have complete control over women. This is the story of one such man. After a plane crash, women take control over him. Alex will never be the same.

DRESSED TO DANCE #16

Due to an accident, Dave has to "fill in" for Jessica at a dance contest.

GOING A BROAD #17

A father goes abroad to visit a long lost son. His son is now modeling bikinis. What will Shelley's father do when he finds out about his son modeling bikinis? What any father would do.

NEAR MISS #18

In a small town, everyone knows

everyone's business. How could Jan possibly change her son into her daughter without everyone knowing? And why would she want to?

TIT FOR TAT #19

Two young wives make a bet: After dressing their husbands as women, the first one "read" is the loser. Jerry's dream marriage turns into a nightmare when he realizes what he and his buddy are being turned into-WOMEN!

THAT'A GIRL #20

A young boy spends the summer in Malibu as a girl. His father hopes that this will cure his unusual "hobby".

WOMAN'S WORK #21

Larry hated working on his father's farm. He found out that heavy labor wasn't the only work that never ends.

MY SON, THE BRIDESMAID #22

Robin gets "into" his new job at the bridal shop.

PAUL: GIRL MODEL #23

Glamour or hard work? Paul tells all about his life as a girl model.

HUSBAND TO HOUSEWIFE #24

After helping his working wife with the housework, Gene decides to make it a permanent change.

ONE OF THE GIRLS #25

A mother and son decide that he shouldn't grow up to be like his abusive father. . .or any other man.

WOMAN-HOOD #26

Marlon and Darwin are delinquent twins who have a choice...Jail or womanhood!

WOMAN-HOOD COMPLETED #27

The delinquent twins cope with their new womanhood.

HOLIDAY IN HEELS AND HAWAII IN HEELS #28

Dale's experience wearing dresses for a school play and more.

LIKE A DAUGHTER #29

Mother & son check into a "fat farm" only to find it accepts only females!

MY SON , THE DEBUTANTE #30

Julian is invited to a fancy party where all the boys dress like girls...and the girls like boys!

MY SON, THE BRIDE #31

The lives of several boys are changed after attending a cross dressing party...One is going to be a bride!

PRETTY AS YOU PLEASE #32

A young man goes to work at his in-law's beauty salon...As a girl!

FEMININE APPEAL #33

We all know women can do men's jobs. . .how about men doing a woman's job-like strippers?

HAIR TODAY, GOWN TOMORROW #34

A day in a beauty parlor turns into a new job, a new girlfriend and a new life!

DAUGHTERS ONLY #35

A young man is faced with a decision-will it be the Army or take his mother's place as a stewardess?

SLINK OR SWIM #36

David borrows his Aunt's swimsuit for a quick dip in the lake. . .No one will see him right? Wrong! How far will he go to hide his gender?

CAMPING IN CURLS #37

A family send their son to camp. . .to learn everything about being a girl! His father assumes that will end his interest in dresses! DOUBLE ISSUE

BLONDE & BLONDER #38

Three feminists force their sons to enter a beauty contest. Each boy has his own way of handling the trauma of being sissified and beautified. Could one of these boys win?

WITH MOTHER'S HELP #39

Nick finds that he likes helping his mother do "girl things. . .and she helps him learn everything he needs to know about being a girl full time! DOUBLE ISSUE!

GIRL BY CHOICE #40

After getting in trouble, the only way Pat's mother will let him out of the house is in a dress!

LETTING HIS HAIR DOWN #41

Jan's mother buys him some girlish things to keep his hair out of his eyes. . .his grandmother buys him the dress! Naughty Grandma! DOUBLE ISSUE!

COED CREATED #42

Carl's scholarship has a few strings attached. . .I should say bra straps! This very long (120 pages) has it all: the lady doctor, a man hating girlfriend, and the supportive roommate. DOUBLE ISSUE!

MORE THAN A WOMAN #43

Andy finds out that a friend cross-dresses and to his surprise, his wife suggest he does it too! A tale of two wives and their husbands.

DRESSING UP & D.U. COMPLETED

#44 &45

A sickly young man goes to spend some time with his aunt. Their little dress-up games get carried away and he becomes too feminine to return to masculinity.

