



Reluctant Press presents:

Her Son's Name Is
CHRISTINE

Philippa Peters



A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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Her Son's Name Is CHRISTINE!

A continuation of the story, *My Father's Name is Jennifer*

by **Philippa Peters**

I. LIFE WITH MY MOTHERS

"You have to talk to your father for me," my mother snapped at me over the phone. "I've tried calling that clinic of his but they keep on saying that he is away."

"Jennifer is away, mother," I told her. "She's in Canada for a while, at a really big conference, I think."

It was easy to lie to my mother. She wouldn't check up on me. She never had. I wasn't going to tell her that Jennifer, my father, was in fact at a clinic somewhere in Montreal, Canada, having her sex reassignment surgery at last. My mother thought that Jennifer had had the surgery years before.

"Since you two are such buddies again after that time with her in Haversham," my mother sneered at me, "you talk to her, Jack. Tell her that I have to have more money, about a hundred thousand."

"But, mother," I protested. "You've just sold the apartment in New York." That left me homeless except for my residence at the university which I was soon going to have to vacate. "You got millions for that."

"Yes, well," said my mother snappishly. "That's gone. Pablo's investments have been taken over by some awful socialist government in South America. Pablo's down there now, trying to find out what happened and to get our money back. I need money, Jack."

Tell your father. The Ritz hasn't lowered its prices over the last five years, you know. Where else is there to stay in New York?"

"Mother," I said to her, as I had many times before. "Pablo has absconded with your money. You are never going to see him or your money ever again. Why don't you call in the police?"

"Oh, that's just like you," said my mother angrily. "You never did like Pablo." She was off on one of her rants against me, about what an awful son I had turned out to be. I listened for a while, then went into the kitchen and made myself a sandwich. When I got back to the phone, she was still going on about Pablo.

"I'll talk to Jennifer when I see her," I told my mother. "I have to leave the residence next week. My lease is up and I have to find a job, so I don't know when that will be."

"Why don't you just go up and see Jennifer, then?" said my mother. She was unable to keep the sneer out of her voice when she used the feminine name that her former husband, my father, now used. "She will give you anything that you want. You know that. And you wouldn't want to see me reduced to living in Harlem, would you?"

The idea of a racist bitch like my mother living in Harlem was ludicrous. I could barely keep from laughing out loud.

"I'll talk to Jennifer," I told her. "But, mother, no one stays at the Ritz any more."

"I do," Carol Sheffield, my genetic mother, snapped at me. Then she slammed down the phone.

"Way to win friends and influence people," I said to the dead phone as I hung it up.

Having listened to my mother made me wonder just how rich my genetic father really was. My mother had never worked; since their divorce, she had flitted round the world with one boy friend after another. The boy friends were gigolos, in reality. They had been in their early twenties, even as my mother became older and older.

I headed down to the Student Employment Office. Some wag had gotten up on the roof again and the letters 'Un' appeared in front of 'Employment'. Judith was standing in front of the huge noticeboard.

"Anything new, Judy?" I asked her. Judith whipped around, then saw that it was me.

"No, Jack." I was John Molloy Sheffield, John or Johnny to everyone at the university. I had had a fling with Judith after sitting next to her on the flight back from Haversham to New York. I had never told her that I was 'Jack' to my mother and father.

"So, which café are you going to be a waitress in?" I asked her.

"Thinking of coming there and pestering me?" asked Judith. No, our little affair hadn't ended well, not after I got back early to my residence and found her making love to one of the biggest lugs on campus. She stomped petulantly and I was left to check in once more with the Unemployment Office.

"I thought you were away for the whole weekend," didn't cut it as an excuse when Judith said it to me. I told her so, then the real recriminations started. I wasn't manly enough for her. Bart had hair on his legs and on his masculine equipment. It wasn't like making it with a junior high school kid as it was when Judith was making it with *me*.

Actually, my hair had started to grow back. When I came back from Haversham, I was without eyebrows, hair on my head or anywhere on my body. She loved me being so smooth, she told me many times at the start. I didn't remind her of that as she stamped her foot at me and slammed my door as she left.

I shouldn't have given her the silent treatment, I suppose. Judith had been very good for my masculine ego after the days that I spent with my mother in Haversham. Yes, I thought of my father as my mother now, although I called him Jennifer all the time. I thought of Jennifer that way. Carol was simply 'Mother' with a capital 'M'. It was Jennifer who had been the nurturing parent all through my early life when she was just 'Dad'. Visiting her in Haversham had rekindled the affection I had for her. We had swept away all the lies Mother had told me about Jennifer. I understood so much more, after that visit, why my father had to become a woman.

I talked to Jennifer after she had arrived in Montreal and she told me about the lovely place she was renting in Westmount, the English part of the city. Charlie Greenwood was with her.

"So when are you kids going to get married?" I teased my mother.

There was a little pause then. "We're thinking of late July," my mother, Jennifer, told me then. "Will you be able to stop whatever job you are doing and be part of the wedding? It just won't be the same without you."

"I'll be there," I assured her. "Just as long as Christine isn't expected to be."

Jennifer laughed at me then. "No, she's long gone, isn't she?" my mother said. Christine had been my name when I had taken her up on her dare that the only way I could understand her was to 'walk a mile in her shoes.' I had dressed as a girl for two days and it had been an earth-shattering experience, for a time. It was why I had no body hair and no eyebrows to speak of. I had shaved off my hair and claimed to have come back from the tropics and done it on the advice of my doctor.

My lie worked for a while with Judith. It was a pity we broke up just before Christmas. I would have loved to take her back to Haversham and have her meet my mother.

"You know that when you come back," I ended my call to Jennifer by saying, "I am going to be calling you Mummy."

"Oh no," Jennifer gasped. "You mustn't! You really don't have to do that!"

"I am going to," I laughed. "You really were my mother all of these years. You are still nurturing me, even now. I'll only come to your wedding if I can call you Mummy, Jennifer."

"Then I suppose," she began, "that I shall have to agree, darling. It will be so great to see you in Haversham in the summer. It's going to be a small, quiet wedding."

We ended with her telling me how much she loved me, as any mother would. I added, "I love you, too, Mummy," as I hung up. I hoped that helped take back some of the harsh words I said to her in the first few days of our re-acquaintance in Haversham. I hadn't been very nice to the person in a dress, long hair and makeup who said that she was my father.

But Jennifer had been so kind to me. In exasperation with me, she challenged me to understand her. I didn't have to take her up on the offer to be her daughter, basically, for a day. I hadn't expected that she would have had a friend like Andrea, another transsexual. Andrea ran a model agency and saw nothing wrong in transforming me into someone who could have been one of Moore Models, Andrea's agency. I learned so much what it was like to be a girl and I had begun to understand my mother, Jennifer, much better.

I hoped that she didn't have *too* small a wedding. I hoped Charlie, her lover, could persuade her to be a bride in a long, white, flowing dress. She deserved it and I would tell Charlie so when I met him again.

After Mother's telephone call, I called the number Jennifer had given me and was shuffled off to her voice mail. I left her a message. She had been scheduled for her surgery two days before; I couldn't expect her to call back after the trauma she was undoubtedly going through. I had listened to her one night telling me about all the doubts she had about undergoing the final operation to make her a woman.

Jennifer had been thinking that maybe she shouldn't go through with it. What if Charlie didn't like her any more? They had such a wonderful sex life as it was and he wouldn't be able to touch her for so long. What if he didn't like her new sex organs? What if she didn't feel pleasure? What if she couldn't show Charlie how much she was aroused by him and loved him?

"Jennifer, he loves you," I told her. Charlie idolized my mother and it wasn't just because she was a better surgeon than he was. "Those last two days, when I saw you together in Haversham, it was very, very obvious," I told her. "Charlie clearly thinks of you as a woman as well. Every move he makes shows that you are his woman and he is the man in your relationship. Really, Jennifer, this is only going to be cosmetic surgery for you."

II. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO EVERYONE

It was Charlie on the phone from Montreal, Dr. Charles Greenwood, a partner with my mother in the clinic they belonged to in Haversham.

"Charlie!" I gasped, responding to the somber tones which which he had asked for me. "Did everything go well with my mother?"

Charlie stopped for a moment. "It's Jack, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," I said. "How is Jennifer? Is something wrong?"

"The sex reassignment surgery went perfectly," said Charlie. I relaxed a little, a huge sense of relief coming over me. "It's something else they found in the surgery, Jack, and so they transferred her to the General Hospital here."

I think the blood must have drained out of my face. I stopped in the middle of the quadrangle and people walking behind me walked right into me. "Hey, man!" one guy yelled. He stopped and added, "Sorry," as he saw my face.

For a moment, I thought that my heart had stopped as I stood there. Charlie talked about tumors they had found and wasn't it lucky in a way as they were quite hidden and

wouldn't have been found until they had meta-somethinged into her organs. Jennifer had had surgery the previous night; the surgeon was very confident he had gotten them out completely but Jennifer wasn't going to be a hundred percent for a long time.

"I'm coming up to Montreal," I told him. I could use the last few dollars in my bank account to do that.

"You don't need to," said Charlie. "I was there through both her surgeries. She won't really be conscious for a week. I'll want her to move back to Haversham as soon as it's safe for her to do so. She's not a heart risk so she'll be able to fly. You could do me a favor though."

"Anything," I said.

"Come up to Haversham in a couple of weeks or so," Charlie said. "You haven't found a job yet, have you? How about being my assistant for a week or more? I'll pay you and you'll be able to visit with your, your mother and she will be able to talk with you."

"That's a long time," I said, wondering why he wanted to keep me away from her.

Charlie seemed to understand. "There are things she has to do after the sex surgery," he said to me bluntly, "that aren't very pretty that she wanted to keep both of us away from. How about, if she asks for you, I send you a plane ticket for the next available flight from Kennedy? If she wants you to wait till she gets to Haversham, will you respect her wishes?"

I really wanted to go to Jennifer. Charlie was trying to be kind to me and protect Jennifer as well. He had been with her for much longer than me since my other mother and Jennifer divorced. I had really only had a week with Jennifer last year. I would have gone to her at Christmas but the airlines were jammed. We had to agree to just chat on the phone over Christmas. Jennifer had been most concerned that I had broken up with Judith. She had been looking forward to meeting her son's girlfriend, she told me.

I didn't look very hard for a job as I was worried about Jennifer. I jumped when the telephone rang every day. I finally booked a flight to Haversham with the last of my money. Charlie told me where to find a key to the house. Then I met Judith again in the lounge as the passengers for Haversham gathered near the jetway entrance.

"You're not sitting beside me again?" said Judith with a toss of her long, dark hair.

"If you're in row 12, you are," I told her. The look on her face was priceless. "Hey, it won't be so bad. I have a book that I want to read."

"Me, too," Judith said grimly. I really didn't understand her. Shouldn't I be the aggrieved party? She was the one who had been sleeping around. She was making it appear to everyone in school like I had done something awful by dumping her. She was the one who had ended what we had by slamming the door and walking out on me.

During the flight, thoughts of Jennifer kept interfering with me, preventing me from reading.

"What are you going back to Haversham for?" asked Judith.

"My mother," I told her. She closed her book.

"Me too," Judith said.

"Mine had cancer surgery," I said to her.

"Mine, too," said Judith. "That's why I have to go back to Shelby." I had learned from her that Shelby was 'the deadest place in the whole effing world' on a Saturday night. Jude had sworn that she wouldn't go back there ever again. If her mother wanted to see her, she could just come to New York, she had said.

"The job situation might be better up here," I said to her.

"Are you kidding me?" said Judith bitterly. "I'll be pumping gas on the Interstate for fourteen hours a day to make enough money to get back to Sunnyside." That was our private name for the State University of New York; the name hadn't caught on with anyone else but Judith and me. "That is, if I can wrest the job out of some pimply high school kid's hands before they get let out after exams. What will you be doing in Haversham?"

"Me?" I asked her. "Oh, a doctor friend of my mother's needs an assistant for a couple of weeks. After that, I'm not sure."

"He'll keep you on," Judith said, almost sneering at me. "A professional courtesy to your mother. You always fall on your feet, don't you, Jackie boy? You never did tell me. What does she do, gynie, peedie, what?"

"She's not a gynecologist, a pediatrician or a what," I told Judith. "And Dr. Greenwood wouldn't give me a job as a personal courtesy to my mother." I didn't want Judith poking around, looking for me. "He isn't really a friend of my mother's, just an acquaintance, really."

"Some acquaintance," snorted Judith. "Ask him if he's got any other juicy intern jobs lying around the office. I know a dozen people who work in Haversham who could give me a ride into town."

"What type of cancer?" I changed the subject.

"Mastectomy," said Judith darkly. "My mother had a mastectomy. And yours?"

What could I say? I kind of thought that it might be prostate cancer from the medical gobbledegook Charlie was feeding me. "Her ovaries, I think," I said. "She's lucky they caught it."

Judith pulled a wry face. "I know I shouldn't say this but if I had to choose, I would prefer to have something internal rather than external. My dad was saying that my mother was having fits over losing a breast. Do you know what it's like to be a woman without breasts, having to wear padding all the time?"

I *did* know what it was like to be a woman without real breasts but I couldn't say anything about that to Judith. I mumbled something.

"She thinks that she isn't a woman at all," Judith went on. I had to shudder at that as Andrea had said I should wear mastectomy pads in the bra that I wore when I was Christine. Now I was glad that I hadn't.

We talked all the way into Haversham. "I should have been nicer to you, shouldn't I?" said Judith as we waited for our luggage.

"I was pretty hurt with what you said," I murmured, watching the bags come down.

“Didn’t stop you boffing Steph Smith at the Greek Bash, did it?” asked Judith with a funny smile.

“That was weeks later,” I said.

“Two,” said Judith. She waved to me then as she went off to find a cab. I suppose she was right. I *had* gotten over her pretty quickly.

I found the key where Charlie had said it was and entered Jennifer’s house with a slight sense of apprehension. Nothing was changed but a picture in the living room. I went into the room I had used before and dumped my bag. The first thing I spotted was a collection of photographs on the chest of drawers. They were all pictures of me, pictures of me from when I had been Christine.

I had an ominous unsettling feeling in my stomach as I looked at the pictures of me as a female fashion model, smiling at the camera as if I loved wearing the clothing I had on. The picture of me in the long, strapless, yellow, evening dress made me feel as if I was in it. I clasped my hands to my chest and shoulders but I was still me.

I hesitated to open the closet door but I did. There they were, all the outfits I had worn for the picture shoot, all the designer clothes that had been brought over to David Backman’s studio where the photographer of the same name took my picture so many times. There were even a few things I hadn’t worn but I had seen earlier in the fashion show. No wonder Rosemary Dallbrooks, the daughter of the boutique’s owner, had been smiling so much as she wrote in her notebook while my mother had talked to her. It looked like Jennifer had bought out the show.

I opened the top drawer of the chest of drawers and there were the panties I had worn and a whole lot more. I touched the soft silk and a shiver went right through me. I closed the drawer hastily. What was Jennifer thinking, to have a room like this ready for me. Did she think that I was going to come back to Haversham and be her daughter again?

No, I said to myself, I was *not* going to do that again. No, I was not ever going to wear that yellow dress hanging over the yellow high heels in the far part of the closet again.

I swallowed and turned down the bed. There was the nightie I had worn for one night. I had dreamed that I was wearing a long-skirted, evening dress. It was swirling about me as I danced with Grant Kinsley as he smiled and held me tightly around my waist.

I shuddered and shook. Grant Kinsley was the man who had kissed me as if I was a girl and turned my senses to mush. He was the man with whom I had so embarrassed myself in his car, kissing him and putting his hands on me when he had had his fill of making me feel like a woman and wanted to stop.

My cheeks turned bright red as I looked at myself in the mirror. Oh God, I promised myself, I am absolutely not going to do anything like that again. No, not ever, never, never, never. It was going to be *so* embarrassing, if I ever met him again. I must just stay away from Moore Models, Andrea Moore and any suggestion that I dress as a girl again. I must learn how to take the teasing I would get if I did meet Andrea again. I would definitely not rise to the bait and let on that it was anything more than a sophomoric joke to me.

“Yo!” called a male voice from the door. “We are home!”

I hurried out of my room. There was Charlie Greenwood at the front door, holding the door as the ambulance attendants steered Jennifer in her wheelchair into the house.

"Here we are, Dr. Whitehouse," said one cheerfully. "Home, all safe and sound."

Jennifer looked quite peaked, I thought, as she smiled up at the attendant. "Thank you," she said in her familiar, soprano voice. "I don't know what Dr Greenwood was thinking of, having me come home as if I was still a patient. I could have walked, you know."

Jennifer tottered to her feet, in her black, shiny, high heels. Charlie and one of the attendants were there right away to catch her. "Oh," she said, with a laugh, "I've been sitting down too long."

Then she saw me and the look of pain on her face dissolved immediately. "Jack!" my mother called out, filling me with joy at seeing her. "You did come after all!" She held out her arms to me. I put my arms about her and hugged her warmly.

Her reddish hair was plaited about her head and pinned in a little bun at the back of her head. She was exquisitely made-up. She was as fragrant with 'Joy' as I remembered her being from my last visit. But she did look a little older and her eyes were definitely strained. I hugged her and felt her breasts against me as tears came to her eyes.

"We weren't expecting you today!" Jennifer smiled at me. "How did you get in?"

"I talked to Charlie," I told her. I helped her over to the sofa and assisted her to sit down. She made sure to adjust the skirts of her burnt orange dress beneath her and about her stockinged legs. Behind us, Charlie ushered the attendants out and stepped outside for a moment to pay them.

"Are they gone?" asked Jennifer as she held onto my hand. Her own hands were soft and her nails were long, pink and femininely shaped. I nodded as I looked at her, my father, and realized that she was now completely a woman. "Don't change your sex, Jack," she said to me with an attempt at a smile. "Really, it's the pits. I can't believe Peggy and Nikki went through it so easily. I've had nothing but complications. You wouldn't believe it if I told you. It must be my age or something."

"Then I should change my sex while I'm still young and healthy," I quipped.

"Of course," laughed Jennifer, patting my arm. She studied my face and my hair. "It's all grown back then, just as untidy as it was before. Have you had it cut since you had it all shaved off?"

"I have indeed, Mummy, three times," I told her. "And if you had arrived home tomorrow as Charlie led me to believe, you'd have seen me all neat, barbered and clipped."

"Oh, so you came home early," Jennifer said with that lovely smile of hers, "to surprise us and we came home early to surprise you."

"I beat you by only minutes," I told her. "If I had looked around, I probably would have seen you at the airport."

"Oh no," said Jennifer with a smile. "Grant leant us the Shavers company jet. We didn't have to go through the arrivals gate or anything."

"Grant?" I said stupidly. My senses were spinning again and my mother looked guiltily over to the piano. There it was. A large copy of the picture of Grant and me, as Christine, smiling and hugging after the Cubs win over the Dodgers, was positioned in pride of place, along with other pictures of me, walking hand-in-hand with Grant, or leaning against him as he hugged me into him at Wrigley Field.

"We bought all the pictures the free-lance photographer had of you and Grant," Jennifer said. "They were such good photos of Christine. She looked so pretty and seemed so much to be enjoying herself. Grant was right, you know. You did need that day out, as a girl, with a male friend to treat you like a girl as Grant did. I think it did a world of good for you."

"I'm not going to have to look at those photos every minute that I am here, am I?" I asked her. My heart beat at a million beats per second as I looked at the pretty girl that I had been.

"No," said my mother. Then her hand flew to her mouth. "Oh, your room! Have you been in there?" I nodded. "I meant to put it all away in the basement before you came. You'll have nowhere to put your male clothes, will you?"

"I don't have much, Mummy," I told her. She reached over and pulled me to her and kissed my face. That was when Charlie came in.

"Hey, hey!" he called at me. "I know she's your mother but, if Jen's going to be kissing any men around here, it's going to be me."

Smarmy, I thought, but it got Charlie a little kissing session with Jennifer then. I had to move off, closer to the pictures of Grant and me, in which I seemed even more compellingly female than I did from far away.

"I have to move the thing around," said Jennifer in a whisper but I heard her clearly.

Charlie bent over her and picked her up, one hand under Jennifer's thighs. "Excuse us ... Jack. Yes, Jack it is, isn't it?" Charlie said. I would have died of mortification if he had called me Christine as I think he was going to do. What was wrong with him? I thought, as I stood in front of the string of photos of 'her,' Christine?

