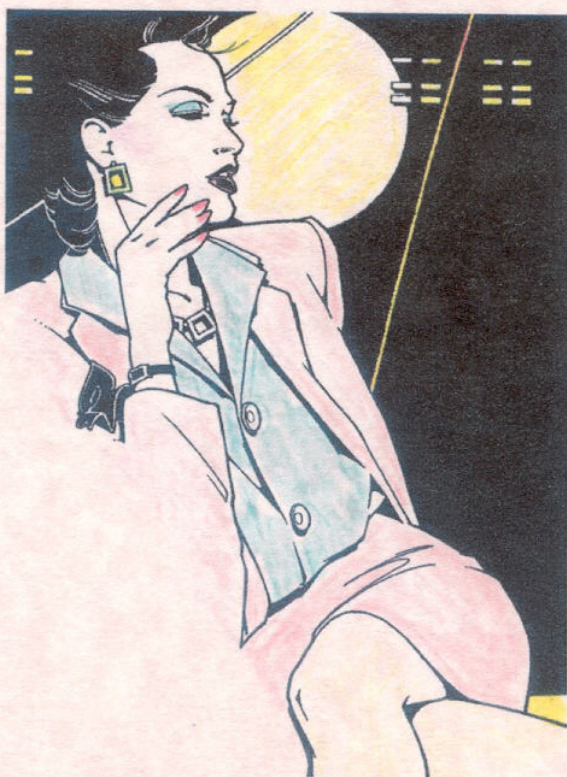


TRANSVESTIA TV FICTION

IDEAL MARRIAGE



IN SEARCH OF THE "IDEAL MARRIAGE,"
RICHARD PUTS HIMSELF IN HIS WIFE'S SHOES...
ALSO HER DRESS, LINGERIE AND...?

Volume 13

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IDEAL MARRIAGE

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IDEAL MARRIAGE

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SANDY THOMAS

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ALICE TRAIL

QUOTE BOARD

"You can't put a good dress down!"

IDEAL MARRIAGE

BY DEE RAYMOND

CHAPTER I

THE WEDDING

Mrs. Leland Archer opened the door to the bedroom as quietly as she could and stood there, a thin, purse-lipped, grey old lady. Her son was humming tunelessly as he knotted the soft silk tie at his throat. Despite her attempts to be silent, he had noted the door opening. Now, he smiled at her in the mirror, the bright blue of his eyes reminiscent of his late father. Mrs. Archer's heart gave a familiar jolt as her son spoke to her.

"Cheer up Mother," he said softly. His grin revealed very white, evenly-sized teeth. "You're not losing a son, you know..."

He sounded so much like his father that Millicent Archer had to turn away for a moment to control her thoughts and emotions. "No," she said, more curtly than intended. "I know that."

Her message was not lost upon her son. The smile faded from Richard Archer's face as he thought over specific incidents which his mother was clearly referring. "She will never let me forget," he thought bitterly.

"Claire is really a lovely girl," said Richard's mother hurriedly. "You're a very lucky man."

There was an awkward silence as Richard recombbed his dark hair fashionably. It was just long enough to cover the tops of his ears. He waited for his mother to ask how much he had told Claire. When she didn't, he realized that she had never intended to ask.

"Yes, I know," he said belatedly. He tucked the comb away quickly into the pocket of his pinstriped trousers. Before he could reach it himself, his mother took the black morning coat from its hanger and held the collar for him while he slipped it on.

As he turned from the mirror, she brushed nonexistent particles from his shoulders. He was astonished to see tears, bright and unshed, in her pale blue eyes. "I'm very proud of you, my son," she said huskily.

Richard was embarrassed. Emotion had never been a trait of his mother. "It's alright," he mumbled to himself.

"Your father would have really been proud of you now," said Millicent Archer as her arms rested on the shoulder of her son.

"Hope so," said Richard awkwardly. He doubted that, but if it pleased his mother to think so, then he would go along with her little "white lie".

There was nothing Richard had ever done, not even making the high school baseball squad, that had pleased Leland Archer. Not since that

terrible day when he discovered the young Richard in the bathroom, frantically trying to strip off his mother's bra, panties, and corset before he was caught. But caught Richard had been! As a result, his father's disgust had been evident in every look for the next seven years, even he had not known of any further instance of Richard's "dressing up".