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A twin is forced by his brother and mother to become the "girl" of the house! Illustrated!

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ALWAYS A BRIDESMAID #53

Baily's mother need his help to run their little bridal salon. He didn't mind until one of the bridesmaids got sick and the dress fit!

LADIES DAY & LADIES NIGHT #54 & 55

Being a reporter is one thing but reporting on women's fashions required more than just a change of clothes!

MOTHER'S NEW DAUGHTER #56

Jesse mother gives him only one choice to keep his long hair-the beauty parlor! There he meets a very special friend.

THAT'S NO GIRL! & THAT'S NO LADY #57 & 58

That's actually their son and father! This

two part, illustrated story is about two boys, their father and the women who force them into the feminine role.

Illustrated with 30 great drawings!

BECOMING GIRLFRIENDS & BECOMING LADIES #59 & 60

I have had many letters asking about that famous school where the boys become girls. These two books are about that school and its attendees. Illustrated 30+ great drawings!

A DRESS FOR DANNY #61

Racy! After breaking his mother's high heels, she buys Danny his own pair! And then a dress...who could encourage this? Surprise! Illustrated with many great drawings.

HUSBAND TO WAITRESS #62

What starts as a job opportunity turns to embarrassment as a young husband is forced to take a job as a busboy. His wife has an idea to get him more money! Promote him to "waitress!" Racy! Illustrated!

FEMINIZATION HONEYMOON #63

After losing their luggage, a young wife teaches her husband how to be a lady! His wife doesn't miss a trick. Written by Tami, a new writer in the classic style. Illustrated!

HE'S A GOOD GIRL! #64

A mother finds a way to put her son through college - both financially and in style. Illustrated!

TRAINED LIKE MOM & JUST LIKE MOM #65 & 66

A school has a program called "Walk a mile in her shoes!" The guys that sign up need a lot of help and they get it! School was never like this...Darn!

BIRTH OF A LADY #67

We all know about people who get married thinking they'll change. This is a story of a wife who thought her love of feminizing men would go away after she married. It didn't. So Robert must do the changing...and changing and change. 92 pages! Illustrated!

WALKS LIKE A GIRL & WALKS LIKE A GIRL TOO #68 & 69

Will Pete follow in his brother's high-

heeled footsteps?

MY SON, THE ACTRESS #70

Illustrated with 15 drawings by a new and wonderful artist. A favorite writer who's finally back writes this story. Terry's mother, aunt and cousin encourage him into the finer things of life.

TOES IN THE HOSE #71

What would you do for a friend? Would you wear a dress?

AUNTIE GETS TOUGH #72

Aunt Helen makes her rude nephew learn manners, respect, obedience, and a "niecely" FASHION SENSE!

AUNTIE GETS TOUGHER #73

Dana's unique adventures in flirty dresses, fitted skirts, silky lingerie, feminine makeup, and high heels.

A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND #74

In search of a roommate, a nurse is forced to let an old patient move in and she discovers a new girlfriend. Sharing clothes, makeup tips and much more! Great Classic!! Illustrated.

JESSE INTO JESSICA I #75 & II #76

By a wonderful new writer! I was hooked on this darling story from page one! Each day both mother and aunt add a bit of femininity to Jesse's routine...making sure that Jesse learns some new ways.

CALL HIM "MISS" #77 & CALL HIM "SIS" #78

Heather teaches a boy staying with her all about the pleasures and pains of a girl's daily routine. From hair curling to a first dress...it's all here. Sexy too!

GOING AS GIRLS #79

By a new writer, it's the story of a husband who gets tired of his wife borrowing his things. So...he'll just borrow hers. Illustrated.

SISSIES TO SISTERS I #80 & II #81

This is a story about a panty raid gone really badly. The boys go from stealing the panties to wearing them! After stealing the panties, the sorority teaches the boys what being girls is all about. Wonderful illustrations!

MISS UNDERSTOOD #82

Tom never thought he had any feminine tendencies but that was the diagnosis. Why fight them?

PRETTY IS AS PRETTY DOES #83

Matt and Andy help their mothers with

some hemming. Their mothers help them with their hair...Did they go too far?