"We'll have to do this several times a day," Charlie said as he carried my mother off to her lovely bedroom. "You'll have to get used to it."

I waited and looked at the pictures of me. All of the model pictures were on display. I looked at myself in many dresses and in many girlish poses. Worse were the candid photos at the ball park. Oh, did I really look like that when I got in and out of a car, with my legs all exposed like that? I shivered and turned away from looking at myself.

Charlie came back then. I flushed as he raised an eyebrow when he saw what I had been looking at. "Jennifer is lying down for just a moment," he said.

"She said that the sex reassignment surgery was terrible," I began but Charlie was shaking his head.

"No," he said sharply, looking hard at me. "That went very well. Jennifer is entirely a woman now and we're following the program. She has to have stents inside her to keep the lips of her vagina from closing up again as well as to shape her uterus."

I had to shiver as Charlie spoke of my father and referred to sex organs a father shouldn't have, in fact didn't really have. "But she's in pain," I said.

"Very little from the sex change surgery but I haven't let her know about the cancer yet," said Charlie, "which has been very difficult to conceal from her since your mother is such a wonderful doctor."

"You haven't told her that she has cancer!" I exclaimed.

"Because she doesn't," snapped Charlie at me. "Not any more. But it's the after effects of that surgery that are sapping her of strength right now. When she's better, stronger, I plan to tell her but stress would be the worst thing for her right now. I would appreciate your not telling her for a week at least."

I could agree to that. I told Charlie that I wouldn't ask her for money for Carol either as my other Mother wanted me to. Charlie frowned at that.

"A hundred thousand dollars?" he fumed. "I shall have to talk to Carol. She may not realize that Jennifer is not making any money this year. She's put off taking on any new surgeries and referred patients to other doctors because we didn't know when Montreal was going to call us for her surgery. She won't be able to work for a long time. I earn enough to take care of the alimony Jennifer promised your mother but that's all I can do for your family, Jack."

I swallowed. "My university fees?" I asked.

Charlie shrugged. "You'll have to work a lot this summer if you want to go back in September," he said. "I really can't afford the thirty thousand she laid out for you. I'm not going to ask her to go into debt to get it for you which we both know she would do. It's going to be tough enough for her to restore her practice in the year ahead once we are married."

"You are going to marry Jennifer this year?" I asked. I got funny feeling in my stomach again at the thought of my father getting married again, this time to another man.

"Definitely," said Charlie. "No matter the circumstances. We may set it back to August or September but Jennifer *is* going to be my wife. I hope you aren't going to give us any problems about that."

"N-No!" I said nervously, still a little flushed at the thoughts floating around in my mind.

"Yes, we will have a church wedding," said Charlie then, a gleam in his eyes as he looked at me. "She will be a bride in a white gown. I am going to insist. Would you like to be one of the bridesmaids?"

I jumped away from the kitchen counter as if I had been shot, my face on fire. "You, you," I spluttered.

"Sorry," said Charlie then. "Cheap shot. I promised Jennifer I wouldn't do that." Which meant that he must have been making all kinds of comments about me when I wasn't there to defend myself, I thought angrily. "Seeing you here and seeing you standing in front of those photographs, I remember how vivacious you were as Christine and how

much your mother loved seeing you that way. I loved the way you made her so happy the day that we went to Chicago with Grant."

Don't remind me. Please don't remind me, I thought furiously. I think he was waiting for an answer to his comments about me. I didn't want to talk to him about Grant at all. He was about to say something more when the doorbell rang and he went off to answer it.

I had recovered my composure only a little when Andrea came clicking into the kitchen in a figure-hugging black dress, black high heels and a new brunette, pageboy hair style. "Well, hello, Christine," she said when she saw me. "How is your mother looking after her surgery? She can't be as poorly as Charlie says she is?"

I had to remember that Andrea had had the same surgery that my mother had just had but much longer ago. She would remember all the things that she went through and was probably comparing it to what my mother was going through.

"Mummy seemed pretty weak," I told Andrea. "She was quite wobbly which is why we still have the wheelchair."

Andrea pulled a face. "Ugh," she said. "I wish you didn't speak to me like that. You had such a lovely voice when you were using the spray I gave you. So, are we going to see the resurrection of Christine any time soon? I know that it would please your mother and aid in her recovery a great deal."

"No," I said, thinking of wearing dresses again, tucking my male parts away, binding my chest and sticking on fake boobies. "I-I'm not doing anything like that again."



"Pity," said Andrea. Charlie came from Jennifer's bedroom, his as well as hers, I supposed. He beckoned Andrea to come see Jennifer. "I have a class in how to be a fashion model starting next week as well as an offer of two hundred and fifty thousand for you to be in a fashion spread for *Exquisite Girl Cosmetics*, based on your photo shoot with David Backman."

Andrea waltzed off to speak to my mother. I was left speechless, my heart beating furiously, as I heard Andrea greet my mother. "I always knew that you should be a woman, darling!" Andrea said in her sweet, soprano voice. Mine had been very similar when I was Christine. "You should have done it before you became a one-man woman, you really should. Think of all you've missed that you and I could have done together."

I retreated to my own bedroom. The door to the closet was open with all the pretty dresses in sight. The nightie was still draped across the bed. Somehow, I had managed to turn the photos so that Christine smiled at me from every one of them.

I heard Andrea go. I lay on the bed, thought about money and the way Andrea had talked to me. I thought about the room my mother had kept for me with all the girlish clothes in it.

I crept out a little later. Charlie was watching some sport on television. "Jennifer is asleep," he said, glancing over at me. "I'll call you if she wakes up. I've given her a beeper. She can call me if she wants something."

I nodded. "I have to make a call," I said. "A local call, a girl from the university that I was on the plane with. May I use the phone?"

"You don't have to ask," said Charlie with an attempt at a smile. "Make yourself at home while you're here."

My fingers were trembling as I called Andrea Moore. I told her that I would like to earn two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

III. CONTRACT

"I don't do this with all my fashion models," said Andrea as I went over to see her in the morning. Jennifer said she could cope and I shouldn't worry. I even got the loan of her car for my trip downtown.

"I realize that," I told her with some agitation. Occasionally, her phone lit up with calls but I guess the answering machine got them.

"Did you bathe and depilate the way that I told you to?" Andrea asked belligerently.

I gulped and nodded. There wasn't a hair on my body any more.

"You know that I am going to have to take most of your eyebrows away," said Andrea with a scowl. "Even if you change your mind, your mother is going to ask you what you did and why and I am going to be on the hot seat with her. I do not want you to do this if you have any doubts at all. If you are thinking that we can go so far and you'll pull out on me, I don't want you to start."

I nodded. My mouth was dry, my insides churning at what I was getting myself into. I had to have money and Charlie seemed to have entirely forgotten that I was supposed to be working with him for a couple of weeks.

"This contract you will sign, I will keep in my safety deposit box," said Andrea. As I looked at her thin, middle-aged woman's face, I thought she must have had a lot of cosmetic surgery. I wondered, not for the first time, what she must have looked like when she was male. "It is a contract that identifies you as John Molloy Sheffield, otherwise known at Christine Whitehouse or Christine White, which I think will be a better professional name for you. It provides penalties that you must pay me, starting at twenty thousand dollars if you walk out on me today. That becomes fifty thousand in a week and a hundred thousand in a month.

"And believe me," said Andrea harshly, "I *will* come after you, Christine, if you let me down. Believe me, I will. Ask around, you'll find a dozen girls around town who've had to pay me because they thought modelling was just for fun and that they could walk away from it when they felt like it or got themselves pregnant."

"I won't get pregnant," I said faintly. Andrea pushed two copies of the contract at me, one to go in the bank vault and the other to go in a file in her office. I had to sign that one as 'Christine White.'

"You'd better not," said Andrea grimly. "I have very efficient debt collectors who will hound you to the next world if you do manage to get yourself pregnant."

That done, Andrea took me into the room next door. It was lined with cosmetic mirrors. "Strip," she ordered me.

My hands shook as I undid my shirt and took it off. I took off my shoes, my pants and my underpants while Andrea looked at me impassively. "You've lost weight since last year," she said. Twenty mirrors reflected me in all my nakedness at many embarrassing angles.

"A little," I agreed.

"You have to lose a lot more to be a woman," said Andrea. "I will give you a target each week. You will meet the target or you pay me a fine. It's five thousand dollars. I will not have a fat model in my employ. If you object to the diet I put you on, you can leave and owe me twenty thousand dollars."

Andrea waited and I nodded.

"You recall how we taped you before?" Andrea asked then. "Show me how we did it."

I opened the suitcase I had brought with some of the clothes I had selected to wear for Andrea, as she had insisted I do for this first session with her. She had promised that she would prepare a hair piece for me. I saw a table full of wigs on blocks on one side of the room.

My male member didn't want to go back between my legs as I was slightly aroused by what I was doing and by the woman watching me as I tried to tape myself again.

"You haven't dressed as a woman since last year, have you?" asked Andrea, a touch of anger in her voice. "You'll really hurt yourself if you do it that way. Next time, I would ap-

preciate it, girl, if you jacked off in the bathroom before you get here. I wouldn't want you getting hard when you saw a pretty girl and she was as naked as you."

I was sorely tempted to tell her to shove it and stalk out on her. "Or we could just ice you down," she said, which she proceeded to do. She wiped me off when I was frozen, showed me how to push my testicles properly into my body and push my now flaccid penis back to be taped into place.

"In a while, we shall try other ways of tucking and disguising what's down there," Andrea said. "But taping works well for runway models. You'll find out why later on. Now put on your panties like a good girl, and use the spray, please. I want to hear a girl's voice coming from your mouth, Miss Christine White, when I speak to you next."

With my panties in place, Andrea had me lie on a table. I did so, rather puzzled. I was shocked by what she placed on me. "This is a chest piece," said Andrea. "Go and see the movie *Soldier's Girl*. You'll see a man, Lee Pace, wear a chest like this which is why you can't tell that he doesn't have natural breasts like a girl."

I shook as Andrea positioned the breasts on me. They looked so real! She stretched the thin sides of the device and began to add adhesive to the edges of the thing. The chest itself fitted to me. Andrea touched the breasts and they wobbled a little. After she had glued all the edges, she went over it with makeup and, incredibly, the edges seemed to vanish. All I saw was me in flat panties with this incredible woman's body.

I felt the tape holding me and knew what Andrea had meant about me popping out down below. In a room full of girls and me, that would have been so embarrassing. Worse, it would have labelled me as the worst kind of pervert.

Andrea prepped me for makeup then by using wax on my face and eyebrows. "I am doing this for you now but I am going to stop and remove what I have done. Then you are going to do it," said Andrea shortly. "You will arrive here for your classes and assignments in the future fully dressed as a young girl. Do you understand that, Christine? From this point forward in your life, you are going to *be* a girl. You will be a girl twenty-four seven and your life will be entirely directed by me. You will get your quarter of a million dollars this year, but I will make sure that you earn every penny of that sum. You may well wish that you never signed a contract with me."

I looked up at her face in panic and Andrea smiled at me. "Want to quit?" she asked. "You'd only have to explain your eyebrows to your mother so far."

I turned to look and my eyebrows were thin arches over my eyes. Andrea wiped the last of her depilation wax from me. My breasts bobbed as I leaned forward. Andrea took my hair then. She pinned it up so that all of my face and neck was clear.

Andrea was as good as her word. She took almost the whole morning to make up my face. She undid it all as she went and I had to re-do what she had done. She was patient and showed me over and over again how to hold and use brushes and how to obtain the effect she wanted. By the end, it had become something of a chore. I scarcely recorded the fact that it had taken me a half hour just to put lipstick on.

"Look at yourself now," said Andrea. I thought I was rather grotesque as I looked at the false eyelashes and mascara as well as the eyeliner, highlighting and rouge. My eyebrows were darkened and were thin arches over my vivid eyes.

The hair piece changed my appearance immediately. The ash blonde streaked hair was like what I had worn the year before. Andrea pinned the wig to me; then I had to take it off, put it on with shaking fingers and pin and brush it about my head in a feminine manner until it was good enough to suit Andrea.

Andrea helped me into a bra over the false chest I wore but she wouldn't allow me to put on the pantyhose I had brought. "You will always wear a garter belt and stockings," she told me, "until I say that you can wear tights or hose for a fashion show. Got that?" she asked me.

"Yes, Andrea," I squeaked in my little girl voice. Whatever was in the spray worked like helium on my vocal cords. "I will only wear stockings and garter belts until you say differently."

I also wore a waist cinch that Andrea put on me and pulled so tight that I could barely breathe. "I-I can't breathe," I gasped to Andrea. She laughed at me.

"I love your girlie voice, Christine," she said. "Now put on your stockings while I pad your little tush to more female proportions."

The touch of the stockings going up my legs was inexplicable. My hands were weak as I attached each in turn to the garter belt. Any idea that I was Jack Sheffield had disappeared as I looked at the girl, Christine, standing there in her underwear looking so female, so feminine. Grant had been able to tell by my eyes that I was Jennifer's daughter but I couldn't see any resemblance with my painted eyes so different from my mother's.

I put on the top and skirt I had brought with me. The shakes got hold of me again as I put on a woman's skirt. It felt so tight, yet soft on my legs. Andrea opened up the top buttons, making a deeper vee of the neckline. Now the breasts showed along with the top of the bra I wore.

I took the short-heeled girl's shoes and put them on but Andrea had me take them off at once. I was a fashion model and fashion models wore high heels at all times, I was told. I didn't believe that but it was apparently true for me. I had to wear four-inch heels at the very least, Andrea told me, except when I was doing the exercises she would give me to strengthen my calf muscles so that I could walk in high heels like a girl.

I wobbled in the heels that Andrea found for me and she berated me. "You're a girl," she said furiously to me. "Think like a girl. You know how to walk in those shoes. You did it for a day out with Grant Kinsley, didn't you?"

How could she know about that? I wondered with a shudder. Andrea hadn't been with us. She'd been off with someone named Mark Johnson. She had taken him off somewhere, I remember being told, to blow his mind by the way she looked in some kind of thong bikini at the beach.

"Get up, you lazy girl," said Andrea as I went to sit down beside her. "Show me how you walk on the runway."

I didn't know how to sashay, as Andrea called it. I didn't know how or where to look. I didn't know how to use my arms, how to show off my body femininely or how to present the skirt properly. I wanted to cry as I was scolded continually by Andrea as the lesson continued.

"Spray," said Andrea. Then there was a timid tap on the door.

Several women were in the outer office, all of them cute and elegantly dressed. "This is Christine White," said Andrea, "a new model that I am taking on. *Exquisite Girl Cosmetics* likes her look and we shall be prepping her for that. Connie, the girl needs new nails. Hers are a terrible mess. Marisa, she needs her ears pierced. Eleanor, if you can teach this girl how to walk, I would be eternally grateful. Now, I have to go to the bank. I will take this with me."

Before I could stop her, Andrea had taken the case with all my neatly folded male clothes in it and left me with three elegant women looking at me as if they could see right through me.

"Please," I began, hoping that my voice would stay feminine. "You really don't have to do those things."

"Oh, but we *do*," smiled Connie who seemed to be the office manager. "We do if we want to work here."

"Andrea's bark is much worse than her bite," said Marisa with a lovely smile. "She tries very hard to terrify all the models but it never works."

"While they get ready to inflict punishment on you," said a diminutive Eleanor. "Let's see what we can do about getting you to move."

I couldn't believe that not one of Andrea's assistants challenged my gender. Eleanor floated over the pathway in the long teaching room as if she was made of gossamer. She laughed at the look on my face. "Oh, if only I was your height and half as pretty as you, Christine, I would have been the world's greatest fashion model," she said. "As it is, I will teach you now and in Andrea's classes. We'll have you sashaying down the runway in no time."

I shuddered as I sat in front of Marisa who did my nails, giving me a manicure as well. It was when the long, red nails reappeared on my fingers that a tremor went through me. I felt so effeminate, so sissy-ish, no, so feminine again, as I had once before.

"I know," said Marisa with a smile. "I *love* it when I put my nails on. They make me feel so girlish that I want to get up and dance. I start flirting with every man around."

I wondered if she was trying to tell me something. She was a well made-up blonde woman of about thirty. At least, I thought she was a woman, but I was beginning to doubt my own judgement. It could be that she was telling me that she was as much of a woman as Andrea or my mother, or me, in what she was saying about feeling girlish.

Then Connie approached with a smile on her face and something that looked like a nailgun in her hands. "This isn't going to hurt a bit," she said cheerily, taking hold of my ears. I went stiff as she touched me. "There," she said. I felt something cold brush my ear. "One done. Now the other."

"Oh, give her two studs at least," said Marisa. "You know she'll be back for more if you don't."

"All right," said Connie. Whatever she was holding brushed my ear again. Then it was the turn of my other ear. Connie spun me about and pushed back my hair so that I could see myself in one of the mirrors. "There, Christine," she said with a smile. "Aren't they pretty?"

I looked at the gleaming studs, flowery, girlish earrings, at my ears. "You will have to change these pretty ones for sleepers," said Connie, handing me little boxes and a pamphlet about the care of pierced ears.

Andrea came bustling back with the purse I had used when I was Christine before. "Here are copies of the contracts that Moore Models has with you, Christine," she said. "I expect you to be in the first class with Marisa on looks and deportment tonight. Tomorrow, you can come at the same time and we will go shopping for you."

Marisa frowned. "I just have a beginner's course," she said.

"Christine is going to be in every class that we have," said Andrea to her assistant. "She needs a crash course in everything feminine as you have all probably seen. But she is likely going to be the first *Exquisite Girl*. She's the one whose picture has been selected."

"Oh, Angelina is going to be most annoyed," said Marisa. "She has been playing up to the chairman most outrageously."

"She never had a chance once I showed him Christine's photo spread," said Andrea. "I told Angelina that she wasn't what they were looking for. Peggy had the best chance of all the girls at this agency but she is swamped with work in New York now. Connie, I want you to go down to New York and check up on her and Nikki. See that they're not getting into any real trouble down there. I'll leave it to you to soothe Angelina's ruffled feathers as well. I have a list of visits I was going to make and the newer girls I want you to promote, Sharon Betts, Ingrid, Angelina. That will mollify her. I'm going to be tied up here in Haversham for the next six weeks and more on the *Exquisite* launch."

"I thought," Connie began. Then she looked at me, my legs crossed, squirming on the high stool on which I was sitting. "Oh," she said suddenly, looking at me intensely. "You think that Christine has got the *Exquisite* assignment already? You know it, boss?"

The other two assistants were looking at me with intense interest now. I felt so stupid and silly; I was certain that they were seeing me as I was, a boy in a dress.

"Yes, I know it," said Andrea with a frown. "Christine has it if she wants it. I have the contract signed and sealed. We have just six weeks, ladies, to make her into a girl who worthy of the honor. It's going to take hard work from all of us, including Christine, but in six weeks, she *is* going to be on the runway,,ready for her first photo shoot as the *Exquisite Girl*."

IV. FACING THE MUSIC

"I'm going to be coming home with you," said Andrea gloomily. "I have to face your mother sooner or later. It might as well be now."

"This didn't have anything to do with you," I squeaked at Andrea. I wished that I could speak in my normal voice but it seemed that my vocal cords were stuck to the roof of my mouth. I couldn't clear my throat and get down to where I normally spoke from.

"The moment Jennifer hears your voice," said Andrea, "she is going to blame me and say that I put ideas in your head."

"Please don't mention the money!" I said to Andrea hastily.

"You're doing this just for the money?" asked Andrea in surprise. "But Jennifer and Charlie are loaded!"

"Mummy isn't working," I told Andrea as I steered the car nervously through traffic and onto the parkway that led to Jennifer's house. "My real mother wants money from Jennifer. I need to pay my way for a third year at university and New York is so expensive."

"Tell me about it," murmured Andrea. "All right, I won't mention the money but that means that you are going to have to convince your mother that you are a transvestite like she used to be. You're going to have to convince her that you love dressing up in girl's clothes and that you always have. You have to convince her that you really want to be Christine White, a fashion model."

"Yes," I said. My nerve began to fail me as we made a shaky stop in Jennifer's driveway, my high heel almost catching as I tried to brake the car.