"He was so proud of you when you came home in Rockyview's uniform," Mrs. Archer felt compelled to say something special about her late husband.

Richard grimaced. "I really only warmed the bench," he truthfully said of his baseball career. He had never been a super athlete. He was sure the coach had selected him more for attitude than for ability, there being a dearth of the latter in Rockyview that year. Baseball had done wonders for Richard, in any event. It had brought him out of his shell. Gone was the uptight teenager after a few fraternity "hops". For Richard, the last year of high school had been almost as "normal" as his college years. He had chased girls as hard as everyone else, and a few had even let him catch them.

He felt as if his mother would stand there in front of him forever noting every line in his face and his great similarity to her late husband. "We have to go now, Mother," Richard said gently at last.

She nodded, and as she stepped back, she fumbled in her dark suede bag for her handkerchief.

Richard picked up his grey top hat from the bed and offered his arm to his mother. They swept out of the bedroom and down the stairs to the long hallway, where Ben Stacey, Claire's brother, was waiting for them.

Ben was supposed to look very much like Claire, and maybe he had when they were children. But now, Ben was a stocky two hundred and twenty pounds on a six foot frame. He was also hung over. In trying to drink his future brother-in-law under the table, Ben had met a rival whose capacity, unknown previously to either of them was almost limitless.

"Gee, Richie," moaned a husky-toned red-eyed Ben. "Aren't you feeling last night at all?"

Richard smiled at his mother who regarded Ben like something the car dragged in.

"Me?" Richard said merrily. "Why I'm getting married today, so of course, I feel just great!"

Ben groaned. His hand shook visibly as he reached inside his coat for a thin metallic flask. "Hair of the dog," he croaked as he unscrewed the cap and took a long swallow.

"Why don't you go ahead, Mother?" asked Richard gently, ushering her toward the front door. The house was the residence of Claire's aunt and uncle, who were elsewhere, along with uncounted cousins, nephews, nieces, and other relatives, both Archers and Staceys. "There's Aunt Donna and Aunt Edith," he said pointing to the two old ladies, decked out in bright red and orange silk. They were determined to be at the church early "to get a good seat" as her great aunt had cackled to Richard.

"Yes," said Mrs. Archer primly. Her display of emotion was now firmly under control. "I'll get a ride with them." She opened the glass paneled doors and stiffly left the room without a backward glance.

Ben was shuddering as the alcoholic liquid tore at his throat. "She's a cool one, isn't she, your mama?" he asked nodding at the closing door.

Richard was instantly defensive. When he thought of his mother, he thought of the woman who had known his most intimate of secrets, and yet, had never revealed the extent of it to his father. She had told Richard, of course, that it was "not nice" for him to wear her clothes, and that she was fed up with finding her lipsticks worn down or smeared on what she thought was clean clothing. She had given him calculating looks that made him shuffle his feet nervously, but she had never called him names like his father nor had she ever spoken of her worries. Only her reaction to his first girl friend, an unbelievable sigh of relief that had broken from her lips, while Mr. Dodson berated him for keeping his daughter out to all hours in the park "kissing and carrying on", had let Richard in on the knowledge that she was proud of him at last.

"She's my mother," Richard said coldly. "She doesn't like to spoil things for others by letting her emotions show, but she feels for everyone just the same."

Ben was still too out of sorts for Richard's words to register clearly. "Hey," he said, as if Richard had never spoken. "Was I dreaming, or did that Natalie really cover herself with whipping cream?"

Richard's face showed his distaste. The stag party had been a typical Ben Stacey affair. "Yes, she did," said Richard, referring to the stripper Ben had hired to "entertain" the stag. By that time, naturally, Ben had been too drunk to see anything clearly, as were most of the men, Ben's business associates, and Richard's friends, uncles, and cousins. Richard had been relieved when Ben passed out at last, and he had been able to slip away.

"Boy!" Ben slapped his knee and looked upset. "I darn well missed it again! She did the same thing at Jimmy Foxwell's stag party, and all the guys got to lick her clean." He peered warily at Richard. "Did you know that?"

Richard shook his head. "Didn't have to," he said, his mouth curled in displeasure. "Not with your Uncle Mike there."