GIRL'S GETAWAY #84

School was out for summer...perfect time for the boys to get into a little trouble. These boys get into more than that! Illustrated!

PINK SLIP I #85 & II #86

No one wants to get a pink slip at work. These guys get them with LACE! Too good for one book! Many Illustrations.

GIRLISH #87

What boy would carry his mother's purse at the mall? And then what? The women in his life would probably want to do his hair and then what? Great new illustrator!

SWISHFUL THINKING #88

Brad becomes Brandy with his mother's help! Illustrated.

GIRLHOOD #89

While most young men were growing into their manhood, one wasn't.

A PROPER LADY 1 & 2 #90 #91

Boys can be crude and unkempt...but this one was taught to be a lady! Illustrated.

CONTEMPORARY TV FICTION

CAN'T CUT IT #1

Medical science solves one man's problem without an operation. The hormone therapy changes his outlook on life not to mention his appearance.

SCHOOLING IN SKIRTS #2

Danny didn't know what Halloween costume to wear. His sister had an idea.

GOING TO THE BALL #3

One man's journey exploring the feminine side of his life.

UNIQUE CONCEPT/FROM FLOOD TO SKIRTS #4

Two wonderful stories of men experiencing the other side of life.

SKIRT FOR A FLIRT #5

Brian didn't realize what a harmless day of flirting at the mall would cost.

EXCHANGING VOWS #6

Randy finds that being a "wife" for a weekend is harder than he thought.

Especially when his own wife is living as the wife of another man. By giving up his male role, does Randy also have to give up his wife?

CHANGING VOWS TOO #7

Randy and his wife move to live as girlfriends. While his wife works as a model, Randi tries to find work...and himself.

VIRGIN VOWS #8

Randy and his twin sister have a yearly picture taken when they're dressed alike.

This year it's in prom gowns!

VOW OF FEMININITY #9

Randy is faced with decisions. Will he stay married to Mindy as a girl?

FRENCH DRESSING #10

Something had to change and Emile was it. A fully illustrated story.

THE NEW GIRL #11

A job is a job...unless it requires too much. Can Stephan be a good secretary?

THE GIRL'S PART #12

From a part in a play to a new role in life. Andy's feminization.

THE BOY WHO BLOSSOMED #13

A young man takes a job in his aunt's flower shop. Everyone mistakes him for a girl...the flower girl.

MY SISTER'S SHADOW #14

He simply had to fill in for his twin sister. A simple task but...it was for her wedding.

HIS FIRST DRESS #15

A tomboy helps Elliot dress in clothes she'd never wear. They teach each other new things!

GIRLIES #16

Two couples find that they have a lot in common. Both husbands like dressing like women! They make plans for spending the summer as mothers and daughters!

HUSBAND TO HOSTESS #17

A young man finds out his wife would rather have him helping with her catering business than being a bum at home.

DOUBLE ISSUE**MY BOSOM BUDDY #18**

Two long time friend's relationship is strained when one gets a job modeling girl's clothes.

HEAD OVER HEELS #19

Glen's mother knew all about raising girls

from bows to the perfect hairdo. What a waste of talent since she only had Glen, right?

I DRESS, THEREFORE I AM #20

After getting caught in his mother's clothes, his mother buys him his own. He finds acceptance and find a new life.

DOUBLE ISSUE**REDTOES #21**

Two young couples make a bet. . . Which wife can turn their husband into the most realistic looking girl? How far will they go to win?

TOO MANY SKIRTS #22

A young man joins an all girl band. The only problem is the uniform. . . they all want to wear skirts! But he looks like a girl in them?? . . .

DOUBLE ISSUE**FLIRTING WITH FASHION #23**

A man gets help with this cross-dressing from another cross-dresser. But is it really help?

JEFF'S HUMILIATION #24

This is a fully illustrated story of a young man who is forced to attend the carnival in frilly petticoats. The drawings in this story are some of the best I have ever seen!

THE PAMPERED SISSY #25

What would you do for millions? Steven's rich aunt leaves him her fortune. . . with one catch. He must become a girl!