"If you are going to drive a lot," said Andrea thoughtfully, "I am going to suggest that you bring two pairs of shoes with you, flats that you leave in the car, and heels to walk around and practice in all the time. I'll let you wear your flats to drive; I want you to arrive alive to my classes. I'll have to get you to take lessons in driving from Eleanor. She showed me how to use my heels to drive. It is a matter of using your heels and not your toes. Eleanor will show you."

"We're home," Andrea called out as we entered Jennifer's house. Jennifer came hobbling down the hallway from her bedroom. Her hair was loose but freshly brushed over her thin shoulders.

Jennifer gaped as she saw me in my wig. My face was made-up, my figure so female and busty in the skirt and top, "Christine!" she gasped.

Andrea pushed me as I stood there. I was embarrassed as my mother, who had once been a man like myself, stared at me. "H-Hello, Mummy," I said to her in my highest, most lilting tones. I tried to be girlish as I spoke. Andrea nudged me again so I minced over to my mother, put my arms about her and hugged her while she hugged me.

"I thought," Jennifer began, staring into my face, reaching up and touching my cheek with her soft hand on my soft skin. "I thought that you didn't want this." She looked at Andrea behind me. "What, what have you been saying to my son, Andrea, that I want to see him like this, as a girl, once more? That it will make me feel better?"

"Mummy," I said in my little girl's voice. "It was all my idea."

"Your idea?" gasped Jennifer, holding me away from her and staring at me. "But you're not like me."

"No, Mummy," I said, trying to smile while I felt so awful inside. "I'm not like you but I *want* to be. I feel wonderful and happy when I am dressed like this," I lied to her. "I had to go over to see Andrea and force her, almost, to help me to become the girl I was for those two short days before. I've dreamed of nothing else since I went back to the university last year. When I came back and all my dresses were here, my underwear, even my shoes, I thought that you had guessed that about me. You have all my pictures on display."

Jennifer looked at me in wonder, then her face clouded over as she felt a twinge of pain. I had to get her one of her tablets. "Don't ever change your sex, Christine," she said again to me as Andrea helped her to sit in an armchair. "I don't know how you can say that this is worth it, Andrea. I really don't."

"It will be *so* wonderful when you have your first orgasm as a woman with a man," said Andrea. "The first of many that will follow, I'm sure."

"I have so many incisions," said Jennifer. "I was just looking at myself after I douched and some seem oddly placed. I couldn't wear a thong like you do, Andrea," she added, crossing her long legs in her lovely dark blue dress. "I would look awful."

"I understood from Charlie that all your scars will be gone in a year," said Andrea. "He was going on about someone named Dupont ..."

"Rene Dupont, the plastic surgeon?" asked Jennifer in astonishment. She put out a hand to me to come and sit with her in the living room. "He's brilliant and very expensive."

"Well, this Dupont worked on your scars after you were closed up, I believe," said Andrea brightly. "That was how I understood it, Jennifer. Now, don't be mad at me about Christine, Jenny. She was going to go into some bathroom, put on her own makeup and go for a walk around the mall in drag if I didn't help her to become Christine again."

"You believed Christine would do that?" asked Jennifer, squeezing my hand and smiling at me. I had to blush as I felt her staring at me. I sat beside her, my stockinged legs crossed as I tried to sit demurely in a skirt, like a girl, despite all the misgivings I was having.

"I didn't really think so," said Andrea. "But do you remember, Jen, when we were desperate to dress the way we felt that we were inside? I do. I thought I saw that same desperation for help in Christine so I was happy to provide it for her. She's one of the prettiest girls I have ever seen. But you know that. You have all these pictures on display to boast about your lovely daughter to all your friends."

Jennifer colored a little at that. "I have had many wonderful comments about you," she said to me. I didn't want my mother bragging about me with the only photos she had of me. I should have sent her pictures of me from last year and this year with Judith. I hadn't which had left a door open for her to present me as Christine, her daughter, to her friends.

"I just got a call from Betty Carson. She heard that I was back," said Jennifer then. "I invited her over tomorrow afternoon. I'm glad I didn't mention that I had my son visiting me. Now I can let everyone know that my daughter is in town again. That is," she looked at me uncertainly, "if my daughter is going to stay around for a little while this time."

"Yes, Mummy," I told Jennifer in my squeaky voice. "I enrolled in classes with Andrea for the next few weeks, if you can stand me for that long. She is going to teach me how to be a woman and how to be a fashion model."

Jennifer looked at Andrea who put out her hands as if she was helpless in the matter. "Not my idea," she said to my mother. It came to me then how we were all telling her lies, Charlie, Andrea and me, 'for her own good.' I only hoped she would understand when I got the money that Andrea said was mine if I showed up at the photo shoot and some fashion shows planned in the late summer. That was all I had to do and I could stave off financial woes for the three of us, Jennifer, me and Carol, my real mother. whom I must contact her soon and tell her the bad news about Daddy coming to her rescue again.

"I really want to be a woman," I told my mother. "I have to start in my first class tonight."

"I wish I could be there with you," said Jennifer with a few tears. "Go and have a lovely time, Christine. What do you have to learn in the first class?"

I had forgotten but Andrea knew her classes and who was to teach them backwards. She chatted with Jennifer; the two of them reminisced about how they had become girls and the problems they had had with some of the lessons that Andrea now taught.

"I'm going to have my hair done on Friday," said Jennifer then as they discussed hair and wig care. "I'm kind of tired of this mop and this color."

"I'll bet Charlie has something to say about that," said Andrea with a laugh.

"He's a man," said Jennifer, wrinkling her pretty, bobbed nose. "He just likes it long so that he can run his hands through it. You know how men are. I'm not going to have it all cut off, just back to my shoulders, I think. I want to change the color as well. I love that wig Christine is wearing. I want something like that."

"Here! You can have it," I said, reaching up for the wig that I was wearing. I felt like an idiot again as Jennifer and Andrea burst out laughing and Jennifer clasped my hands again.

"Oh, it's so good to see you again, Christine," Jennifer, my father, no, my real mother, said then. "Andrea, thank you so much for restoring my daughter to me. I don't think that I've laughed since they operated on me. Oh, look at the time. It's time for me to change my bandages and stuff again."

"You should have a nurse to help you," said Andrea then. "I'm surprised that Charlie allowed you to leave the clinic as quickly as you did."

"They don't keep anyone in very long now," said Jennifer with a wry smile. "I think it's changed quite a bit since you were operated on, Andrea. You can help me though, if you like. We can compare. You can tell me if this looks all right to you."

"Just what I want to do," said Andrea with a high-pitched, feminine snort. "You show me yours and I'll show you mine. Is that the idea? Christine, why don't you make us some fresh coffee and maybe open a bottle of wine?"

I nodded, feeling a little sick as they went off together. My hair moved about my face as it used to, reminding me of how I must look now. I put water into the coffee maker and

fresh coffee in the filter. My fingernails got in the way of using the spoon as I looked down at my hairless arms and hands, the red tips on my fingernails looking so vivid against the white frills of the kitchen. I walked back anxiously to the living room in my skirt. I heard Andrea laughing from the bedroom where the door was still open.

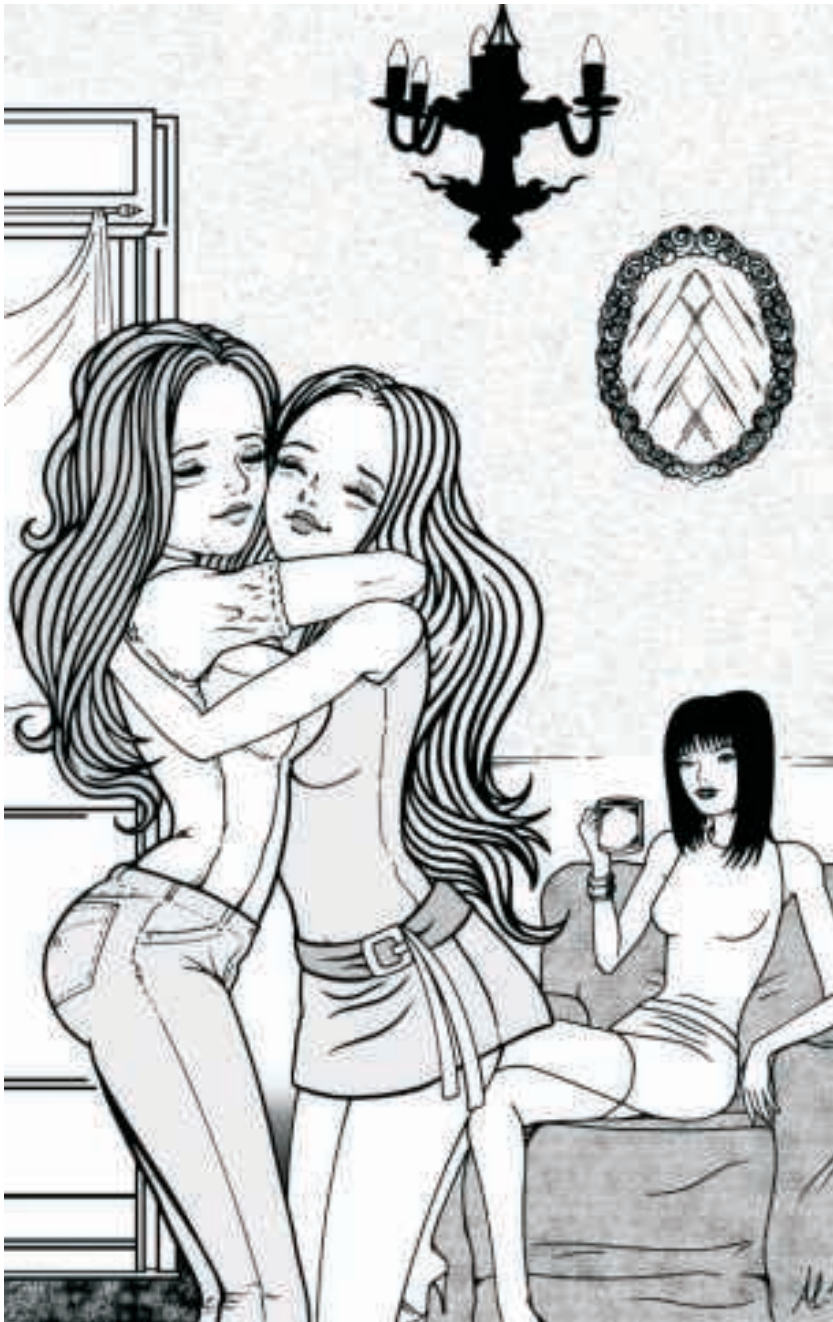
"It's so much prettier than mine," I heard Andrea say. "Your surgeon does such beautiful work. You should see Peggy now. Hers is the most beautiful I've ever seen on any girl, the ones like us and the other kind. Really, you should see it. She's embarrassed to be in the nude at fashion shows but she shouldn't be."

I heard Andrea saying, "The swelling has started to go away now, you can tell. But you have to keep that in or you'll never be able to take a really big guy into you. Don't you

dare take it out too soon. I'd hate for you to have to go back for more surgery. This is all you should ever have, sister Jennifer."

I swayed in my skirt in my high heels and breathed in hard. My chest hardly seemed to move. I edged back into the kitchen for the coffee and wine which I brought to the coffee table just as the women returned. I felt a lump in my throat as I thought that I was looking at my female father and her female best friend, a former male like herself.

"You're walking a lot better, Mummy," I said to Jennifer. She smiled and thanked me for the compliment. I was trying to get used to calling her that as I would have to if we ever went out together as women. I could sense that we might do that very soon. I would soon be out shopping with my mother and I would be her daughter. I caught Andrea's faint smile as she heard me say that to Jennifer. I would earn that money



from her and Jennifer would be proud of me. I only hoped she would be just as proud of me when I reverted back to being Jack Sheffield at the end of the summer.

"I think I shall really improve over the next week or so with my daughter here," Jennifer said with a beautiful smile. Then Charlie came bustling in. He stopped when he saw me.

"A surprise, isn't it?" said Jennifer gaily. "But such a lovely one! Christine has returned to us. She's going to be out this evening with Andrea, taking some lessons for modelling. Isn't that a wonderful surprise?"

"When I said you needed to get a summer job, Christine," said Charlie Greenwood, "you didn't have to go to this extreme to find work." He turned to Andrea. "She *is* going to be earning money working with you, isn't she?"

"Oh yes," said Andrea. "I always pay the girls I have under contract, five thousand a month usually unless she doesn't want me to. It all has to come back, of course, out of the fees that she makes as a model."

"And she also pays you a fee for every job that you find for her," said Charlie. I sat with my legs crossed and wondered how much of that I would be able to save each month. If I did three months and skimmed and saved, could I save more than ten thousand out of what she paid me? That wouldn't be nearly enough to get me through college in my third year, let alone help my mother or Carol. I knew that I *had* to make myself into the *Exquisite Girl*, whatever that was, and get the big money Andrea had seduced me with.

"Christine has to be on time at seven o'clock for her first lesson tonight," said Andrea with a smile. "She is going to learn how to take care of her skin, the lotions she must use on her lovely legs, and face and body, the perfumes that will suit her, as well as how to move about a room as a model should. The genetic girls she will be with have no idea about these things so we have Eleanor and Marisa teach them right off the bat.

"Don't you dare help Christine tomorrow, Jennifer. She will have to do everything for herself based on the lessons she has learned. She will have to do her own makeup and hair, put on the right dress and accessories and meet me at my office by nine o'clock. We'll see then how much she has learned."

When Andrea finally left, having called a cab after she had consumed half a bottle of wine, Charlie came back from the door, chuckling. "If that cabby doesn't get laid tonight, it won't be for any lack of trying on Andrea's part."

"She really does like men," said Jennifer, moving to the sofa to sit beside me. "Lots of them."

"She has the equipment to keep them satisfied as well," said Charlie with a grin which he turned off when Jennifer gave him a wide-eyed look which I think was to alert him that I was there. "Mark Johnson was telling me," Charlie went on, looking at me and winking, "that Andrea is insatiable in bed. He says he has never met a woman like her. He thinks that he's in love, or lust, for her."

"Charlie!" said Jennifer. I was supposed to convince him that I really wanted to be a woman like Andrea or Jennifer. I didn't think that I could.

I couldn't eat dinner with Jennifer and Charlie. I had to start my diet right away, Andrea had told me on my way back to Jennifer's. I was only allowed soup and I had to water it down so much that it barely tasted of the chicken that was supposed to be in it.

I also had to exercise and soak in a scented bath tub, put on fresh underwear, adhering my breast to myself again and clothe myself in a dress, "the summery thing you wore for our lunch last year," Andrea had insisted. I could tell by the smug way she looked at me that it was a test, as was my diet. Andrea was certain that I would fail.

I wasn't going to, certainly not on my first day, not with a quarter of a million dollars running through my head. I tried to keep that at the front of my thoughts as I did the exercises she had told me that I must do. The flexibility exercises I might have passed on but Andrea insisted they were paramount.

Making up after my bath was a trial as I kept staring at the jewels gleaming at my ears. As soon as I had pushed my hair back in a clip as Andrea had done it, I looked like Christine again; the earrings and my thin eyebrows announced that I was a woman. I hardly needed all the makeup on my eyes and the foundation on my cheeks to be Christine. I finally got my look right, then I had to struggle to tuck myself and get my panties on. I tightened the waist cinch as best I could and rolled new stockings up on my legs, quivering at every touch of nylon on me. Then I attached my garter belt in place.

I had my dress on and my wig in place when there was a tap on the door. It was Jennifer, smiling at me. I gritted my teeth and tried to smile as I swished the dress from side to side.

"I bought you a necklace, darling," my mother said to me with a happy smile. "It will go well with your new earrings."

Jennifer put a locket around my neck, then she had to go and get me matching bracelets and a thin girl's watch for my bare arm. She kissed me as I swished femininely. I picked up my high heels and prepared to go to the lesson I had to attend in my rustling dress.

"Perfume," said Jennifer then with a smile. "We must go shopping and let you pick out your own perfume. You don't always have to be use mine." She had a small bottle that she used to dab me with her soft hands on my breasts, on my neck and at my wrists.

"There," she said, tightening the bottle and putting it in the white purse I had to carry. "Now you smell like a real girl."

"Thank you," I said meekly. I used my spray as Jennifer smiled at me in pride, mother to daughter. I was walked to the front door with Jennifer's arm about me. My skirt seemed to bounce as I walked femininely. My chest certainly seemed to bounce as well.

"I'll want to hear all about it when you get in," said Jennifer enthusiastically as I took her keys and headed out to her car. "Oh, I'm beginning to get such chills. I remember when I first went out in my sister's clothes but I looked nothing like you, Christine, at all. People laughed at me on the street when they got close to me. Some little kids even chased me home. I couldn't run in my high heels. It won't be like that for you, my darling girl."

"No, Mummy," I said squeakily. I was hugged and kissed and finally let go. I adjusted my dress about me and felt weak and silly as I looked up and saw the girl's eyes looking

back at me in the rearview mirror. *I want my pants*, I thought as my dress touched me so softly and I felt the pull of the garter belt on my stockings. Andrea was right to insist that I wear them. I felt so girlish in them.

“Don’t get home late,” were Jennifer’s final words to me.

Andrea was waiting for me when I arrived with a swish of my petticoated dress. I changed my shoes in the car, swung my stockinged legs in front of me and tried not to wince as I minced in my high heels over to where she was standing. She sniffed me, then took my hand and led me into the room I had been in that morning. Half of the tables and mirrors were occupied by girls chatting volubly to each other.

I had a panic attack. I think that I would have run away if I had been on my own. But Andrea’s hand propelled me over to a mirror and seat on the far side of the room so I had to pass everyone there. They all looked up at me in interest and studied me as I sat down as gracefully as I could. I crossed my legs, Andrea gave me a knowing smile and went over to talk to Eleanor who had a list in her hand.

Two more girls came in and she checked them off. “We’re waiting for five more,” she said. Girls turned from studying themselves in the mirror to looking expectantly at her.

“Should, should you be in a beginners’ class?” asked an awe-struck young girl at the mirror next to mine.

“Oh yes,” I said to her, grateful for the little girl squeak I emitted. It was just like Charlene’s, the girl who had spoken to me. “I’ve never had a lesson in putting on makeup before. Have you?”

Charlene shook her head and stared at me. It was most discomfiting and made me think that I had done something wrong. “Then who did your makeup?” asked Charlene. “It’s so beautiful.”

I was saved from having to give an answer by the arrival of the last group of girls. Miss Eleanor smiled and asked us all to stand, to turn our chairs, to sit on the chairs and then to face her.

“Very good,” she said, pointing to the five of us who had crossed our legs. “That’s something women do automatically.”

We had to stand then and I was one of the few wearing long, flared skirts that swished or rustled each time I moved. We didn’t stand properly, apparently, so we had to sit again, only proving that we couldn’t sit properly. Miss Eleanor sighed and had Rose show us how to stand. Then she had me, Christine, demonstrate to the girls in the class how to stand like a girl.

Then I had to show them how to sit like a girl, which I had gone over with Andrea so many times a year ago and just the day before this session. We had to practice sitting for fifteen minutes before Miss Eleanor was satisfied with us. Then she showed us how to remove makeup; each of us had to stand, turn the chair, and sit femininely. Grace and Melinda had to do it again. We had to clip our hair out of the way behind our ears and cover our faces with makeup remover. I hadn’t put on my false eyelashes as Andrea had warned me not to. There would be a class later on attaching them properly.

We were inspected by Miss Eleanor and Miss Andrea; we had to have removed every trace of makeup from our faces. Then we were taught the lotions we were to use and which were right in front of us on the tables. We had to put lotion on our faces and hands as if we were going to bed.

"You will put on the body lotion and the leg lotion when you get home, before you go to bed in your pretty nighties," said Miss Eleanor. "Pretty models never wear pajamas," she intoned, turning and winking at me as if to say that it wasn't true at all and that she knew I didn't believe it. "In our fifth lesson, you must arrive with your nighties. We shall practice how to apply lotion to all of our bodies. From this point on, your body is going to be as soft and scented as a baby's. Am I making myself clear? Grace?" Grace squeaked a 'Yes,' as did Alice and me, Christine.

Without makeup, we had to walk about the room. We had to put small, thin, red books that seemed ready to fall off at the slightest of movements or jarring of our heels on our heads. "Quite disgraceful," was Miss Eleanor's verdict on us all. She took the book from Charlene and demonstrated the ease with which she could do the exercise. "And the way you sat down!" Miss Eleanor went on. "It was as if, Christine, I had taught you nothing in this class at all."

My cheeks flamed as she singled me out for the rebuke. I didn't want to be singled out in a class full of girls. I ducked my head and my book slid to the floor, making everyone laugh at me. We practiced again. This time, I was careful how I stood, how I moved, so I was able to go a little way about the room. I had to hold my shoulders back, my chest out and my head still. I only lost my book the next time when Brittany walked right into me.

"Very good, Christine," said Miss Eleanor with a warm smile. "We will make a pretty girl of you yet."

V. THE NEXT STEP IS A BIG ONE

My days and nights settled quickly into a very predictable pattern. I became a girl. What's more, I became a fashion model. My mornings were for Andrea to torture me and try to make me quit.

I had to dance. I had to do every type of dancing that there was, including, yes, ballet dancing, as well as modern dance and ballroom. I had to have new wigs pinned tightly to my head; my partners in dance didn't allow me any breaks. By the way that they all acted, I finally realized after an agonizing three weeks that Andrea must have had a word with all of the instructors or partners. I was driven mercilessly to perform like a woman and to show the world that I enjoyed it.

Barry partnered me in ballroom. I had to smile and smile and swirl my skirts about myself. I wore different wigs for modern dance and jazz dance. I had slits in my skirts to show off my legs and my panties as well. I nearly quit when Andrea wouldn't allow me to wear a bra when I danced with Colin. The phoney nipples showing through my dress really turned him on.

I couldn't believe I had to do ballet dancing when I went to the dance studio and standing there was Anton, "It's Anthony, really," he whispered as he held me about my waist.

By the end of the week, I was in the pink tutu; my face must have matched it in color. David Backman came and took my picture in Anthony's arms, my hair all plated and beribboned. I wore not only a pink tutu but another, stiffer, dark blue with white ruffles. My makeup was severe and heavy, my hair was braided and set in a tiara that matched the blue overlaid dress. Of course, I was in tights and ballet shoes; if I didn't perform as a girl should, no one cared. Andrea only cared that I look like a ballerina in the photographs.

I had to look like a can-can dancer and smile, Christine, smile. I had to be a flapper, a showgirl and a Rockette, I think it was. I had to exercise until I could do one routine correctly and then I was photographed. I wore strapless gowns; Andrea made sure that the edges of my breast plate were invisible and properly glued down.

In many different ball gowns, I was posed with Barry, he so tall and distinguished in his tuxedo. I danced and had to smile again. I was photographed and photographed and Barry had to kiss my cheek.

Anthony held me with his hands on my thighs, I wanted to quit as he threw me, then raced to pick me up. I had to be feminine in his arms as he made me arch my back and lean in to him as if we were romantically involved. He kissed me on the cheek and neck, even when I wasn't expecting it.

It was a relief to do adagio with someone named Jose and another guy named Claudio, who was younger and nicer to me. I had to do Spanish dancing in a black wig and kiss curls. I had to change into a flirty dance dress and dance with one of my partners to modern pop songs. Barry was the best because he was so much taller than me. I could really smile as he swung and twirled me. Invariably, I ended up with his arms about me tightly.

Barry kissed me lightly after one dance; my legs seemed to turn to jelly and Andrea was there to see it. Immediately after that, all my male dancing instructors started kissing me. I could barely go from class to class as I couldn't help but anticipate what Claudio was going to do. He'd put his arm about my waist, his hand snaking up to my breast. Then he'd kissed me urgently as I whirled into him.

"Very nice," Claudio said to me. My mind reeled at the way I had received his kiss. I had actually kissed him back.

I was in agony as I left the dance and exercise studios and met Jennifer for another afternoon of shopping, looking for girl's clothing for me. After a month, with all the lessons that I had on makeup, walking, sashaying, walking down the runway in everything from evening gowns to swimsuits, I didn't even think about being shy in the brassiere store Jennifer took me into.

"Why didn't you tell me about the polyps they operated on me for?" Jennifer asked me as she steered me to the most expensive, frilliest bits of feminine frippery.

"Charlie asked me not to," I told her, looking at her hair, now blonde-streaked and curved about her head. The reddish color was gone. Her hair look like the wig I was wearing. "We were all so worried for you."

"It wasn't my snip-snip that was so hurtful to me," Jennifer said, sighing as she selected panties for herself. "Charlie explained it all to me and how he got you to promise

not to tell me. So, I won't talk about it with you further but Charlie's going to get an earful from me."

"Is he going to be sent to the doghouse?" I asked her with a quick smile.

"No," Jennifer smiled back. "That would be punishment for me as well, wouldn't it? We should talk about that later. Oh, it's so delightful to choose panties and know I will fit them perfectly," she said with another bright smile at me. "It's really a delightful sensation to have nothing between my legs."

I looked at her flushed face. "You and Charlie, Mummy?" I asked Jennifer. She shook her lovely hair and the long silver earrings she wore.

"We still have some time before he is allowed to penetrate me," Jennifer said with a shrug. "But there are other ways to please a man."

"Mummy!" I said shakily.

"You don't have a sex life, do you?" Jennifer asked then. Her face was concerned. "You and the right man could get off together, you know."

"I don't want to hear this, Mummy," I said to her. My whole body was quivering from nerves. She must have seen it. "Why do you want to tell me this now, anyway?"

"Andrea says that you are kissing and cuddling in her classes and she recognizes the signs," Jennifer said seriously. "You are about to start dating and seeing a young man, perhaps Claudio."

"Oh, Mummy!" I said and Jennifer quite misinterpreted me. I meant to tell her how wrong that she was but she took it to mean that she had guessed right and that I wanted Claudio as a boy friend.

"I just want you to be very careful about choosing a young man," said Jennifer. I felt the non-existent hair on my body stand on end as she talked to me a little about her experiences with men. It only came to an end when a salesgirl joined us and my mother made several purchases of very sexy lingerie, including a bra set for me.

"I don't need that," I told her as we walked out of the lingerie store with our shopping bags. A blond, spiky-haired guy gave me a look. As we walked away along the glass-lined walkway of the upper level of the mall, I saw him lean back and look after me, indicating me to his friend.

His friend who turned and seemed to go 'Wow.' All I could see in the mirror were two ash-blond women, one taller than the other, both in mid-thigh skirts and colorful tops, swaying as they strolled easily in their high heels down the mall. I got chills again; I knew that one of those women in a pretty dress was me. *I should never have done this*, I thought for the millionth time as I hung on to Jennifer, wishing that I could have my trousers back.

"Andrea wanted to talk to me. She said she knew that you hadn't read the contract that you signed thoroughly," Jennifer went on.

"Which contract?" I asked her as we headed to *Starbucks* for coffee.

"The one that has a clause about breast augmentation," Jennifer said to me, turning and looking into my face to see the shock registered there.

"I, I don't understand," I began, taking the iced drink I was allowed while my mother took her usual latte to a table with me.

"It's standard in Andrea's contracts," Jennifer said. "At least, that's what she told me. She said she tried to tell you about it. She uses it to prevent the girls she signs from having surgical procedures that would change their looks or their bodies without her approval. She doesn't want her girls messing with their looks as she is trying to sell them to prospective clients."

"What's that got to do with me?" I asked Jennifer. There was almost a glow about her the last couple of days.

"How do you like the breast prosthesis you have been wearing?" asked my mother.

"It's fine," I said anxiously, hoping nothing was out of place.

"Not for a fashion show," said Jennifer, "and that is what Andrea wants to put you in next."

"I don't understand," I said. I knew something bad was coming at me.

"It's a big step," said Jennifer seriously, "but you do want to be the prettiest girl you can be, don't you? You do still want to be a fashion model, yes?"

Look at me, I thought miserably. Look what I've become, Mummy, in the last month. Look at my skin and my makeup. Look at what I am wearing. Look at all the boys looking at me. Look at all the girls envying me and studying how I am dressed. I may not be a professional model yet but I am ready for it, Andrea has seen to that.

"Of course I do," I lied as I tried to think of the money I was supposed to earn 'very soon.' I just hoped I wasn't going to be humiliated too much more by what I still had to do to become the *Exquisite Girl*.

"You can't go into a show with artificial boobs," my mother said to me then. "You need your tush expanded too. It's all about the old T and A, tits and ass."

"I can't do that!" I told Jennifer, aghast that she would suggest such a thing to me, her son. Then I looked over her head and caught a glimpse of myself in a mirrored wall. Christine looked back at me in dismay. I had been too convincing with my mother. She really did think I wanted to be her daughter. No wonder she wanted to give me advice about boyfriends.

"Then you can't be a model and we are going to owe Andrea fifty thousand dollars in penalties," said Jennifer.

"What c-can I d-do?" I stammered as I always did in times of stress. Jennifer put her soft hand over mine, her long, pearly nails a contrast to my pink talons.

"Andrea says that she talked to Louise Barrett who does most of the T and A work in town," said Jennifer carefully. "Andrea's set up an appointment for you. I can come with you and be with you throughout the procedure."

"I c-can't," I said in a panic. "I, I w-wouldn't be able to be me again!"

"Andrea said that it was something like that," Jennifer said with a smile. "I didn't realize it but she said that Peggy was just the same way as you when she got her first augmentation. So, Andrea has this procedure that is reversible done by Louise. It really is."

"I've s-s-seen p-pictures of P-Peggy in a b-bikini," I told Jennifer. "She, she's ..."

"Quite different from the way she started out," said Jennifer. "As am I and as is Andrea, Nikki, Marisa and Louise herself." Jennifer smiled at my shocked face. "Well, you didn't think I came to Haversham by accident, did you? There's always been a small underground transvestite and transsexual community here. I would have introduced you around but Andrea asked me not to. She says that she had big plans for you in the straight world."

"The fashion industry is part of the straight world?" I asked her. Jennifer laughed and patted my hand again in motherly fashion.

"Louise will slip what are basically bags into your chest and hips and rear and fill them with gel. You won't even have to be anaesthetized to have it done. You are not going to be augmented very much, just enough so that you can walk about bare-breasted in a roomful of girls and not be noticed at all."

"Because I w-would have b-breasts as w-well!" I almost yelled at her in my panic.

"Reversible in an afternoon," said my mother, "by Louise or any competent surgeon. Heavens, I could do it myself."

"Could you?" I babbled at her. "If I absolutely didn't like what was done to me?"

"Of course I would," said Jennifer, looking at me, a little puzzled. "But I would prefer Louise to do it. She's much better with scar tissue and hiding surgical incisions in skin folds than I am. I've specialized in eyes too much."

"I'm not going to do this," I said to my mother. She took my arm and we went out of the coffee shop. Almost everyone there was looking at us as we left; several of the men smiled at us both. We did look very stylish, after all.

"It's a very big step, Christine," my mother assured me. "I would love you to have it done soon. I want to have you as my bridesmaid next month."

"You're getting married to Charlie?" I asked her stupidly. Who else would it have been?

"Charlie wants a big church wedding," said Jennifer, a shy smile on her face as she looked up at me. "He insists that I wear white and be his bride. Andrea says that Nikki and Peggy will love to be my bridesmaids. You should be one as well. Of course, you don't need an augmentation to be my bridesmaid but it would be spectacular if we could put you all in low-cut dresses, wouldn't it?"

"You and the other bridesmaids will look so pretty with your hair swept up," said Andrea later that afternoon. "Jennifer thinks she's going to get away with just a hundred guests at her wedding but I have news for her. This is going to be the wedding of the year in Haversham. Everyone is going to be there. Mark has asked me to be his date and I agreed. So, your mother had better ask me now!"

"I said that I wasn't going to have any surgical procedures," I told her,

"I heard you, my dear," said Andrea. "Tell Jennifer I wrote out a list of all the people who've asked me to tell her they want to come to her wedding. I know the church only holds about four hundred. It will be filled just with people I know."

"I didn't know that my mother was so popular," I said in despair. Andrea, like my mother, just ignored what I was saying about breast augmentation.

"The little boy from Nebraska who was brought in just after she'd decided to be Jennifer," said Andrea. "The blades of some machine cut up his head. She did something revolutionary that you're not supposed to do with eyes and saved them both for him. Louise did the plastic surgery afterwards. We were all riveted when they took off the bandages and he looked up and said 'mama' to the right person. You should look it up in the news archives. No one said a word then about her being a transsexual. Your mother is such a lovely person. I hope that you are getting to know her well now that you are living together."

I *was* getting to know Jennifer well. It wasn't like living with Carol. Jennifer was more of a woman than Carol ever was. Carol was much like Andrea in personality, actually. They both seemed predatory to me, always on the hunt for attractive males and unusual sexual adventures.

"We don't need a porn channel," I told Jennifer once as we sat and relaxed in the living room after a visit from Andrea. "Andrea fills the bill quite nicely."

Jennifer laughed at me. "Oh, Andrea isn't as wild as she would have you think," she said. "That incident with the ballplayer happened over six years ago."

"Mark will probably be an usher," Andrea said, still ignoring my protests over having real breasts. "Ask your mother who is going to be giving her away, will you?"

"Maybe it will be Carol," I said grumpily and Andrea listened to me for the first time in a long while.

"Your genetic mother?" she asked me in surprise. "I don't think that we want her at the wedding, thank you very much. Nasty piece of work, isn't she?"

I supposed that Carol was a nasty piece of work at that. "She's just like you," I told Andrea and she giggled that girlish giggle of hers.

"I didn't think she was that bad," said Andrea. "Now off you go like a good, little girl to learn your runway strut from Eleanor. She says that you've almost got it. We can put you in the shows in Shelby and at Dallbrooks for sure. We have several video shoots for you as well as part of the *Exquisite Girl Cosmetics* testing. They want to see how their cosmetics will be shown and how the *Exquisite Girl* is going to be presented."

"I'm *not* going to get my breasts augmented," I said as I uncrossed my legs gracefully and got to my high-heeled feet. I sashayed away from her, barely conscious of the sway in my walk as I went to my class in my dress. I heard Andrea applauding how I left her. I didn't give her the satisfaction of seeing me blush by turning my head to glare at her.

The following day, I went with Jennifer to meet Dr. Louise Barrett, a soft-spoken woman whom I just knew couldn't be a man. Jennifer must have been joking with me. The doctor looked me over and said that she would do me right away. I didn't realize that she meant right there and then but she did.

I was on the verge of hysteria again as Louise Barrett took away my breast plate and began to inject a freezing anaesthetic into the muscles of my chest. A slim, silent nurse, her long, golden hair in a tight nurse's hat, came to assist her. She was wearing a surgical mask and my mother also had to put one on.

"We don't see you at our little soirees any more," said Louise to my mother.

"No," said my mother. "I suppose that I should come and see the girls of the old Chapter again."

"But it wouldn't be the same," said Louise with a smile in her made-up eyes as she made an incision in me that I didn't feel at all with all the anesthetic in me.

"I have sort of moved on from TS and TV affairs and issues," Jennifer said.

"Spoken like a woman," said Louise as she did my other chest muscle.

"It's so wonderful, isn't it?" said my mother enthusiastically, her hand squeezing mine.

"You are going to be marrying Charlie Greenwood next month," said Louise with a laugh. "A woman like you will be changing her name to his, won't she?"

"Oh yes," laughed my mother. "You'll have to call me Mrs. Greenwood then. It will be so wonderful."

"For a while," said Louise Barrett. She had me turn over and injected me all over my rear and hips with the freezing anesthetic. "I don't do this procedure very often," she said to my mother and me. "It will work well for a few months and bridge the gap to hormone therapy. You *must* get your daughter onto estrogen soon, Jen. It will help her to preserve her feminine looks into her late twenties, thirties and beyond."

"Or she can come to you and have all the procedures I've had," said Jennifer with a light laugh.

"If she wants to take the hard road to being a woman," Louise agreed. "Oh, I didn't introduce you to my daughter, did I? Candace has been ably assisting me in the clinic for over a year now."

The two of them, doctor and demure, smiling nurse, turned me this way and that. I gathered that they were injecting me with something. Then they did it to my chest and Louise manipulated and pulled me to and fro. I looked at the breasts that seemed to fill and grow in front of me.

"There," said Louise. "They'll remain shapely and pert like this for several months. You should come and see me again then and we can talk about something more permanent."

"I'll want them removed," I told her shakily as she fitted my bra back in place.

"No, you won't," said Louise with a smile. "You'll want nicer, more permanent breasts. The hormones should be kicking in by then if you get started now. You are going to enjoy having real breasts, a girl as pretty as you. You girls always come back to me so eager for me to do the next thing and the next thing. Just don't ask me for a nose bob, Christine. You have such pretty features and they all work together so well. You do need to be on hormones to preserve them, though."

"I can't feel anything," I said to my mother as we clicked out of Louise Barrett's clinic. "I might just as well be wearing my breast plate."

"Wait till the anesthetic wears off," said my mother. "You'll feel every tug and shaping that Louise did. That's why you have the painkillers. I think you are going to be in for a most uncomfortable night, darling."

"I thought Candace was very pretty, didn't you, Mummy?" I asked her as I sat on what felt like a padded cushion but it was now inside me. My panties fit me much better now. I lifted my legs into the car. Jennifer was watching me with a smile.

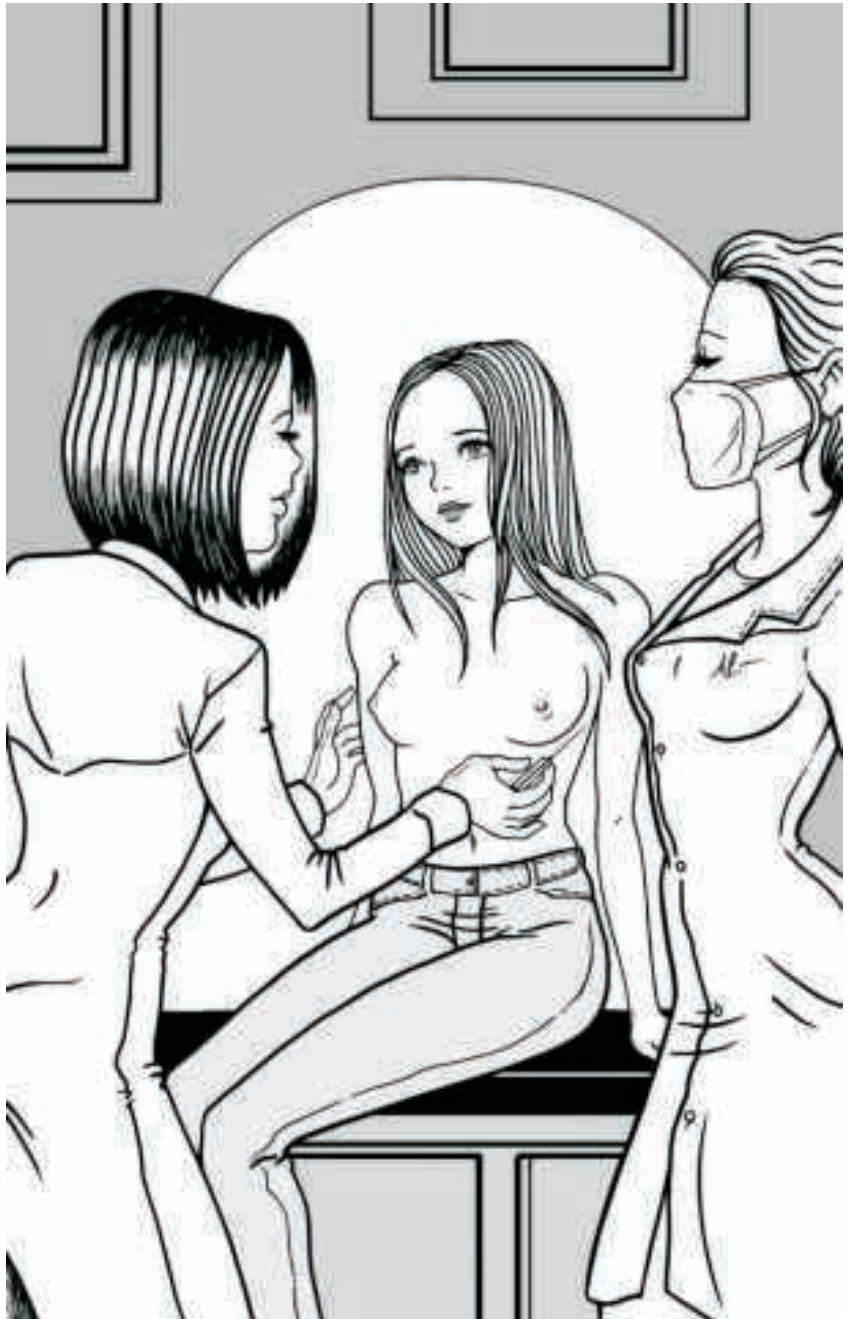
"Louise doesn't have any children," said Jennifer with a smile. "She did get married to a Robert Barrett who liked girls like us. He came to our meetings and was most supportive of her."