DEAR SIR OR MADAM #26

A wonderful fiction book exploring the intimate lives of males facing their femininity. Many different stories with many different motivations. Great!

GIVING HIM THE SLIP #27

Women wearing the pants and men wearing the skirts?? It just isn't done, is it? Would men ever be the ones to wear make-up and be submissive to their wives? Read this and find out!

A LIVING DOLL #28

A mother decides to show her son how to take care of his hair and gets carried away!! When his girlfriend finds out. . .

FEMININE METAMORPHOSIS #29

The story of a young man's transformation into a social and sexy young woman. A new writer with wonderful insight!

CASE OF THE MISSING PANTIES #30

Bill Cates goes to work at a lingerie

company and things start to disappear. What will happen to the person who took them??

CLEAVAGE #31

After helping his seamstress mother with some swimsuit modeling, Shawn finds a hidden interest in girl things. His father has a secret and the fun BUSTS out!

JOINING THE GIRLS #32

Boys will be boys until two boys embarrass a group of girls and they find out boys are sometimes made to be girls!!

JOURNEY INTO WOMANHOOD#33

A young man, femininely distressed as a teenager, finds himself turning into a woman!

TASSELS FOR TOMMY #34

A man marries a stripper. . .she suggests he go into the business too!

A SUMMER GIRL #35

Tory is forced to spend his summer vacation as a girl with his cousin!

HORMONES FOR LIFE #36

It's death or female hormones for this man!

WINDOW DRESSING #37

A young man finds a new job in a department store-as a window mannequin.

FRILL OF IT ALL #38

A wife helps her husband become the woman of his and her dreams.

METAMORPHOSIS & META'

COMPLETED #39 & 40

A transformed girl helps many femininely distressed young men search for the ultimate feminine experiences!

HUSBAND INTO GIRLFRIEND #41

Many wives wonder why they have a husband when a girlfriend would be so much more fun! One wife decides to change her husband! Illustrated!

JUST ANOTHER GIRL #42

When poor Robin's mother finds out he's been cast as a girl in the school play, she wants to make him PERFECT! Illustrated!

SISTERS FOREVER #43

This is the story of two brothers who are forced to be sisters to help a sickly aunt. Ten great illustrations by Puyal! A

summer of discovery!

FEMININE DESIRES #44

A reporter thinks that feminizing his nephew was a good story but before he knows it, the tables are turned on him.

Great illustrations by Puyal.

TAKING HER PLACE #45

David is forced to take his sister's place...in mind and in body. His and his mother share many experiences! Many great drawings by Puyal.

MISTAKEN FOR A GIRL / MISTAKEN FOR A DAUGHTER #44 & 47

Wearing his sister's clothes, Steve is mistaken for a girl. Once seen, he is forced to assume the role of a daughter in a small town. Written by Nikki, a new writer who has a way of getting her heroine into some major trouble! Illustrated by Puyal!

SON TO SISTER #48

The story of a son that follows in his father's footsteps...actually his high heels! Illustrated by Puyal. A wonderful story.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MODEL & A DIFFERENT KIND OF BRIDE #49 & 50

It starts out with a young man who helps his sister at a bridal fair by becoming a model. Illustrated by Puyal.

CHICKS RULE! #51

A great story. A dress is only a dress until your wife makes you wear it. A sexy tale of an "understanding wife" who takes her husband places he never imagined going!

SITTING PRETTY & SITTING PRETTY TOO #52 & 53

Gone with his male clothes! We all know that Southern girls are trained to be ladies. But what about the guys? A summer vacation turns these boys into Southern Belles! 88 pages each with special pencil illustrations by Puyal.

GIRLIE GIRL #54

Who wouldn't want to be younger? Or even look younger? Norm's wife has a unique idea!

FEMININE BUDDY #55

Kit gets an opportunity that half the population dream about...the girl half. Illustrated.

PRETTY LITTLE PANTIES #56

Poor Steve ends up at school in his mother's dress. Illustrated.

BECOMING EMMA #57

An accident forces a family to treat Kevin like a girl.

HIS SISTER'S DRESS#58

A delightful story of a guy that is caught borrowing his sister's clothes. As a punishment, his mother and sisters decide he should spend a little time in dresses! Illustrated.