"He's her daughter now?" I asked.

"She's always called him Candy," said Jennifer. "He's in heaven really. He's always wanted a woman to dominate him as Louise does."

"But the breasts he has and that figure..." I said.

"Louise's work," said Jennifer with a frown. "She shouldn't really be doing that on a family member, I've told her again and again. She doesn't admit to anything now but when I see his lips like that, Candy always had such thin lips, I know Louise has been improving her daughter's looks again. Aren't you glad that I am not a mother like that, Christine? I'm only trying to help you to achieve the goal you have set for yourself to be a fashion model."



VI. FASHION MODEL

I was getting my model bag ready for the car. Jennifer was outside, talking to some of her neighbors on the street, probably about me, her daughter, Christine. The phone rang and I answered it.

"Is Jennifer or Jack there?" asked Carol, my mother.

I had just sprayed my throat so it was very difficult for me to get close to my normal voice as Jack. "Just a moment," I said to her. "Jack has a cold but I'll go and get him." Later, I realized that it would have been much easier to have impersonated Jennifer than to try to impersonate my boy self.

I got several tissues, put them over the phone and tried desperately to lower my voice. "Hi," I said, wheezing and trying to cough. "This is Jack Sheffield."

"You don't sound like Jack," said my genetic mother. "Why is your voice so muffled?"

"Got the flu, Mother," I told her, coughing and clearing my throat. My voice still sounded girlish to me. "Bronchitis as well."

"Oh," said Carol angrily. "My hotel has thrown me out!" she said dramatically. "And they've seized my suitcases. All my clothes. You *have* to talk to your father, Jack, and get him to wire me some money!"

"The Ritz has thrown you out?" I gasped.

"Not the Ritz!" my mother snapped at me. "I had to move after that phone call from that horrible man your father has taken up with. Charlie Green or something like that. He told me he had power of attorney over Jennifer's money while she was in hospital or some such malarkey. He refused to pay my bills at the Ritz until I agreed to move here, to the Bennington. It's so cheap and tacky, Jack. You couldn't imagine me living in a place like this. I didn't dare to bring Roberto here."

"Roberto?" I asked and Carol was off on a long account of this man she had met and how it looked like I would have a new father soon. I didn't ask her how he had bought a new car recently or where her alimony check had gone. It was larger than the salary that I earned at Moore Models.

"Jennifer has no money, Mother," I told her when I could get a word in. "She's been sick, she has cancer, Mother. She hasn't been able to work."

"Then what am I to do?" wailed my genetic mother over the phone. "Where am I to go? Where am I to live?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask her why she had ever sold her New York apartment and where that money had gone. "A moment, Mother," I said to her as I considered the amount of money I had in my account. Andrea had just paid me a second month's salary and told me how much I now owed her in fees. The pittance I was going to be paid for the show in Shelby wasn't going to cover it at all. I had better be very good in the video shoot that followed it the next day.

I tried to grunt but it came out as a squeak. "I have about five thousand I can send you, Mother," I said. "Will that take care of the Bennington?"

"I'll only have a thousand left for the rest of the month until my alimony check gets here," complained Carol. "You tell your father he is going to have to come up with more money, or else!"

"Or else what, Mother?" I asked her, dreading what her reply would be.

"I'll go to the tabloid press and sell them my story," threatened Carol.

"Think about that," I said as gruffly as I could. "Doesn't that mean, Mother, that you would lose your alimony right away?"

"My lawyers wouldn't let that happen," snapped my mother. "Is this Jack or is this his girl friend? I think it is his girl friend, isn't it. You're pretending to be Jack. Well, young lady, you can tell Jack to send me five thousand and I won't go out again this month." There was very little chance of that. "You can tell Jennifer that she *has* to talk to me. She has to be out of the hospital by now unless she's at death's door. She *has* to talk to me and send me more money or I promise that I *will* go to the press this time."

Jennifer came in as I was returning her phone to its cradle. She looked gorgeous in a dark red dress. "Someone called?" she asked in her beautiful soprano. I thought of all the things she had gone through and the worries that Carol would heap on her. I would have to talk to Charlie about her.

"Wrong number, Mummy," I said, trying to smile at her

Jennifer looked me over. "I love your hair," she said. "A pony tail really suits you. I can't wait till next year at this time. Then when I praise your hairstyle, it will be because it is your own."

Jennifer hugged me then. Her breasts pressed against mine and mine were now as real as hers. In my low-cut blouse, my chest bounced like a girl's. I had a girl's breasts. I felt a sick feeling inside me as I thought of myself like that. If it wasn't for the wigs I still wore and the way I had to tuck into my panties, I would have been a girl everywhere.

I could behave like a girl when I wanted to as well. I had had lessons in everything, even how to greet and say goodbye to people. I knew how to bend in the miniskirt I was wearing and how to keep my head back and my chest out. The sway in my walk was now natural and normal for me. It was going to take an awfully long time for me to turn back to being Jack, I thought miserably.

I had asked the University for a leave of absence for John Molloy Sheffield. They had agreed and given me a deadline that was fast approaching if I wished to change my mind. Sending Carol all my money was going to make certain that I couldn't return in September, not unless I did become the *Exquisite Girl*, which I had begun to think wasn't the sure thing that Andrea had told me it was.

Jennifer took me downtown to Moore Models. There were several girls, tall and thin like me, waiting to climb onto a bus for the short trip to Shelby. A trailer was attached, a long one for the dresses in the fashion show being put on for the women of Shelby.

"There'll be a lot of women whose husbands work at Shavers there for the show," said Jennifer. I stood there awkwardly; Marisa waved at me and several girls I knew from Andrea's advanced class scrutinized me as football players might have looked at the opposing team.

"Ouch," laughed Jennifer.

"Rivals for a job," I told my mother. I could have told the girls that I wasn't any kind of threat. I just wanted to get the money Andrea said I would get from Exquisite Cosmetics, make the videos they wanted, do the shows they wanted, then Christine White would be no more.

"Do well," said my mother, kissing me. "Oh, I love that *Opium* on you. But you're going to have to change to *Exquisite* products, aren't you?"

"That's what Andrea tells me," I said to my mother, my long earrings bobbing about my neck. "I have to go, Mummy."

"I'll have the invitations to the wedding mailed by the time you come back," said Jennifer eagerly. She and Charlie had agreed on two hundred and fifty at the reception. Andrea had looked at the guest list and given them at least ten couples more whom they 'had' to invite. I wouldn't be surprised when I got back to find that the number had grown past three hundred. Andrea's prediction of the four hundred-seat church being packed didn't seem like it was going to be far wrong.

I took a seat for the short ride. I was able to stretch out my long legs in my short skirt as the other girls were doing. I was a girl among girls, I thought. Even my augmentations didn't seem so bad now; they made me fit in well with the other girls. I smiled to Charmaine and Isobel whom I knew well and they asked me how I was.

"A little nervous," I lied to them with a smile on my plummy, painted lips, tossing back my long, ash-blonde hair.

"So am I," said Isobel with a phoney smile back at me. It was the first show for both of us. All of the others had been in several local shows, catalogue and newspaper ads.

I lied to Isobel, whom I chatted to a lot about boys and clothes, when I told her that I was a little nervous. I was a *lot* nervous. I was so nervous that I felt I might pee in my panties at any moment. No, I mustn't think of that. Soon, I was going to be half-naked and at the mercy of the dressers that she employed to run her local fashion shows.

The dressers treated us girls as if we were just so much meat. I was chatting to Isobel when I was grabbed. Dorothy, the makeup girl, sat me down in front of a mirror and had me strip off so that I sat there in my lavender-colored bra and panties.

Dorothy didn't have time to waste so she did my makeup, giving me curly eyelashes and lots of extra makeup about my eyes and gloss on my lips. She wasn't satisfied initially so she worked on me until I had the look that Andrea had said I should have. I sat there and people looked at me but I looked just like the other models who were all as undressed as I was.

I had had to get used to that; Eleanor had made us all strip in her classes and even leave off our bras so that we didn't display any feminine modesty, which she said was a sin in modelling. I didn't have time now to be nervous as my dressers put me into my first short skirt and sweater. My breasts were without the support of a bra, tenting the front of me, making my emotions sizzle.

After my first change and my next stroll down the runway in a long, mauve skirt and jacket, I was in a business suit and black high heels, wiggling and swaying as sexily as

Charmaine in front of me. I knew my figure, even my tush, was as good as hers. Everyone told me that.

The dressers stripped me fiercely as they did the other girls, then dressed me and re-dressed me with no regard for my naked breasts or my feminized body. If my stockings had to be changed, they were. If I was at all slow at getting them off, I was yelled at. There were sixteen models or so and we all had to move, move, move. I hardly knew what dress I had on. I just walked, swayed as femininely as I could, making sure that my heels came down one in front of the other, and tried to keep my face devoid of expression.

I sashayed down the runway as I thought what a fool I was. I was aware of the audience, avid and full of staring eyes, on either side of me. I wasn't to look, I had been told by Miss Eleanor several times. It would scare me, I was assured. I had to keep my eyes on a spot on the far wall and walk towards it, swaying as femininely as I could.

We changed into evening clothes. I had to change wigs and have the new one pinned to me. I was sure that one of the dressers would say something about my manliness. The women changed my hair without missing a beat or commenting on my shortish hair stuffed in my wig cap. I gathered up my skirts and swished out to the wings.

Ellie put my necklace on me while another woman put on my bracelets and fresh earrings. Then I was out there to the 'oohs' and 'aahs' of the crowd that seemed to have grown while we were working..

The audience liked my dress and applauded as I did my stand, posed in model sullenness, then did my pirouette, using my hands as I had been taught to make the dress flare out and move femininely. "Beautiful, Christine," said Eleanor with a charming smile.

Eleanor was serving as the emcee. "That is what our audience came to see today," she whispered to me. I tried to pretend that I liked what I was doing by giving her a quick smile.

I had another evening gown to change into, strapless. The bodice was tight about me, pushing up my breasts. My breasts pushed forward as the skirts hugged my legs. I really did feel girlish as I posed and pirouetted. The audience again applauded me or my dress, I wasn't quite sure which.

I moved down the runway as Isobel was leaving the entrance with an exaggerated wiggle. She winked at me. I still couldn't relax and just be the woman I was supposed to be even though I had done all this a hundred times in the classes. I felt tense as I minced girlishly down the runway and flashbulbs went off as they had done all through the show. I did a perfect pirouette to show off the five-inch heels I wore. Then I headed back to where Charmaine was ready to follow me.

There was a group of men standing behind the last line of women. One of the men moved; I would have recognized his silhouette anywhere even though I didn't see Grant Kinsley's face completely. My pulse began to race; I had to fight to keep my pouty face in place. Eleanor nodded and smiled encouragingly to me as I slowed, swayed, and then exited. My senses were on fire as I thought of Grant Kinsley looking at me and the way I was dressed.

I was numb as I thought about Grant seeing me as a woman in my long, strapless dresses, being able to see that I had breasts now. I had broken every word I had ever said about not dressing as a girl again. *Oh, if only Jennifer had saved more money*, I thought in distress, I wouldn't have to do this for Carol and myself.

But it was silly to think that way. It wasn't Jennifer's fault that I was dressed like a girl or had breasts and a tush like a woman. I had allowed these things to happen to me. I steeled myself every day to remove any trace of hair in my scented bath as I stared at the mounds erupting from my chest. I forced myself to smile and be willing to wear the most delicate of women's underwear and the silliest of fashions. I practiced behaving like a young girl, affecting the speech patterns of empty-headed Charmaine and cool-talking Rachel.

No, there was no way I could blame my mother for my predicament. And Jennifer really was my mother. She was becoming more motherly by the day; I called her 'Mummy' all the time to prove to her that I really wanted to be a girl, that I really wanted to be a fashion model.

Jennifer had been an excellent provider for me and Carol. I kept thinking how Carol had squandered all the money my mother had given her. The same was true of me as well. I should have gotten a job last year, even a part-time job. I could easily have saved half of the money and not be in the position I was in, not being able to go to school, or help Carol or Jennifer.

It was all my fault that I was parading in front of a room full of women in an off-the-shoulder black and red dress, a huge slit up to my waist, black panties over my tiny, white ones, my frontage as flat as any of the other girls in the show with me. I almost cried as a wave of emotion flooded over me. I thought angrily, "What else could I do?"

I could have gotten a real job, an inner voice told me. I could have told Carol to do the same and I could have stopped sponging off my mother by accepting all her hospitality while she was still recovering from her illnesses. Not that a sex change could be construed as an illness, though some people like Carol clearly thought that it was.

I was changed into my last evening gown. It took a real effort to clear my mind of distracting thoughts. I had to think properly or I would wobble on my five-inch heels and start to make incongruous male gestures in my beautiful dress.

I am Christine, I told myself vehemently. I am Christine. I am a beautiful girl. I am a fashion model. Christine, Christine, Christine, went through my head like a prayer. I swayed out again. Now I *was* Christine. The women applauded me and the dress I was wearing that I barely knew I had on.

I finished my turn and Eleanor nodded to me, smiling as if I had done very well. I actually relaxed for a moment as I sashayed to my dressers. Very soon, I would have to change into the tennis dresses and so-called leisure wear—bikinis—we had to model to the ladies of Shelby. *Grant, I thought, you should have stayed and seen me in a bikini. Then, you would have known how much of a hypocrite I really am.*

Thoughts about Grant kept whirling through my head. Then I saw him again as I stood beside Eleanor waiting for Isobel to clear from in front of me and for Charmaine to do her

pirouette and start to turn. He was right in front of me with his little phalanx. He could watch me coming right towards him, then see me walking away femininely.

I didn't know why he was there at all. It couldn't be to watch me, could it? I could feel frustration rising in me as I thought about how this was my very first time on a runway and he was there. *Grant shouldn't be here*, I thought angrily, as I flounced one last time in a long dress and exited.

This was supposed to be a fashion show at a very low level, my first fashion show. All the girls in the show were young and were aspiring models. It was supposed to be for the women who worked in the offices at Shavers, the company Grant owned, or rather his mother owned.

One of the dressers undid my long dress and unhooked my bra. Suddenly I was aware of how I must look to everyone with the thrusting mounds and excited nipples that showed through the top of my little dress.

"Wake up, Christine," the dresser said impatiently to me. "Pantyhose off."

I stood there and took off my pantyhose with shaking fingers as the other girl with me combed out and re-arranged my hair so that it danced in a flounce at my neck. A little white dress went over my head, my huge earrings were replaced with small studs and my feet were being pushed into white, high-heeled sandals. I was given a tennis racquet to twirl and I was thrust to the entrance to the runway.

Charmaine smiled from the end of the runway as she saw me, ready to go on. I knew how I looked. I was just like all of the other girls who were models. I walked and acted like them. I would giggle with Isobel on the way home about all the cute boys we had seen. Our voices would be shrill and girlish as we both behaved like young girls out on the town. I wondered what Grant thought about as he saw me. He knew that I was a man acting like a woman in the fashion show his workers had organized.

I wondered what Isobel would say if she knew. She would want to talk about boys and men after the show. She liked to talk about the men she kissed and rate them. I knew she would have seen the men watching us and would be telling me all about them and asking me who I thought would be the best kisser in the group. I wouldn't tell her about Grant and the kiss he had given me. I couldn't do that. I wouldn't dare. I would have so many questions to answer about being Grant's girl for a day.

I concentrated on what I had to do. I knew that my long legs were tanned and shapelier and more feminine than Charmaine's or Isobel's. I shimmied forward onto the runway again and did a few more stops, poses and pirouettes with my face as expressionless and haughty as I could make it. I hated having to rustle my little mini-skirt with my hands as I walked so that I showed off my panties to the women watching me so avidly.

Inevitably, my eyes slid to where Grant had been. It was a relief, and a disappointment, that he wasn't there. He wouldn't see me in my bikini after all. All of the men had gone, in fact. I was totally alone as the only man in a world of women. I thought about what I was, what I had willingly allowed myself to become. *You did it for Jennifer*, I kept telling myself. Seeing Grant after I had wondered about what he would say if he saw me again had scrambled my brains and my emotions.

I had several skimpy outfits to wear, colorful panties over my little white ones as I paraded. I wore straw hats and little jackets and wraps over the bikinis in which I ended my last forays down the runway. I knew how to stop and take off the jackets or wraps slowly, almost like a striptease, and let the women get a good look at my bikinis. They also got an eyeful of me as well, my starvation-thin figure and my breasts and femininely shaped tush and thighs. No, with my makeup and hair, there was nothing to give me away as male at all.

Finally, in our black bikinis, we girls all came out and were allowed to smile to the audience and wave as they applauded us. We presented to them the chairman of the social club that had brought the show to Shelby.

There were speeches which we applauded and smiled at. Then we were free to go back into the dressing room and get ready to depart. The dressers didn't help me much then save to remove the bikini from me. That left me in my tiny, white underpants, just like the other girls; many of them were losing their panties a little as they giggled their way out of the bikinis. The chatter around me was enormous.

"Christine White?" said a familiar voice through the noise behind me. I turned around, drawing up my hands and trying to hide my little breasts from Judith's prying eyes.

"I would have known you anywhere," said Judith with a huge smile. "My boy friend has pictures of you in his room. He says you are his sister, Christine. You don't have the same last name, but you two do look much alike."

"I hope not," I said, finding the white, frilly bra the dresser had left for me and putting it on while Judith watched me in fascination. Jennifer said that I didn't look at all like Jack. Andrea said that she wouldn't have known my boy self at all. But here was my ex-girl friend and she was putting the lie to both those statements.

"Oh, you're so much prettier and feminine than him," laughed Judith merrily as I felt my world coming apart in shame and humiliation. I raced to put on my garter belt and stockings and she looked at my feminine figure. "You wouldn't happen to know where he is right now, would you? I'd really like to get in touch with him again."

"He went back to New York," I said to her, She seemed disappointed as she studied the heavy, heavy makeup on my face and. She seemed fascinated by the extra curly false eyelashes I was wearing.

"The job he came up here for," I said to my ex, "fell through."

"He said it was only for a week or so," said Judith, pulling a face. I was so relieved when she turned and appeared about to leave. "Oh, what about your mother and her cancer?" Judith asked me with a sympathetic smile. "You *are* Jack's sister, aren't you?"

"Stepsister," I told her. "We had the same mother."

"That's why you have different last names," said Judith, nodding. "You must both have taken after her."

"Our mother is doing very well. She's back on her feet now and planning to get married again soon. How is your mother, Judith McEwen?" I asked her anxiously, making it seem that I was reading the name off her name tag.

"Oh, she's well," said Judith. "She's right over there. She's worked for Shavers for years. You won't believe this but when I first saw you in the show, I was sure you were Jack Sheffield in a dress. Then I came in here and there you were, without any clothes on at all. Then I knew you weren't. You two look so alike that you could be twins."

"He's two years older than me. And he's got stubble all over his face. I don't look like a boy, do I?"

"Not really," said Judith with a smile. "Now that I've seen you up close, I can see that you are a woman. But when I first knew Jack, he had no hair on his body and he looked girlish. When I saw his photos of you, I thought he had been fooling with me and had been dressing like a girl over his holiday. I should apologize to him when I see him. I have to say, Jack wasn't girlish at all in any way when we made out."

"That must have been after he came back from his trip to South America," I said. My hands shook as I put on my white blouse. The grey mini-skirt of my business outfit followed as Judith stood there smiling. Finally, I put on my high heels which made me much taller than her.

"Yes, he said that," said Judith, "but I didn't believe him."

"You really liked him? That's why you want to see him again?" I asked Judith as I brushed my hair straight about my face. She looked enviously over my shoulder at all the dresses being carted off by the members of Andrea's staff.