MAKEUP MATERIAL #59

It's really three stories. Two delightful stories of guys facing their budding femininity and one...one very different newsy story of a little town called, ESTRO, Illinois. Lot's of drawings.

DRESSES & TRESSES #60

Bobby has a few problems. All the women in his life seem intent on getting him into dresses. But they'll stop soon, right? Wrong! Lots of great Puyal drawings!

A GIRL NOW #61 & THEY'RE GIRLS NOW #62

This great story is by a new writer. Randal and his friends are put through training that...well, lets say few guts go through. Nearly a year's work by three editors went into making this a masterpiece! Lots of great Puyal drawings!

LEARNING CURVES #63

Life throws a curve at two boys. In fact, it throws two curves their way...With their mother's help and a dance teacher, they learn a new way of life. Illustrated.

MY BETTER HALF #64

After coping with many changes....Rob decides to make a few changes in his life and the way he dresses. Illustrated.

DISCOVERING DRESSES #65

A male teacher learns that there is no substitution for experience in learning. He finds out all about being a woman! Illustrated!

BIKINI BOUND #66

Many, many great illustrations! The story of a boy who has to be a girl on a family vacation. His mother and three sisters make sure he's perfect...even in a bikini!

PURSE STRINGS #67

Tight finances force a boy to wear his sister's hand me downs...Why waste good dresses and high heels?

SISSY'S HISSY FIT #68

If an overbearing father calls his son a "sissy", there is only one way a mother can get back! Great illustrations!

DRESS UP DAY #69

Dressing up for a talent contest helps a young man find a new interest that everyone encourages...except one. Who knows, maybe he'll even get into it? Illustrated.

LAVENDER & LACE I #70

A young man's journey from lavender to lace. Illustrated

LAVENDER & LACE II #71

Sometimes it's the little things in life that create the biggest changes...one youn man's journey from lavender to lace! Part 2. Illustrated.

GIRLFRIENDS TV FICTION

ENDOWED WITH BEAUTY

A boring life suddenly gets out of hand when a CPA's wife gets involved with a hairdresser.

FEMININE PROPOSAL

Stan is forced to accept his wife's proposal...and become a woman.

FEMININE PROPOSAL II

Stan is forced to accept his wife's proposal...and become a woman.

FEMININE PROPOSAL III

Stan is forced to accept his wife's proposal...and become a woman.

FEMININE PROPOSAL IV

Stan is forced to accept his wife's proposal...and become a woman.

FEMININE PROPOSAL V, THE FINAL PROPOSAL

Stan is forced to accept his wife's proposal...and become a woman.

LUCK BE A LADY

Parents are always hiding things from their kids but for Dad to suddenly start living as a woman! That is just too much...or is it?

A PARTY GIRL

Ryan hated shopping with his wife. All she was interested in was girl things...something had to change! Illustrated!

DRESSING DOWN

Cory had everything: a beautiful wife, great job, and money. So why were things so messed up? A sexy tale of a

couple coping with unique challenges. Illustrated!

HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTESS

What would a wife make a guy do for success? If their restaurant needed a woman...guess he'd be it! Completely illustrated and great fun!

EMPATHY FICTION CLASSICS

QUEEN OF THE DANCE #1

A young man is picked up by a lady...and becomes the dress up toy for her and her friends. Can he escape? New illustrations and editing.

TV TRAINING CAMP #2

What if your wife really wanted you to cross dress? The story of two women turning their husbands into ladies!

TV VACATION #3

Spying on a slumber party gets Tom and Phil into more than a little trouble...It gets them forced into dresses!

BOY! HE'S A PRETTY GIRL! #4

A funny story of a longhaired boy who is recruited to teach the town's most beautiful girls to wrestle. They decide to teach him what they know best! Great illustrations and new additions.

BRIDEGROOM IN TRAINING #5

By the best writer (in my opinion) that Empathy ever had. This is a story that touches everyone and every place. Francis' new wife had a way to make him quit flirting with the girls..."Flirt for a Skirt!" Great illustrations and new additions.

HIS DRESS UNIFORM #6

A longhaired rebel is forced into a parochial school where they wear uniforms. He refuses to cut his hair and wear those geeky boy's uniforms...so he's fitted for one that the longhaired students wear forcing a "Change of Habit!" Illustrated and re-written.

TRANSVESTIA FICTION

FATED FOR FEMININITY #1

"Why not let Lennie compete anyway, of course, he would have to dress as a girl from now on. We could spread the word that Lennie is not a boy, and never was. It might work..."

IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY #2

John dresses in skirts to show the girl's at school how they should dress. His mother and father suggest he try it for the summer. Thus "Jane" is born. Many surprises!

TALES FROM A PINK MIRROR #3

Gerald is removed from his all boy school and is enrolled in a school of his stepmother's choice. He is enrolled to learn how to be dainty and feminine.

HIS AND HERS EQUALS THEIRS #4

Joan always borrowed her husband's clothes. To get even, Stephen borrowed hers. Every passing day found Stephen more feminine in actions, dress, and conversation.

IF YOU CAN'T LICK 'EM, JOIN 'EM #5 (DOUBLE ISSUE)

Merrill loses a bet and must dress as a girl for six months.

HE...CROSSED THE LINE! #6

A young couple can only find an apartment that accepts women.

CHRIS TO CHRISSE #7

A high school prank causes Chris to have to dress like a girl.

MARTIN TO MARION #8 (2 BOOKS)

All three parts of a long story of Martin's experimentation at learning the role of "Marion".

A TALE OF TWO MOTHERS #9

Two mothers teach their sons about being girls.

FASHION MODELS #10

A completely revised story about two boys who become fashion models! Their lives, loves and careers.

ACCEPTANCE #11

Erica's mother tries to stop her daughter from marrying a cross-dresser.

CHARM SCHOOL #12

After an accident, Alex fills in for his wife at their charm school. As a woman!

IDEAL MARRIAGE #13

In search of the "ideal marriage," Richard puts himself in his wife's shoes...also her dress, lingerie &...?

THE BIRTH OF BARBARA #14

Paul and Amy's marriage was falling apart until they decided to switch roles. Paul eventually becomes Barbara.

MANNEQUIN #15

A boy helps his Aunt hem up a dress

she's made and he finds he has a new position around her house.

FEMININE FORTE #16

Andy is forced to take his wife's place in a girl's dance group. Then he got "discovered!"

PETTICOATS FOR PATRICK #17

Patrick's story of growing up with the women who encouraged his dressing up.

THE MAKEOVER #18

To help his wife, a young man must take her job in a beauty parlor... as one of the girls!

BOYS TO BABES #19

The story of a show where the boys take the girl's parts! Each finds a different way to cope with their new identity.

THE PICTURE ALBUM #20

Over 100 pictures of CD's enjoying themselves "en femme". A historical pictorial.

THE TURNABOUT PARTY #21

Husband and wife go to a masquerade party.

I AM A MALE ACTRESS #22

On a bet, a reporter takes a bet...can he pass as a female well enough to try out for a part.

FOOLED INTO FRILLS #23

Many have asked for more of these wonderful tales from Transvestia. This book has two. "Wrong side of the Track" about a boyfriend who poses as a girlfriend & "Beauty Pageant," the story of a reporter who enters a beauty contest.

RED, WHITE & PINK #24

Two wonderful stories of two young men...one that is running from his responsibilities, the other is doing it for his country. Both end up where most men would dread, in dresses!

MY SUMMER IN DRESSES #25

A summer at the lake turns into a summer of discovery. Joe finds out how the girls spend their summer...in dresses!

TITILLIATING TV TALES

HUSBAND TO SISSY #1

HUSBAND TO SISTER #2

HUSBAND TO SEDUCTRESS #3

This series has been the most expensive to produce with drawings by Puyal on nearly every page. A collaboration of

your favorite writers that took years to finish!

AUNTIE'S REVENGE #4 AND

AUNTIE'S SWEET REVENGE #5

A wonderfully illustrated story of an Aunt who just won't stop buying girlish things for her nephew. He's faced with being a sissy or being a niece!