"Well," said Judith with a smile. "You know how it is. Jack was all right, but we girls are always looking to upgrade, aren't we?"

I almost said, "Doobie No-Brains was an upgrade on me?" But I didn't. She read that I didn't like her belittling Jack. "Well, I have to be going," Judith said with a huge smile. "This job doesn't pay much but it keeps the wolf from the door. I'll tell Jack I met you when I see him in class this year."

Judith went off and joined a group of older women who were helping to tidy up the large hall and the section behind the drapes and runway that had been the models' dressing room.

Praying that Judith wouldn't come back, I quickly began to put my model bag back together. I grabbed my bag and headed out of the curtains to hide out on the bus.

I cleared the curtains and there was Grant, standing with a woman in a wheelchair.

"Well, here she is, Mama," drawled Grant, holding her back from the stream of people getting out of the hall. "You *will* get to meet Christine Whitehouse after all."

I stood rooted to the spot as Janine and Tina came clicking by me, looking in interest at the old woman in the chair. She was staring at me most studiously. "White or Whitehouse?" she asked me with a twinkle in her eye.

"Andrea," I said, speaking in what I hoped was a girlish voice; I couldn't recall when I had last sprayed my throat. "Andrea Moore who runs Moore Models thought that Whitehouse was too long so she shortened my last name."

"She was right," said the old woman. "It was quite a mouthful, wasn't it? You're Jennifer Whitehouse's daughter, Grant tells me. I saw a picture of you in several papers from a baseball game last year."

"Yes," I said, aware of the silent study Grant was making of me from beside her. "Grant was very kind and took my mother and me to see our first Cubs game."

"Grant should take you again," said the old woman dryly. "You brought them luck. I don't think that they've won a home game since."

"There have been a few wins, Mama," said Grant Kinsley gently. His mother turned and looked up at him, clasping his arm.

"He still doesn't have manners enough to introduce me properly," said Grant's mother. "I'm Martha Kinsley, Miss White. May I call you Christine?"

What could I say? Everybody else did. I began to nod and the old woman smiled again at me.

"I'm supposed to own Shavers which is why I like to put in an appearance at all the social affairs our Health and Welfare group organizes. I was surprised by how professional the show was. The stores and boutiques that sponsored it are going to get a lot of business from our employees, I suspect."

"If you are only supposed to own Shavers," I asked her cautiously, "then who really does?"

Martha Kinsley smiled really pleasantly at me then. "She listens as well as she looks, Grant," she said. "I can see why you took her out last year. Grant, of course, makes all the decisions but he does all these fancy things like asking me to approve his choices. It makes me feel that I am still valuable to the company."

"You are, Mama," said Grant, leaning over and kissing the top of the old lady's head. I saw the display of affection in the way that he clasped her hand and arm. "We all value your opinion. You know that."

"Then I approve," said Martha Kinsley. "I think Miss White is an admirable choice, Grant. I think that she will make *Exquisite Girl Cosmetics* look like it lives up to its name."

My mouth dropped open as I watched Grant kissing his mother's forehead. "She didn't know, Mama," he said with a twisted smile on his face. "She didn't know that Shavers is the company behind *Exquisite Girl Cosmetics*. It shouldn't come as a shock, Christine. I told you last year that our pharmaceutical division was looking to expand into cosmetics."

"Andrea never said that it was *you*," I gasped, my legs wanting to turn to jelly. Mrs Kinsley looked at Grant and smiled at me warmly.

"Would you take the offer to be our *Exquisite Girl*," asked Martha Kinsley, "even with Grant hovering around and putting all kinds of restrictions on what you can and can't do publicly as well as in modelling? If he listens to my opinion, he'll make the contract he's going to offer you far less restrictive than it is."

"I'll have to see," I said nervously. I thought that the contract was all signed and sealed. Andrea had led me to believe that. She just had to get me ready and I was in, she had said. "Probably," I said, looking at Grant's face to see if he approved of my answer

and of me as the *Exquisite Girl* face. I couldn't tell by his poker face what he thought, though.

"Then that's done," said Martha Kinsley cheerily. "Grant, you and Andrea can meet and make the contract terms we suggested permanent."

"Christine still has to appear in a New York show," said Grant. "It was one of the conditions."

"Waive them," said Martha pleasantly. "I like this girl, Grant. She does wonders for the clothes she wears. We really *do* have to have her."

"We are doing test videos over the next few days," Grant said, making excuses about why they shouldn't make up their minds right then and there.

Martha waved them all off. "Such a pretty girl," she said. She put out her hand to me so I had to walk with her and Grant who was slightly behind, all the way down the ramp and over to her limousine in front of the community center. There were a lot of women still there, chatting away. They came over to pay their respects to Martha and to give me the once over as well.

Grant helped his mother into the car and the chauffeur whisked the wheelchair away. "I'll walk Christine to the bus," Grant said and put his arm under mine. I could feel everyone looking at us as I minced towards the bus, trying to be as feminine as I could.

"So it was more than a one-day thing," said Grant as he escorted me. "You've decided that you really love dressing in women's clothing after all."

"No," I said before I even thought about it. My skirt rustling about my stockings betrayed me.

"No?" asked Grant, his tone definitely mocking. "What is this I see before me then?"

"I need the money," I said to him and Grant looked surprised. "I need money to go back to school," I told him after a long pause. "Carol, she's my real mother, needs money, and Jennifer hasn't been able to work since, since..."

"Since she had her sex change surgery," said Grant.

"Since they found cancer when they were doing that surgery," I told him. He looked surprised. He said something in a sympathetic tone but I didn't catch it.

"It's all right," I hurried on. It felt weird to be there beside him, talking to him as if I was a girl when he knew exactly what I was. "My mother, Jennifer that is, is on the road to recovery and she is going to be married soon to Charlie Greenwood."

"Yes," said Grant. "And I have something to ask you about that, Christine." *He called me Christine*, a delighted little voice inside me started to say. I wanted to say, *Anything, Grant, ask me for anything and I'll give it to you*. But I didn't. He stepped around in front of me and took my hands.

"It would be a very great favor," Grant said, looking down at me even though I was in my four-inch heels, "but my mother would love an invitation to Jennifer's wedding. She thinks it is going to be the social event of the season. As you saw today, my mother never likes to miss out on a significant social event."

"I, I'm sure my mother would, would be delighted to ask your mother to the wedding," I said to Grant. *And that means that you will be there as well, I thought in distress. It means that you will see me acting the part of a bridesmaid.*

"Good," said Grant. "And this, Christine, is for the audience we have on the bus and all around the parking lot."

He put his arm about my quaking body, pulled me against him and kissed me right on the mouth. He let me go and I felt my senses reeling as I staggered towards the bus. It was as if everyone had been watching me, even the bus driver, and my exit was choreographed.

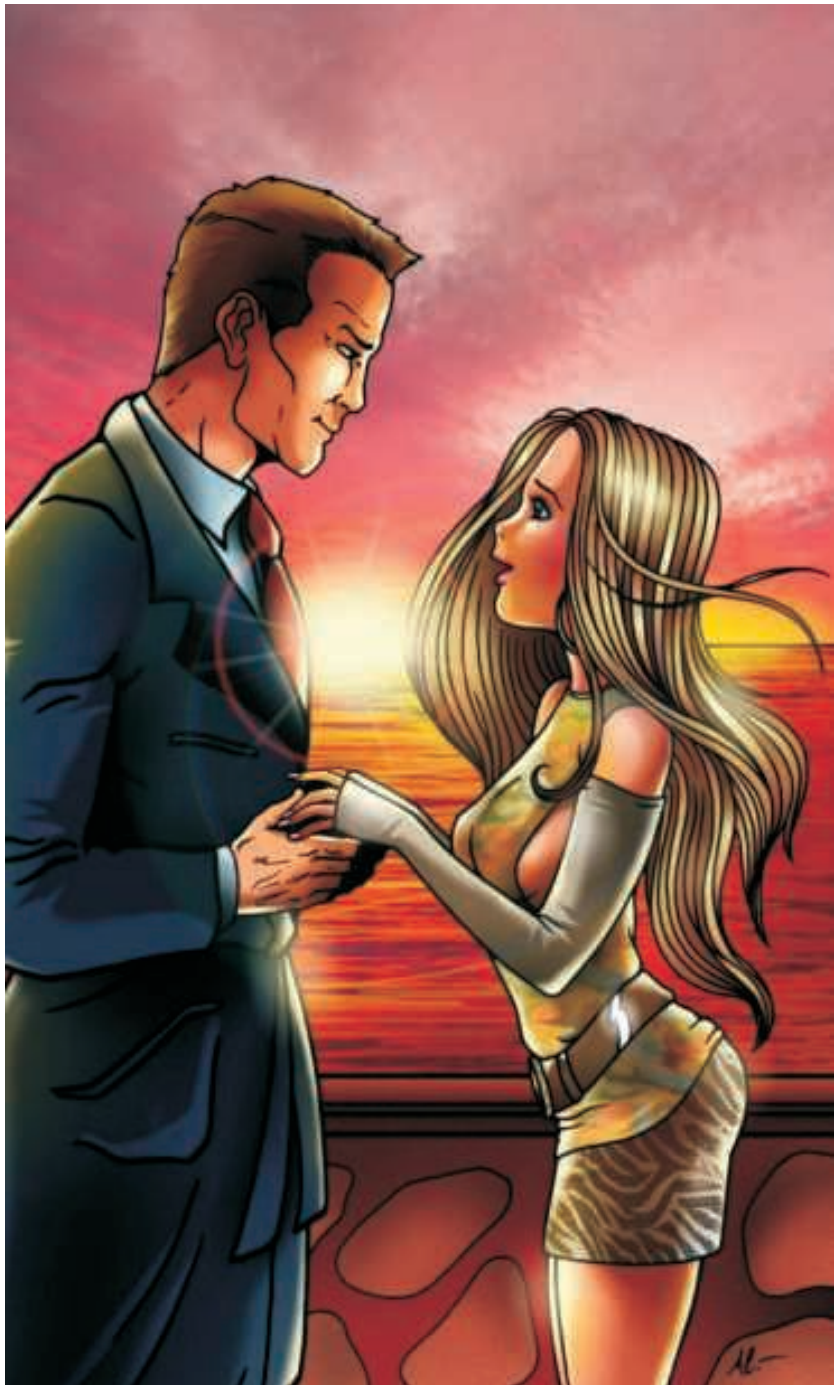
"Wow," said Isabel excitedly. "You and Grant Kinsley, kissing! What was it like?"

Earth-shattering, mind-numbing, stupid, terrible, tingling, wonderful, heavenly, incredible, fantastic. The words tumbled from my mind as I stretched out like a girl on the bus seat and wondered if and when Grant would ever kiss me again.

VII. EXQUISITE GIRL

Going back to New York for the Heather Portillo collection was a trying time for me. Rachel and Janine had been selected to go with Andrea and me.

It would be my fourth show, but my first major showing, as it was for Rachel and Janine, but they had worked many shows over the previous year with Moore Models. They had done catalogues and newspaper spreads as well as local magazines. I had none of their experience and I would be out there with some of the prettiest girls in the world, supermodels as the press



called them. That wasn't what was causing me such uneasiness, though. I was entering back into the world where I had once been Jack but now I was doing it in a skirt and stockings.

Andrea sat beside me on the plane and opened a fashion magazine in which she began to show me an article on Heather and her designs. She was proclaimed as a designer who made 'dresses that any woman would love to wear.' I read a little of it. Heather said that she was most careful about choosing the models for all her shows. She had her favorites but she also had her pick of the 'cream' of all the best models in New York. Her definition of 'best' seemed to be 'sexiest.'

"How did I get to be in this show?" I whispered to Andrea.

"Heather is a friend of mine from way back," Andrea said. I looked at her sharply, wondering what that could mean. Louise Barrett had apparently been a friend from 'way back' as well. Andrea didn't say anything more about that, however, only showing me the lovely evening gowns with the article. "She loves the models I have trained. At the moment, you are the best of the girls I have been training on our local circuit in Haversham. It was obvious at Dallbrooks and in the Ann Arbor show. Heather has my word on it that you are ready for New York, as Janine and Rachel are as well. Heather has had photos of the three of you since last year."

"This is nothing to do with Grant Kinsley then," I said to her. There had been promos for *Exquisite Girl* cosmetics at each of my last shows, featuring still pictures of me from the video test I had done for the company. I was supposed to do several more while I was in New York, after the show. Then I had to hurry back to Haversham with Nikki and Peggy to be a bridesmaid with them at my mother's huge, white wedding.

"Not Heather's show," Andrea promised me, giving me a sly smile. The story of me kissing Grant on the tarmac in Shelby had lost nothing in the telling. The way I heard it back from Grace, who hadn't even been there, was that we had been lip-locked for over five minutes as his hands were all over me, exploring.

What could I say to that, except, "I only wish it had been like that." I realized that I wouldn't have minded at all if it truly had been that way.

We were halfway through the Dallbrooks show when Isobel whispered to me, "Grant is here." I froze. I was almost totally naked; Brenda, the dresser, started pulling on my panties and almost exposed me totally as she tried to get me to change into the dark blue silk I wore with my next, slitted skirt.

Several girls told me excitedly that he was there then. I tried hard not to look for him. I succeeded as I didn't see him there. I first spotted him at the entrance as I left with Jennifer. He was talking with Rose Dallbrooks. He made no effort to come to me or to talk to my mother.

"Well, that was unusual," said Jennifer as we drove back home. I was stressed out, exhausted and deflated after all the tension I had been through. "Grant usually makes a point of talking to me whenever we meet. I just sent off the invitations to the wedding and included Grant and his mother separately. I wonder who he will bring with him. He's always linked with Janice Fox, the actress, in the tabloids these days. Her biography says that her father was an executive with Shavers."

"How long have they been going out?" I asked, feigning semi-indifference. I felt worse than I let on as she told me all about Grant's love life and his myriad of girl friends.

"I can see why you didn't take up with him," I said to her.

"Oh, he's a lot of fun," said Jennifer with a smile as if she was remembering going out with him. "He was much too young, much too virile, though I did sometimes wonder when I saw him with other women nearly as old as me. I hope he would have enjoyed me. I would have enjoyed having a little fling with him. But then I met Charlie and Grant suddenly seemed so young and immature by comparison. I must say that he seems much more grown-up these days."

"Let's not talk about him any more," I said. Jennifer smiled. I don't think that I fooled her one little bit.

At the show in Ann Arbor there were thirty of us models, nineteen from Moore Models. The dressing room was packed with a huge crowd of workers and the designing staffs of the three designers who were pooling their efforts in a huge show. Privacy was non-existent; all through rehearsals we had to sit in just panties and pantyhose and wait for the sewing machines to regurgitate the dresses that had to fit us perfectly.

It was the first time I met designers who pushed me about as if I was a puppet. I had jewellery changed all the time as one male designer couldn't make up his mind what was best. He had definite ideas on how we were to present his dresses. We had to smile, but in different ways at different parts of our journey on a circular runway.

We had to do dance steps at certain points when certain music played; several girls fell in rehearsal because of the impossible heels we had to wear. Every mistake or mismatch of earrings or necklaces was the model's fault, I found out. We were not allowed to say a word to the designer. I might have been a plastic mannequin the way that I was treated.

At Heather Portillo's, it was very different. "I'm *so* pleased to have you here at last, Christine," said Heather. She was an older woman, her face much more lined and wrinkled than in the magazine's photos. "I've been trying to get you here all year long but Andrea has had you tied up. I want you for my late autumn show and my winter show. Andrea has the dates. Make me a priority, please, Christine. I need a young, pretty girl in my dresses. You do *so* much for them and for me!"

I had a warm feeling after I met Heather. We went through a brief run-through, a preparation for the final show that took a week as Heather had to screen every dress, every makeup style and every piece of jewellery or accessory her assistants put on me.

"Beautiful," said Heather many times. She smiled a lot and said the same thing to many of the girls, who were devastatingly beautiful. "Martin," she said to one of her assistants who was listing everything that had to be worn with each dress. "Make sure that Christine steps out between Giselle and Katherine Summers. And she must have blonde hair as well. I'll want to see her in shorter page boys tomorrow. Christine and Giselle are going to be lookalikes, I think. It will ensure that we get longer play on the television news."

I was stunned; Giselle Hammond was regarded as the one of the topmost runway models in New York. Katherine Summers was well-known as well. Both of them had been

models for years. Just seeing them, their faces so familiar, sent a surge of excitement through me. I was admiring models as if I was Jack, I told myself bitterly, not Christine and in a skirt and stockings just like them.

Nikki and Peggy lived in the apartment Andrea maintained in the Village so we had to go and visit them at home. It was absurd to see the four of us together, I thought. We were all men, after all, yet we talked about girlish things and affected girlish mannerisms. Of course, we were all dressed as glamorous women which we all were, even Andrea who was older than us.

It was hysterical to me to see how Nikki and Peggy had been completely consumed into their roles as women. They talked incessantly about boyfriends and men in general and teased me about Grant Kinsley whom they had heard was my boyfriend.

"He is not," I said, my color high.

"Oh goody," said Peggy in a voice that sounded very much like mine now. "You'll have to come out on the town with us, Christine. There are so many wonderful men here. There are Grant Kinsleys in every club. We should bring some home for a little party!"

"After the Portillo show," said Andrea curtly. "Christine has to have her beauty sleep and so should you two girls."

"Oh we do" said Nikki, faking wide-eyed innocence. "We're in bed every night by eleven."

"But who with?" asked Andrea. Peggy smiled and lifted a hand to her mouth, showing off very dark, blood-red nails.

"I hoped that Peggy would be a good influence on Nikki," said Andrea as we caught a cab back to the Singleton Hotel where we were staying with Janine and Rachel.

"Didn't she have a boy friend that she'd been going out with for years?" I asked her.

"That didn't last past Peggy having the snip," said Andrea grimly as we slowly went along the Parkway. "I understand that he's shacked up with some underage kid just like you only he's feeding his intended oodles of hormones. The kid is lapping them up and is in love with Dave just as much as Peggy was. You can't say I didn't warn her."

"Peggy had her sex change before Nikki?" I asked. Andrea nodded.

"Your mother changed places with her on the surgery list," said Andrea. "I wish she hadn't now. I should have got Peggy sharing with someone who wasn't like Nikki Harper. Peggy's acting like she's just discovered sex and will sleep with any man who gets next to her. Nikki? Well, she's always been a slut."

"At least they won't get pregnant," I told Andrea. I wondered what she said about me when I wasn't there.

"There are sexually transmitted diseases," said Andrea scornfully, "but girls never listen to me when they hit the Big Apple. It's one of the reasons I want them back in Haversham for a while. I want to read the Riot Act to them. I want to introduce them to some nice men."

"Grant Kinsley?" I asked. Andrea laughed.

"That would be an idea," she said. "Really, they should be thinking of marrying rich men, the pair of them. They're both squandering their money much too fast. I suspect they're cokeheads as well."

"Peggy and Nikki looked too good," I told her. Peggy and Nikki both looked so soft and womanly. I couldn't imagine them doing any kind of hard drug.

"You'd be surprised," said Andrea darkly. "It's not just transsexuals taking the white powder. I can't keep the girls off it. They come to New York and seem to think it is normal for an evening's entertainment. When they get knocked up, they never know for sure who the daddy is. But you're right. Peggy and Nikki won't get pregnant."

"And these are the girls you want to be my mother's bridesmaids," I said and Andrea smiled at me.

I hadn't been back at the hotel very long when the phone rang. It was Peggy. "Is Andrea there?" she asked carefully.

"No," I said. "She went over to check on Janine and Rachel. Then she has some business to do with Connie."

"Good," said Peggy. "Nikki and I are coming up."

The two waltzed into my room. Nikki was smiling and talking to some men who trailed by along the hallway.

"We thought we should take you out and get to know you," said Peggy with that shy, dimpled smile I found so alluring. The first time that I saw her and she had smiled like that, I couldn't believe she had been a man, like me.

"Yes," said Nikki, hunting through my clothes closet. "Wear this," she said, picking out the flirtiest dance dress I had, one I had only worn to dance in one class with Colin. I hadn't worn a bra with that dress and I jiggled all over the place.

"Come on. Quick," urged Peggy. "We are going to be bridesmaids together for your mother, aren't we?" She smiled and put her feminine hand to her mouth. "We know all about your mother," she said, glancing around at Nikki, who was holding my dress against herself and dancing in front of the mirror. "She was so nice to both of us, just like Andrea. She told us both that we should be models and do what Andrea wanted us to do."