UNDER HIS SKIRTS #6

A man is forced to take on a feminine role and his wife wants him to be perfect! This is a wonderfully illustrated story of when things just go "too far!"

PRACTICALLY A GIRL #7

Why would anyone want a boy to model brassieres when there are so many girls? Maybe that is the point! Illustrated.

A WILLING WOMAN

How far would you go to help a friend? Would you put on lingerie, makeup and a cute little dress? Illustrated!

GIRLS' THINGS I & II

A couple guys call someone a sissy...there's nothing like a cute little dress and some girls' things for revenge!

THE STORE BRIDE

After going to live with his Aunts, a young man find comfort in his new job...in their bridal shop! Great Illustrations.

PRETTIER IN PINK I

PRETTIER IN PINK II

Based on the classic story of a young man whose mother gets confused and decides he's going to be her daughter! Great illustrations and great fun!

MAKE-BELIEVE GIRL

A summer in the big city turns a guy's life upside down! Illustrated.

WHAT SISSIES WANT

There's nothing like a bunch of sissy clothes to make a tough guy feel like a sissy...and then girl's clothes to make him feel like a girl! Illustrated.

WHAT GIRLS WANT

There's nothing like a bunch of sissy clothes to make a tough guy feel like a sissy...and then girl's clothes to make him feel like a girl! Illustrated.

PETTICOAT PUNISHMENT

ILLUSTRATED

SCHOOLED TO BE GIRLS

A new sub series of the PPI. A detailed Puyal drawing on nearly every page spread!

#1 NORM:

This series will follow the lives of various students of the Sylvan School where boys are taught to be proper young ladies...Great illustrations on early every other page.

#2 VAN: THE BRIDE!

Van causes some trouble and is sent to the Sylvan School to be trained as a girl! This book has a great Puyal illustration on nearly every two pages. Wonderful escape reading!

#3 BOB: PANTY THIEF

Bob steals panties and is sent to the Sylvan School to be trained as a girl!

BILL'S HUMILIATION'S IN PANTIES

Eight volumes with illustrations on every other page.

A long story about a young man being punished. He thought he could take anything until the girls took over.

HENRY'S VACATION IN PAINTIE-FIVE BOOKS

A most classic tale of Henry and his Aunt. Almost every other page of this tale is illustrated with finely drawn pictures of every stage of his embarrassments. A must for collectors!

SCHOOLED WITH GIRLS 1-3

Over one hundred and twenty hand crafted drawings span these three books.

It answers the question, "What could be worse than being forced to go to school with the girls?" Poor Peter finds out...he's forced to wear their clothes too! Don't miss out on this one! Even one of the drawings by Puyal is worth the price!

BEAUTIFIED BULLIES 1-4

An amazing story with a detailed illustration by Puyal on nearly every two page spread. This series is the story of two young men whose ruffian ways are controlled via petticoats and pretties.

There are over 150 professionally drawn illustrations. This is an amazing collection.

THE MALE MAID BOOK OF ABC'S

The Male Maid Book of ABC's, Male Maid' contains twenty-six new Juan

drawings of male maids and pithy text by Carole Jean facing twenty-six classic full-page male maid drawings by Juan.

BOUND TO BE A MAID

Bound to be a Maid, 'Bound' was originally sold in the 1950's as a set of 40 photographs of "VanRod" (Gene Bilbrew) art. Its original title was "Bound Over or Missing Gwen de Lynn". No credit was given to the author whose brief text appeared above each drawing, nor was the publisher named

NOW HE'S LOUISE & THE BERIBBONED GANG

"Now He's Louise & The Beribboned Gang", 'Louise and Beribboned' are two classic Petticoat Punishment stories from forty years ago. I updated the text and hired Adam to illustrate it.

THE SARAH SCHOOL

"The Sarah School", 'Sarah School' is a new version of a classic Petticoat Punishment story from forty years ago. I updated the text and hired Adam to illustrate it.

CRAVEX - A WIFE'S REVENGE

CraveX - A Wife's Revenge". This (largely) original Petticoat Punishment tale with a twist or two was fully illustrated by Adam.