I wanted to scream at all the lies we were telling and the stuff we were *not* telling each other. Peggy and Nikki clearly believed that I thought that they were real girls and were trying to behave like real girls. They thought I was a real girl with a transsexual father. I had promised Andrea not to reveal to anyone, not even Peggy and Nikki, who I really was but it was absurd that Peggy was trying to ingratiate herself with me. She admired me because she thought that I, Christine, was 'real'.

"We have to move quickly," said Nikki, just as I had decided I was going to spill it all out to them. "Hurry up and change, Christine, before the Wicked Witch comes back and spoils all our fun. We promised Gary we would meet him and his friends in half an hour."

So, half an hour later, after refreshing much of my makeup in the taxi, we went into *The Hot Club* in Greenwich Village. It was packed with beautiful girls and handsome guys. The booze flowed like water.

I suppose we did make quite an entrance. The bouncers leered at us, didn't ask us for ID, and had the doors open for us to go in as we slid out of the cab. We were all in short, bouncy dresses, showing off long, shapely legs. My wig was just like the girls' natural hair, long and bouncy, since Nikki had found Andrea's blond mane in the closet.

I was going to have so much to answer for when I got back to the hotel. But it was a thrill to walk into the club in my sparkling dress and high heels and have everyone looking at the three of us, such pretty girls were we.

"Baby, you came," said a big guy, coming out of the crowd and putting his arm about Nikki. He almost bent her over as he kissed her forcefully on her mouth. She didn't resist and kissed him right back. It was almost embarrassing. Peggy and I looked at each other and smiled as if such a greeting was quite normal.

When she came up for air, Nikki shook her long, blonde hair and said, "This is Gary Porter, girls. Gary, these are my friends, Peggy and Christine."

"Come on over and meet my friends," Gary said, leading the way, his arm about a mincing Nikki who had her arm about him as well.

"You know who he is?" I asked. Peggy shook her head and looked at me anxiously.

"He's Gary Porter. He's a football player," I told her.

"I wonder if his friends will be athletes too," said Peggy with a smile.

They were. They were tall as well, Herb being the same height as Peggy in her heels and Tom being an inch or two taller than me. Their faces lit up when Gary returned with 'three gorgeous models as I promised'. They had a smiling waitress bring shooters and wine to the table. I recognized the tactic I often had used with my friends when we met a bunch of girls. We got as much liquor as we could into them. Gary and his friends seemed to have the same idea with us.

So much for 'let's go out and get to know each other,' I thought, as Gary and Nikki began kissing once more. Her legs were over his on the couch, his hand played with her stockings. She didn't stop him at all, encouraging him to be playful right out there in front of everyone.

Peggy's eyes were sparkling as Herb plied her with drinks. It occurred to me that these guys didn't know the girls they were out with. It was as likely that the girls could drink them under the table as that the guys could do that to them.

"You're not drinking," said Tom Brink, a muscular linebacker I had watched avidly the year before making tackle after tackle in the playoffs. His muscles were so big that I was, frankly, afraid of him.

I smiled at him and he smiled back. "I was thinking," I told him, "that if we had a one and one contest, my friends and I would drink the three of you under the table. What good would you be for us then?"

"You're right," said Tom with a laugh. "So why don't you drink up some of these shooters and I won't have to work so hard."

"I'd rather dance," I told him. He was willing to humor me. *Anything to get into my panties*, I thought. I would have been exactly the same if I had been a man. If I had been a

man. The thought jarred me as I joined the line of girls and danced as loosely with them as they were dancing with each other. *When did I begin to think that I was a girl?* I thought. Tom tried to dance with me but he just didn't have the rhythm.

Tom wanted to stop and get a drink and so I let him. Another guy I didn't know at all grabbed my arm and asked me to dance. I went with him as Tom glowered at me. "Who's your musclebound friend?" the smiling Latino guy asked. I found myself challenged to keep up with him. Then, with the musical beat changing, he wanted to do the lambada with me, which Colin had tried to teach me.

Sebastiano was such a wonderful dancer. I wasn't in his class but he was a gentleman and said that I was. I had told him that Tom was a football player and so Seb relented and reluctantly let me go back to my friends.

Nikki and Gary should clearly be thinking about getting a room; Herb seemed to be staggering and Peggy was giggling. Tom was angry with me for dancing with another guy. "But I like dancing and you don't," I pouted at him, taking one of the shooters he gave me.

Tom smiled at my now-empty glass and ordered another double round of shots. The music changed to something really lively. Peggy jumped up and dragged a grinning Herb off to the dance floor. I stood up and took Tom's hand. "We have to dance this one," I said.

Tom staggered after me, his hands on my gyrating hips. Clearly, he had drunk a lot while I had been away. On the floor, neither Tom nor Herb could keep up so it was a delight to dance with Peggy. The two of us were being as girlish and crazy as we wanted to be. Several guys started to come on to us.

I should have seen it coming. I should have realized that Tom wasn't going to be a happy drunk like Herb. Peggy and I started dancing with these young guys who were putting out moves that were highly suggestive. Peggy wiggled her breasts, then her rear, at them, giggling and inviting me to do the same. One of them touched my rear as I wiggled and my dress flew up a little. Peggy giggled and the guy looked as surprised as I was. I wiggled my breasts again and said, "It's no big deal but don't do that again," when Tom poleaxed the guy.

I was never so shocked in all my life. "Oh, good grief," I cried, kneeling to see if the guy was all right. Peggy leaned over me, her long hair flowing over her face, her hands on her mouth again. "Are you all right?"

The boy who was about the same age as me, clearly wasn't. "Leave that punk ..." I heard Tom yelling. Then about five other guys dove on top of him. The dance floor emptied as guys grabbed girls and backed off. Bouncers came on the run. The poor guy who was hit was carted off to the main office. Tom was hauled off by four or five bouncers. It took that many to contain him.

"Check their IDs," said a manager-type to the waitress who had served us. "And clear the table if they're underage."

Peggy had told me not to worry about ID as they never asked.

"I didn't think," I told the waitress. "I'm not driving here in New York so I left it in my hotel room."

"Don't worry," said the waitress, glancing at the manager. "Go to the Ladies' behind the balcony when you want to blow your nose. Better than booze any day."

I stared at her blankly and she shrugged. Herb seemed to have sobered up a little. "Gary," he said. "We've got to find Tom."

"Your friend's in a police car headed uptown," said the waitress. "He didn't like being thrown out and took a swing at one of the paparazzi taking his picture. Are you guys really pro football players?"

"We got to bail him out before Coach ..." began Herb.

But Gary uttered several expletives. "The Press has probably called him already," he said. "We might as well enjoy the rest of the evening because Coach is going to make us pay tomorrow."

"Brink!" said Herb. "What a headcase! We should never have brought him!"

"But now we have an extra girl," said Gary, standing up and showering the table with bills.

"Don't worry about me," I said hastily. Herb grinned.

"Yeah," Herb said, "a girl like you won't be without a date for long, will you? It was all your fault, flirting with all those other guys. One man not good enough for you?"

"One man is good enough for me," said Peggy. Herb looked down on her, squeezed her and smiled. I felt the urge to slap him but I curbed my temper. That was why I looked so angry as I left *The Hot Club* in a barrage of photographers' flashbulbs.

Andrea was furious when I got back to the hotel. My note hadn't sat well with her nor had the fact that I borrowed her long hair. "Did Peggy or Nikki see you without your wig?" she asked me.

"No," I told her. "I went into the bathroom and changed."

That mollified her a little. The following morning's tabloids with pictures of us and the football players only set her off again, though. "Football player in brawl over model girl friend" screamed one headline. There was a picture of me, blonde hair flying as I hurried out to get into the cab a smiling bouncer had arranged for me.

Heather Portillo was looking at the front page of one of the tabloids when I arrived for work and frowning at the picture of me. "This isn't your natural hair, is it, Christine? Martin!" Her assistant scurried over. "This is the look that I want, with Christine's hair flying out like that. Did you have a wig arranged like that? Oh, that hair is beautiful and suits you so well, Christine. We have to have you as a blonde in my show."

I lost my familiar wig and I sat there in front of the other girls without any protection while Heather, Andrea and a hairdresser named Cynthia discussed what could be done with my natural hair.

"We could dye it," said Cynthia, combing my hair back straight, pinning it behind my ears and in a line over my head. "Then we would only need a half-wig and we could have ringlets, curls, pony tail, whatever you like. We could just pin them on. And we could use a page boy as well."

“Oh, it would be so delightful to change her look with every dress,” said Heather with a smile. “Oh yes, do that. You’ll love being in a half-wig, Christine. They’re so much cooler than the full wigs you’ve been wearing. It will be as if you are floating in the air. That’s how it felt for me when I finally got rid of all the wigs I wore during chemotherapy.”

She smiled and indicated her breasts. “Lost them both,” Heather said brightly. I tried to offer empty words of consolation. “Well, ladies,” she said to Peggy and Nikki, “did you see the publicity your escapade has brought our show? We have extra news outlets coming to film both of you and Christine tomorrow. How about you sleep in tonight—by yourselves—and be at your very best for my showing tomorrow?”

We were a two-day wonder which is long, I guess, for New York. I made the front page in a lovely, short, cocktail dress of Heather’s, my new hair, and the new makeup that went with it. It changed my look so much that I wouldn’t have recognized the blonde model as me.

I sat in a dressing room the next day, waiting for the call to be on the set for the *Exquisite Girl* video shoot. On a monitor, I saw this long-legged, long-haired blonde girl come down the runway after Giselle Hammond, who was smiling and looking from side to side as she arrived at the end of the runway.

We did look alike, save that I was pouty and tense as Andrea and her staff wanted me to be. There were quick shots of me then in all of Heather’s dresses. In the line march at the end of the show, the camera found me again. I was smiling relief, applauding Heather who came out and hugged Giselle and me and held us both as we walked down the runway into the applauding crowd.

“No wonder Tom Brink was jealous of another guy dancing with her,” said the male anchor to the woman who had just mentioned that I was the girl who had been fought over at *The Hot Club*. Andrea turned and smiled at me.

“You realize that your price for the shows you will be doing between now and Christmas has just gone up twenty, thirty, fifty thousand dollars,” Andrea said with a huge smile. “No publicity is bad publicity.”

“I’m not appearing in more shows,” I told her in a panic. “I’m just doing these *Exquisite Girl* promos and that’s it.”

“That’s it?” asked Andrea, a twinkle in her eye.

“I just want to get my money and get out of these clothes,” I said to her.

“And leave pots and pots of money on the table?” asked Andrea with a fake sigh. “I could make you into the world’s next supermodel.”

“I don’t want to *be* the world’s next supermodel,” I told her desperately.

“You just want to get some money and help Mom and Dad,” said Andrea, mocking my family. I didn’t really have a Dad any more.

“You got it,” I told her. There was a knock on the door; I was wanted on the set.

It was like shooting a little movie. In a week, we had shot scenes of me and a variety of male models. I was arriving on the red carpet and signing autographs in one scene. The ac-

tor was supposed to drift behind me. I was to pause and turn to him “with love in my eyes”, the director said.

It was a thin-faced, elegant man that I turned to. Andrea had told me he was gay. We did a few takes and I couldn't get the look. “Imagine it's your boyfriend at the club, the one who had the fight over you,” said the director. “Imagine that it's him standing there.”

The scowl that I gave him made him laugh, along with the rest of the crew.

“Imagine someone else then,” said the director. That was when I spotted Grant Kinsley on the set, his hands in his pockets, looking at me.

I shuddered at the sight of him and the director asked me if I was cold or wanted a moment. I shook my blonde curls. When we did the scene again, I was still wondering what Grant was doing there. Then I turned to my modelling partner, half-expecting it would be Grant looming over me.

“Yes, that's it! Mark that one,” said the director eagerly. “Well done, Christine. Want to tell us who makes you look at him like that?”

I glanced at the doorway but there was no one there.

VIII. BRIDESMAID

“I think that Charlie and I are doing entirely the wrong thing,” my mother, Jennifer, told me as I arrived back at the house with Nikki and Peggy, the other bridesmaids. “We should have just eloped.”

“There's still time,” I said to her. Jennifer took me in her arms and kissed me.

“Mmm,” my mother said. “You know that I was only joking about eloping. What is your perfume?”

“It's a new product from *Exquisite Girl*,” I told her. “It's called *Intimate Dreams* or something like that. Peggy is wearing it too but Nikki prefers a different cologne.”

“Oh gosh,” said my mother, looking over the three of us. “How is anyone ever going to notice me when I have bridesmaids like you three, towering over me and looking so beautiful? Oh, Christine, what have you done with your hair? It looks gorgeous. That pony tail isn't your hair, is it? And where did you get such a wonderful dye? I can't see any dark roots at all!”

“This is the work of a New York hairdresser named Cynthia who worked for Heather Portillo, Mummy,” I told her as she showed Nikki and Peggy the rooms they would be staying in. “It's just a half-wig. The front is me and if I took it off, well, you'd see. My short hair is styled so well I could go out as a girl with a bob now.”

I didn't tell her that it was going to cost me a fortune to get my hair back into anything like boy shape but when I was paid by *Exquisite Girl*, Andrea told me, I would have enough to get a proper haircut and dye removal job.

I sighed as I realized how difficult it would be to go back to being Jack Sheffield. I sat on my bed and looked down at my feminine figure and the stockings that showed be-

neath the hemline of my tight, grey skirt. Andrea had promised me she would ask Grant to speed up paying the money his company would owe me. Failing that, she told me, we could get a loan to tide me over if I needed it. If I needed more money than that, she told me, all I had to do was say the word. I could have work up to my ears in New York, Paris or Milan.

"And how do I get to Paris?" I asked her. "How do I get a passport, Andrea?"

"There are ways," said Andrea. "Legal ways if you intend to be a girl for the rest of your life."

"I don't want that." I told her firmly. No, I didn't want to be a girl any more, not when I thought of Grant Kinsley turning away from me and going off with that actress girlfriend of his in her car after the Dallbrooks show.

From upstairs in the house, I heard the babble of girlish voices. Mummy was leading the other girls down to my room. They were exclaiming about how lovely their rooms and their dresses were and had I seen them yet?

"We are going to have every man in St Hilary's Auditorium wanting to dance with us," said Peggy in delight.

"I hope the best man and the ushers are people we know," said Nikki, rolling her eyes.

"They're Charlie's friends, Nicole," said Jennifer with a smile. "Sorry, girls, but your first few dances are going to be with older men. But they are all tall. I told Charlie that he had to do that for such glamorous models as you girls."

Peggy and Nikki smiled at my mother. "I was hoping for some guys from the *Paradise*," said Nikki slyly then. Peggy nudged her and my mother smiled.

"The *Paradise* closed down last year," Jennifer said. "We don't really have a gay club with female impersonators like that any more. I guess the shows just got too expensive to run."

Peggy glanced at me uneasily as Nikki asked my mother about other clubs and bars she wanted to visit. The girls then borrowed my mother's car; Peggy said they had a little shopping to do although Nikki seemed a little confused by that.

"Peggy is telling Nikki not to talk about transsexuals, I think," I said to my mother as the car left our driveway.

"We have a rehearsal tomorrow afternoon," said Jennifer, sparkling with pleasure at all the compliments Nikki and Peggy directed at her before leaving. They had adored her wedding dress and couldn't wait to see her in it. I gathered it was upstairs; Charlie was absolutely forbidden to go up there. On the night before the wedding, he was going to Mark Johnson's to sleep.

"Who's going to give you away?" I asked my mother as that had been a concern the last time I was home.

"John Kinsley, Grant's father," said Jennifer.

"I didn't know ..." I began. Jennifer gave me a meaningful look.

"John divorced Martha when Grant was a young man and gave his shares in the company to her," Jennifer said. "He phoned me and volunteered to give me away. He said he wouldn't miss my wedding for the world." By the color I saw on my mother's cheeks, I could guess why Grant's father was coming to her wedding. It might also explain why my mother never did have a fling with Grant, way back when. Maybe cradle-snatching wasn't the real reason after all.

Andrea arrived then. "There," she said, with a great flourish, handing me a long envelope with the imprint of Shavers Pharmaceuticals on it.

"What is it?" I asked her, slitting open the long envelope with one of my long, shapely nails.

"Don't do that, darling," said my mother. "It will hurt your nails. Why, it's a check!"

"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars," said Andrea, "as promised, Christine. But don't spend it all at once. You will need to pay taxes on that and there are my fees and our accounts to settle up."

"How marvellous!" said Jennifer. "What are you planning to do with all of your money, Christine? Buy a car?"

I shook my head. "No Mummy, some of it is for you," I told her. Jennifer looked at me, her lipsticked mouth in a perfect 'O' of surprise. "I know that you haven't been able to work of late so I did all this," I indicated my body, my figure, my hair and clothes, "so that I could help out because you were so short of money. I could help out Carol, too, since she's overspending her alimony again."

"Wait a minute," said Jennifer, her thin eyebrows frowning at me. "Wherever did you get the idea that I was short of money?"

"You aren't working, are you?" I asked her with as warm a smile as I could manage. I hugged her and kissed her soft cheek, leaving a little smudge of lipstick there. I felt relieved that everything would now be out in the open.

"Oh, darling," said Jennifer with a smile. "I don't have to work, you darling girl, didn't you know that? The trust fund your grandfather and grandmother left to me gives me an income I find hard to spend in most years even with Carol being so profligate. Your university tuition hardly made a dent in it at all!"

"Charlie said ..." I began. A chill ran through me as Jennifer laughed.

"He doesn't know everything about me or my finances," my mother said, "and neither does Carol. Charlie's definitely not marrying me for my money. Yes, it's been a surprise to me, a pleasant surprise, that I haven't heard from Carol lately. Surely, she knows that I am going to be getting married soon."

"I told her you were," I told Jennifer, a sick feeling inside me. Had I done everything I had done since I came back to Havensham, becoming a model and changing myself so drastically, for nothing? I had breasts and a tush, for goodness' sake. I glanced at Andrea and she had the nerve to wink at me. "She had to move out of the Ritz and the Bennington kicked her out because she owed them so much."

Jennifer laughed as I told her about Carol having her clothes impounded. "Who paid the bills to get her out of hock?" she asked. Then the light went on. "You did, Christine. You did?"

"I, I had a few dollars," I said. "And I've been working to get a lot more to help both of you."

"And you let Christine do this?" Jennifer asked, turning to look at Andrea who had kicked off her high heels. "You encouraged her to be a fashion model so that she could make money! You took advantage of my daughter, Andrea?"

"Don't drag me into this," said Andrea, smiling and waving her hands as if she had done nothing wrong. "Christine wanted to be a girl very badly. She convinced me she did. Ask her. It was all her idea."

"But Andrea, you knew that I never depended on my salary from the clinic," said Jennifer. "Why didn't you tell Christine to talk to me about money?"

"Jack," said Andrea, smiling at me. "She was very much Jack at the time. He said that she wanted to make a lot of money. I told him how much he could earn as a model. Christine's been worth every penny of it, Jennifer. She has worked really, really hard to be a beautiful, attractive woman. Wouldn't you agree she's succeeded? Christine really *is* your daughter now, you know."

I was stunned. I looked at the pair of them as I fully realized for the first time what I had done to myself. I had turned myself into a woman. I had made my mother think that I wanted to be her daughter for the rest of my life. I was even going to be her bridesmaid at her wedding. I thought I had been helping her when in fact I had done nothing of the kind.

Everything I had done, the operation on my breasts and my tush, my hair being styled like a woman's, the lessons I had undertaken and applied, the changes in my voice, all of it had really been for nothing.

"Christine, what's the matter?" asked Jennifer. I must have looked like a ghost.

"I-I have to lie down," I said, staggering to the passage that led to my room. My closet door was open and in it there were long dresses and high-heeled shoes on display. There was the deep reddish purple of the bridesmaid's dress peeping around the door. There were pictures of me on top of the chest of drawers, cosmetics on the dressing table and a garter belt dangled from an open drawer.

I fell on the soft, silky pillows of my bed. My skirt hitched up a little as my worried mother came in and sat on the bed beside me, taking my hand. "Christine, what is it?" Jennifer asked. She smiled as she stroked my hand and leaned towards me. "It was such a lovely idea of yours to help me and Carol out. Even though we don't really need it, it was wonderful that you did what you did for your family. I am so proud of my daughter right now."