TV SERIALS MAGAZINE

AMERICAN BOY IN ENGLAND

Four volumes of classic CDing. You find out what is worn under Kilts and more!!! Considered one of the best stories ever written by many.

DESTINED FOR DRESSES-PARTS:

ONE, TWO, THREE

The story of what happens to Terry and Kim are "drafted" to become cheerleaders in short skirts! Will they survive?

MANICURED TO PERFECTION #1

In search of a job, Rob can only find work in a beauty parlor. Will he find happiness?

PRIMPING TO PERFECTION #2

POLISHED TO PERFECTION #3

"DOMESTIC BLISS "ONE, TWO, THREE

A young man finds "domestic bliss" as a fashion model's sissy maid. A very long and well-written story. 3 books.

FORCED TO BE A DAUGHTER #1

**LEARNING TO BE A DAUGHTER #2
BECOMING A DAUGHTER #3**

A three part series. After a problem with a girlfriend, Justin is sentenced to 9 months of dressing like a girl. His mother decides she doesn't mind having a daughter! She makes him a daughter!

**THE APARTMENT OF FEMININITY
BOOKS-ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR**

This VERY long story is about a landlady who rents a room to a cross dresser and finds him to be the perfect boarder. . .She soon rents to others and forces them to live as girls!

**PUNISHED IN PINK
BOOKS-ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR**

His rich aunt and her maid discipline Gale. His unruly behavior is stopped by a sentence in girl's clothes. He meets many others like himself!

**SANDY THOMAS MAGAZINES
I BECAME MY SISTER (COMIC
BOOK#1)**

Man learns how to live the life of his sister. Fully illustrated, comic book style. Also includes "Tebby, Teen TV.

I BECAME A GIRL (COMIC BOOK#2)

Learn how his girlfriend turns a boy into a girl from several stories of his exploits. Also IS THIS THE END OF NIGHTMAN? Another super hero adventure.

**I BECAME A SUPER BABE (COMIC
BOOK#3)**

Tebby, teen TV goes shopping the super hero adventure of Impressive Girl!

**I BECAME A PRINCESS (COMIC
BOOK#4)**

Male Chauvinist becomes a girl and another man wakes up to find out he's now a Princess!

**I BECAME A TEEN-AGE GIRL (COMIC
UNDERSTANDING CROSS-DRESSING.**

A discussion from many points of view about cross-dressing and the men who do it and why. Perfect for someone trying to understand life options. By Virginia Prince.

FROM MAN TO WOMAN

BOOK #5)

The continuing saga of Tebby.

I BECAME MY TEACHER

A wonderful fantasy comic with a Tebby lead story and amazing illustrations and transformations. Completely illustrated.

THE SISSY SERIES

**SISSY MAID QUARTERLY - #2 - #3 - #4
-#5**

Informative guide to the unique lifestyle of the sissy servant. From uniform reviews, etiquette, and obedience. from curtseys, gaffs, to aprons. . .it's all here! Large magazine size. #5 has pictures!

**THE SISSY MAID ACADEMY-PARTS
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A young man is feminized and trained to become a maid to the rich and famous! A day-by -day account of his life in the academy and how to be a maid?

WHERE THE SISSIES COME FROM

A fashion editor is curious about the trained sissy maids she's seeing everywhere. You'll learn about the training and preparation necessary to work in a young woman's household.

THE SLIP

A new writer! A new style! Racy and one of my best-not for the weak at heart. This will only be sold direct. Limited edition! An incredible read! A frilly little slip can get a sissy into a bit of trouble!

THE SECRETARIAL SLIP

A sissy finds his new secretary job a bit more than he can handle.

NON-FICTION BOOKS

THE TRANSVESTITE AND HIS WIFE.

The best book ever written to explain to loved ones about cross-dressing. Written to make the reader understand this unusual hobby and how to cope with it. By Virginia Prince.

A non-fiction biography of someone who was my mentor and changed my life: Virginia Prince. This is a frank and honest biography by Dr. Richard Docter of Virginia's life; most of which was spent living as a woman. She published Tranvestia in the 60's and has been a leader of the TG movement. Fascinating

reading.

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Some guys will do anything for a buck...
Ted even agrees to act as a daughter!



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