"I-I didn't want to be a fashion model," I managed to say.

"No," said Jennifer, "and you don't have to be, Christine. It was wrong of Andrea to encourage you. But on the bright side, you do have a lot of money and all of it is yours to do with as you wish." She smiled and touched my face with her cool, soft hand. "I'll talk to Carol if you could just tell me where she is staying right now."

"At a Howard Johnson's, I think," I said shakily to her.

"Oh no!" said Jennifer and she laughed. I felt sick as I looked at her and how happy she was. Well, she was going to be a bride in just a few days, married to a man who would say in public that he loved her and wanted her to be his wife.

I looked at my loving mother in her pretty skirt like mine. Yes, Jennifer may have been my father but she was now unalterably a woman and she loved me. If I told her about the anguish I was in, that I didn't want to be her daughter at all and that being a bridesmaid was going to be torture for me, I could imagine how awful she would feel. No, I could not do that to her just two days before her wedding, her five hundred person wedding with the reception in the largest hall in the city of Haversham.

"I feel terrible," I said meekly, sitting up. My skirt slid up my thighs as I got off my silky bed. "I should have talked to you, Mummy."

"Oh darling," said Jennifer, standing with me and hugging me to her. I'm sure she didn't realize I'm how her breasts pressed against mine, now that I was wearing such thin bras. I really felt like a girl at that moment. "I love you for what you tried to do and so will Carol when I tell her all about it."

"Please don't tell her, Mummy," I pleaded with Jennifer. I thought about Mother and what she would do if she saw me in a dress. "I don't want her to know all about this." My gesture showed my mother that I meant how I was dressed like a girl.

"But she's going to see you, isn't she?" asked Jennifer. "Andrea was saying that the first *Exquisite Girl* commercials are going to go on the air this weekend. You'll be the face of the new line of cosmetics for a while. Carol is going to see your picture every time she goes to buy a new lipstick."

"Do you think she will know that the pictures are me?" I asked my mother.

"I see what you mean," said Jennifer seriously. "I think I would after a little time. I'd be thinking that I knew you from somewhere. Then I think it would come to me. I really don't know if Carol will recognize you."

"She's nowhere near as perceptive as you, Mummy," I told Jennifer. "I am a lot thinner now and my body, as you know, is not at all like it used to be."

"Not at all," grinned my mother. "Oh, it's so lovely having you home, Christine. I have missed you so. Have you thought about what you are going to do while Charlie and I are off on our honeymoon? And after that as well? Andrea says that she has all kinds of wonderful offers for your services. Do you want to talk about that?"

"Maybe after you come back," I said and that placated my mother.

"Your check," she said. "I must introduce you to my banker, Lucy Astor. She can advise you on what to do about taxes. Why don't I call her now and set up an appointment with her? We can get your check earning interest for you, at least."

"Lucy Astor?" I said to my mother with a smile. "A woman banker?"

I knew what the answer would be by the look on her face. "Well, she is now," Jennifer said.

So I went downtown the next day with my mother and met Lucy Astor, a charming woman in a lovely, grey skirt a little longer than mine, whose desk was filled with photographs of herself and her family. She had three children and a dark-haired, handsome husband. His photo made me wiggle a little anxiously on my chair as my mother asked Lucy all about her daughters and her youngest, her son.

"So your family is all complete now with David?" asked my mother, smiling at the photograph of a little boy in a cowboy outfit.

"Oh no," said Lucy. "I promised Jay that we would have four children. I am actually pregnant right now. It will be late March when our fourth is born. Then I won't have any more."

"You were kidding me, Mummy," I said to Jennifer as we left the bank, Lucy having given me an exhaustive lecture on the options open to me with such a large amount of money to put in her bank.

"About what?" asked Jennifer as she steered me into *The Second Cup* for coffee.

"Lucy is pregnant," I said. Jennifer smiled broadly at me.

"Don't be surprised," said my mother, "if, when you see her in December, January or February, that she has a figure just as slim as it is now. If you ask her about her pregnancy, she'll tell you that everything is well. She will have a beautiful baby in March or April. She might even be breast-feeding it."

"What!" I gasped. "That's not possible!"

"It is when you use a surrogate mother," said Jennifer with a smile. "It satisfies Jay Astor because his sperm will be used to fertilize the ova they put into the surrogate. They are using the same surrogate who gave birth to David and she is very good about keeping a diary about her pregnancy. She will give it to Lucy after the new child is born. It's like she gave birth to him herself."

Mummy looked at me in amusement. "So," she said, teasing me, "how would you like a new brother or sister? Maybe one of each."

"Don't tease me, Mummy," I said, clutching her arm tightly.

"Who's teasing?" asked Jennifer. I couldn't tell at all if she meant what she was saying or not.

I wasn't prepared for Grant Kinsley to be at the wedding rehearsal. The church where the wedding was to take place was already decorated with white garlands and ribbons and bows by the acre. I thought about what Jennifer had said about her money. I could see it now in the way that the church was decorated. I should have known it by the company that she kept. Grant Kinsley was the richest man in Haversham, I had found out from Peggy.

Peggy was delighted that Grant was one of the groomsmen and ushers who would accompany her from the altar down the aisle and see her to the reception at St Hilary's. I would be escorted by Mark Johnson, the best man, since I was the daughter of the bride and so her 'best friend.'

We rehearsed what we had to do. My mother's hands were shaking as she gripped the rose Charlie that represented the bouquet that she would have on the following day at her wedding when she would become a bride.

I was aware of Grant and Peggy coming after me as we walked through the exit part of the ceremony. Mark Johnson held my arm as we reached the foyer where we had to stop as we would be for pictures during the actual ceremony.

"I hope Andrea doesn't expect anything like this," said Mark with a smile at me. The photo session had broken up and we were trailing the others back to the main entrance.

"Andrea?" I babbled. "Andrea Moore?"

Mark grinned and nodded to me. "This wedding stuff is contagious," he said. "If Charlie and Jennifer can do it, why not Andrea and me?"

"Andrea is getting married to you?" I asked him, stunned, as we stood in the doorway to the church.

Mark leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Don't tell her yet, please? I'm going to propose when we are on the floor for the last dance at the reception. I've got the ring in my pocket now so that I won't forget it. When I ask her in front of five hundred people, do you think she'll have the balls, er, the fortitude, to say 'No' to me?"

"Oh, Mark," I said, hugging him and giving him a kiss on his cheek. "I think that she will love you for doing it so publicly."

Serves Andrea right, I thought smugly. She had repeatedly told me that she was only going out with Mark for sex as she was with the half-dozen other men she was sleeping with. She claimed that she was a very satisfied woman. I tried to imagine her as a bride and I couldn't.

Mark left me jauntily to go and talk to Jennifer and Charlie. Whatever he said made them laugh. In the church driveway were several limousines ready to take us all to the rehearsal dinner at *Marco di Pisa*. I was about to go up to my mother and the very tall, white-haired man who had brought her down the aisle. A strong arm suddenly grabbed me and pulled me behind one of the church pillars.

"What do you think you're doing, Christine?" blazed Grant Kinsley at me.

I looked up at him in fright and tried to pull my arm free. It came loose quickly when Grant suddenly let it go but he put his arms on each side of the pillar and I was sort of trapped by him.

"I'm trying to get away from you," I told him, pushing at one of his arms.

"You know what I mean," said Grant angrily. "What are you doing sneaking off with Mark Johnson and kissing him behind the pillars? Are you chasing any thing in pants just like you did in New York? You know that there is a morals clause in your contract with *Exquisite Girl*, don't you? I've a good mind to exercise it now and sue you for the money we have already paid you. I'll let the tabloid press know what we have done and why."

"I haven't done a thing," I told Grant. His eyes fell onto my bra.

"Those are real, aren't they?" Grant asked me abruptly and I nodded.

"I couldn't be a fashion model without them," I told him. "And I wasn't making out with Mark. He was telling me how he is going to propose to Andrea after the wedding dance and I wished him the best of luck. He made me promise not to tell her but he didn't mention you."

Grant pushed off and I wasn't surrounded by him any more.

"Andrea says that you don't want to be an *Exquisite Girl* any more," Grant said thickly. "Is there something wrong with our product?"

"Besides me being attacked by the chairman of its company?" I asked him. "No," I didn't want him looking at me like that any more. I didn't want him treating me as a girl any more, even if my cleavage was very obvious and even if I was wearing a tiny mini-skirt like Peggy and Nikki.

"It's not your products," I told him. "I just don't want to be a fashion model any more. I don't want to be a girl any more, period. I'll finish out my mother's wedding, but then it's going to be sayonara to women's clothing. I am going back to being Jack Sheffield again."

By the end of my little speech, Grant was totally confounded. "You don't want to be a girl any more?" he asked me stupidly. "And you have those breasts and hips?"

"They're just gel," I told him.

"We'll pay you millions to be the one and only *Exquisite Girl*," said Grant. He put his arms back where they were, trapping me again. In the distance, I could hear a womanly voice calling my name.

"I don't need money," I told Grant.

"No," agreed Grant. I thought he was going to tell me that I had his money and I wouldn't get any more. "You don't need money but there is something that you *do* need."

Grant lowered his head and kissed me, right on my lips. His arms wrapped around me, trapping my arms at my sides as he pressed me against him. My breasts became tighter and my nipples harder than I ever remembered them being, even when I had experimented with them in the bath.

Let me go, I thought, but my body was reacting to Grant's kiss just as it had the previous year, just as I had been waiting to react for so long. I pulled one arm free, put it about Grant's neck and kissed him as hungrily as he was kissing me. He let my other arm go; I put that one about his neck as well, pulling him into me and kissing him back, opening my mouth to his tongue. I kissed him as any girl would kiss her handsome boy friend and let him feel the bounciness and femininity of my chest.

"Christine," Grant murmured, his hands caressing my back and little skirt. "I need this so much even if *you* don't."

"Oh hello, Grant. Is that my daughter with you? Her ride is waiting for her to go," my mother said.

"I'll bring her with me," Grant said huskily. In his arms, I felt that I was 'Christine,' totally and fully. I was a girl named Christine and I wanted to kiss Grant forever.

"We'll expect you at the *Pisa* in twenty minutes," said my mother, amusement in her voice. "Then we'll be sending out search parties."

"We'll be there in twenty minutes," Grant said, not letting go of me.

We heard my mother's high heels walking away. "Where were we?" murmured Grant. I raised my lips to his. He kissed me again. I leaned back against the pillar in the church foyer. Grant pressed against me, his hands on my tush, pulling me into him so that I could feel his massive desire for me.

I think he would have had me as a woman right there but it wasn't the right place. I let him keep his hand on my tush, however, as we both struggled to walk to his car.

Grant had to kiss me again before he opened the door and let me in. "Oh, those legs and those breasts," Grant murmured and he kissed me again. He put his hand between my thighs as we drove and I didn't move it as we drove along sedately. We reached the *Pisa* in twenty minutes on the dot.

Andrea was waiting for us. The first thing she did was to take me by the hand and haul me off to the Ladies' Room, where I had to repair my hair and makeup and try to get a hold of myself.

I felt like such an idiot and a fool as Andrea and I joined the group. I'm sure everyone was looking at me but no one said anything except to discuss topics like how busy the main room of the *Pisa* was even though it was early on a Friday.

IX. THE WEDDING

The church looked so different with every type of purple, deep pink and red flower arranged throughout. It smelled so wonderful that I hardly needed the *Intimate Dreams* that I was wearing. I led the bridesmaids in, one by one. I loved the feel of my dress against me, especially after the day before and being kissed so wonderfully as a woman. The straps of my dark purple dress were thin. They looked like bra straps from a distance but they weren't because none of us was wearing a bra. I gloried in being so female, just like the other bridesmaids.

I loved the way the bustier clung to me and showed off my womanly curves. One of the groomsmen was looking at me with such intense desire that I could feel it. But it was my mother's day and we couldn't do anything that might spoil it for her.

Jennifer looked gorgeous as she glided down the aisle, her white veil obscuring her face and hair. Her hair was piled high on the top of her head as was Peggy's and Nikki's. Mine was as well, but mine was still mostly a wig though the front of my blonde head and my curled bangs were all mine.

We bridesmaids carried small purple bouquets while my mother carried an all-white one. She shook as old Mr. Kinsley handed her off to a proud looking Charlie. He lifted her veil and showed the crowd one of the most nervous, most beautiful brides that had ever been married in St. Hilary's Church.

There were no objections to joining 'this man' and 'this woman' in holy matrimony. Each promised to love, honor and cherish each other. I knew that my mother would have promised to obey her husband but Charlie wouldn't hear of it.

The pastor declared them to be husband and wife and Charlie kissed the bride with a passion that was clearly genuine. They signed the church register and so my mother became Mrs Greenwood.

The rituals weren't finished yet as the ecstatic couple and the wedding party had to be photographed a million times in the church, in the foyer and on the church grounds. The local papers took their pictures as did the official photographer and just about everyone else who attended the wedding. As Martha Kinsley had predicted, my mother's wedding was the great social event of the year.

Just before we got to the *Pisa*, Grant said, "I owe you an apology for what I thought about you. I've been going mad whenever I've seen you talking and laughing with another man. Then, seeing you coming out of that night club with those football players and going off to party some more, as the caption said, well, I thought the worst."

"I went back to the hotel," I told him. "Peggy and Nikki took the two football players to Andrea's apartment."

"I knew that the moment you kissed me," said Grant. How could you? I wanted to ask him. But I didn't get the chance at the reception at St. Hilary's until I had danced with all the men, including his father.

It was silly and stupid to feel the way my feminine emotions dictated when Grant took me into his arms and we danced. All my lessons with Barry paid off as I drifted with Grant, completely trusting him as I glided backwards in my high heels.

"You said that the moment I kissed you, you knew I hadn't been off with the football players," I said to him. "It was you who kissed me first, remember?"

"But you kissed me back," said Grant. "I haven't kissed any girls at all since I kissed you after the Chicago trip. I told Jennifer how I felt about you. She begged me not to force myself onto you and let you make the decision about being a woman or not. I told her I didn't care about whether you ever made the full change as she has or not."

"You mustn't say such things to me," I hissed at him. "I'm a man, Grant."

Grant looked at my heaving, aroused breasts and smiled at me. "Not from where I'm standing," he said. "Everybody knows how I feel about you. Every time I look at you and you look at me, there are sparks flying, aren't there? I've been true to my word to your mother, Christine, and I still will be. If you want to be a man again, I'll back off, but if you are going to be a woman, I am going to besiege you."

"What, what does *that* mean?" I asked him. Grant put his arm about my slender waist and led me to the excited group of women watching as my mother came down the stairs in her lovely white suit. All the girls had to line up to catch the bouquet. I saw her grinning at me and I silently begged her not to throw it at me. Mummy took pity on me, turned her back and tossed it into the crowd where a blushing Peggy picked it off easily.

"I should have thrown it to you," said my mother. "I'm sure all of the girls around you would have let you catch it."

"I'm getting enough attention as it is," I told her as I hugged her. We kissed and were showered by confetti. Charlie grabbed my mother and they took off. My mother's last words to me were to enjoy the rest of the evening.

Andrea was stupefied when Mark Johnson went down on one knee. A spotlight shone on her and he asked her to marry him. What could she say, surrounded by an eager crowd all willing her to accept him? She *had* to say 'Yes' and kiss him as if he was her one true love.

I joined all the other squealing girls in congratulating her and wishing her well. "Keep your bridesmaid dress," Andrea said to me with a gleam in her eye. "You might use it again."

Grant was supposed to see us bridesmaids home after the last dance but Nikki went off with one of the ushers and Peggy was dreamily looking up into the face of Claudio, who had served as an usher. She clutched the bouquet she had caught. "Do you mind if Claudio sees me home?" she asked, blushing. "Your mother gave Nikki and me keys in case we got home late."

Just like my mother to anticipate that, I thought. So, as things turned out, I was the only bridesmaid Grant had to see home. He didn't waste his opportunity. Grant kissed me as soon as the door closed behind us. I didn't get the chance to tell him whether I had decided to be a man or a woman. He undid my dress. I didn't object at all as his mouth on mine drove away all rational thought. Grant loved that I wasn't wearing a bra. Oh, the agony I went through as he lovingly kissed one of my perky, straining breasts and then the other's aroused nipple.

I whimpered as he lifted me in my white and purple silk panties and garter belt and carried me to my bedroom. He caressed and caressed my titties and I was in ecstasy. I clung to him as he undid my garter belt and stroked my legs until I was squirming beneath him, begging him not to stop, ever. Then Grant eased off my panties. He massaged my tucked, hurting genitals back to life and I let him, thinking nothing of it that he should touch me so gently and so intimately.

Grant wanted to touch me like a woman and I wanted him to as well. He lay on top of me, kissing my face and my breasts. Then he lifted my legs about him and penetrated my rear as a man takes a woman, how my mother said she and Charlie had much enjoyed. I doubt she had enjoyed it as much as I did. Passion overwhelmed me as it never had when I was with Judith. I was a girl, I was Christine and I didn't have to hold back. Neither did Grant. He had me as if I was a woman all night long, waking me so that I could kiss him and wiggle for him and let him make love to me, time after time.

My mother told me that she had had orgasms when Charlie made love to her that way. It only took me until the second time Grant took me, filling me. He took his time and pushed so deeply into me that I was shrieking in delight. I came, as my mother had assured me that I would if I gave it a chance.

My mother told me that she and Charlie had been very chaste, that was her word, since her surgery. They wanted to make their first time together as man and woman really special. Her doctor told her that all his patients had orgasms like real women when they made love and that she would be no exception. I hoped that she was having just as wonderful a

time with her man as I was having with mine. I just loved Grant and everything he did to me.

Neither Peggy nor Nikki came back that night. It was a good thing that they didn't as Grant made me a woman many times over, even the next morning, laughing when I spurted on him, saying that it was proof of how much I loved him.

My mother phoned in the late afternoon. "Well," she said to me. "How did it go after we left?"

"We all went home," I told her.

Jennifer was silent for a moment. "Grant did take you home, yes?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes," I said slowly. "Grant did bring me home."

There was a long pause. "May I speak to him, please?"

Grant looked at me and grinned. All he was wearing was a thin robe. He came over and began kissing my ear and cheek as I tried to listen to my mother. "Who are you talking to?" he asked me.

"How wonderful! He did stay the night?" my mother said, excitement in her voice.

"Yes, Mummy," I had to admit as Grant fondled my breasts. I set my body against his, feeling his manhood rising again.

"Tell him that he can stay as long as he likes. I approve! I really do!" yelled my mother enthusiastically.

"Mummy approves. She wants you to stay and make love to me again and again," I murmured to Grant as Mummy went on about how wonderful her night had been.

"I don't need her to tell me to do that!" said Grant. He put his arms about my slim body, caressed my naked breasts and started to penetrate me from the rear. "Have you told her about Andrea and Mark?"

My mother was astounded at what I told her. "Oh, that will be wonderful if Andrea settles down," she giggled.

"Mummy, you're on your honeymoon," I said to her, hardly able to talk as Grant kissed my neck and hair. "T-Talk to us when you get b-back."

"I needed a little break," said my mother with another giggle, "it seems that you might need one as well. Both our men are totally voracious, aren't they? I must call Doctor Poileau when I come back and thank him so much. I didn't know what an orgasm really was until last night."

"Neither did I," I told her as Grant stroked my soft skin and kissed my lips. My panties fell down my legs..

"It will only get better for you, my daughter," said my mother tearfully.

"I don't think that it *can*," I said to her. I hung up the phone and my lover took me back to bed to be his woman. Our bodies locked together, Grant rocked me and I held his head to me in a wonderful, lasting kiss.

No, Mummy, I thought, as a wild convulsion went through my female body, it can't get any better than this. I am Grant's woman and I always will be.

He was already planning our wedding for about this same time the following year, telling me that I should continue as a fashion model, or an actress. He was going to be right behind his beautiful wife every step of the way.

His wife. He called me that and it made me shudder. I wanted to be Mrs. Grant Kinsley. I wanted it as Grant made love to me. He wouldn't change a thing about me and I loved him so much for that. He would find a way to legally marry me and then I would be bride like my mother.

Well, my mother had overcome so much and achieved her life-long dream. I supposed that *I* could be a bride as well.

*****end*****