That brought a sudden, great guffaw from Ben. He gave Richard a friendly punch on the arm. "I had forgotten that old mountain man!" he roared, throwing back his head to show four columns of gold fillings. "So the old man got it on? He told me he would!" He punched Richard again. "Hey, I'm glad you're marrying our Claire. I always thought she would marry someone of the family, but I guess she has more sense than that." He calmed down, his eyes closing to half mast again. "Yessir, Claire has always had more sense and class than the rest of us. You'll be good for her, I guess. Now, let's go get you two hitched, before I start in on all the reasons why no one should ever marry a Stacey."

Richard found himself trembling as Claire and her father made their majestic way down the aisle of the crowded church. He could hardly believe that this was he, standing before the Reverend, awaiting a woman who truly seemed to love him. For most of his life, Richard had thought that no woman would ever be able to love him not with a secret like his.

But, Claire knew nothing of that of his collection of cross-dresser literature of the newspaper file he'd kept as a boy nor of his absurd attempts at cross-dressing when his mother was out of the house. And furthermore, Richard was determined that she never know of those secret thoughts. He loved her, and from his love, had purged himself of his private books. As Claire joined him at the foot of the alter, he prayed to be forever free of his "abnormality", as his mother called it.

Claire lifted back the veil from her face and gave Richard a fairly controlled smile. Her blonde hair was set in waves for the wedding. Richard had rarely seen her look so beautiful. She was probably too thin and too gaunt to be called a true beauty, but she was extremely attractive nevertheless. When she smiled, she had a controlled warmth in her manner that brightened the spirit of the recipient of her favor.

Now, she was smiling at Richard, and his stomach tightened. How could he be so lucky that a girl like this would choose him, he thought. He prayed again that he would never let her down as the wedding ceremony continued on like a dream.

Later, the hot, windless day allowed everyone the pleasure of an outdoor reception. Even the Reverend attended, and took a glass of champagne to toast "Mr. and Mrs. Richard Archer". His action was of such rarity, that it made Mrs. Archer flush with pleasure under Claire's gentle teasing.

Ben Stacey had recovered with the serving of the meal and the advent of the wine. He was both funny and lewd as he read out telegrams, several clearly faked, to the newly-weds. Then, he entertained royally as the reception got underway, involving all the older aunts in dancing.

Claire and Richard were relieved to finally break away, to change, and bid a tearful farewell to a party that was clearly just warming up.

"Thank gawd that's over!" exclaimed Claire, leaning back in the bucket seat and closing her eyes.

"Tired Darling?" There was a tightness in Richard's chest. Now came that part of the day that meant so much to a new bride and groom. Despite all the advice he had received, he still felt nervous, and his hands were wet and clammy on the steering wheel.

"I want to get to bed right away," said Claire, a little smile playing across her soft attractive mouth.

The motel where they stopped for their first night together was clean and quite luxurious. Claire had been the practical one to suggest they drive out to Carolina Bay where Richard was taking over as sales manager for Ben Stacey's furniture supply business. She hadn't wanted any scene at the airport or to be on show for the tourists as they left. Being nonchalant

was hard enough at the motel. Confetti still clung to their clothes despite the cleaning they had given the car's interior.

Inside the motel room, doors securely locked, Richard was able to take his bride into his arms for the first time since the reception. Claire had slipped off her heels as soon as they were alone, and now, Richard was only slightly taller than she.

"Hummm," she murmured, drawing her head away, her arms about his waist. "You had better shave again."

Richard didn't particularly want to wait that long, given how nervous he was, but he wanted to please Claire very much. So, he reluctantly headed for the bathroom. His beard was very light, hardly in existence about his cheeks. Claire must have very sensitive skin to be able to feel the soft stubble at all. Perhaps she was as nervous as he and just wanted him out of the way for a moment.

She had changed into a long white flowing nightgown by the time he emerged from the bathroom. Her hair was combed out, and she looked delectably feminine. Richard started tugging fervently at his clothes to get them off as soon as possible.

Claire laughed. "Hold on big boy. I have to get all this makeup off first," she said gliding toward the bathroom.

When she finally came to bed, Richard was ready for her. They had never slept together before, although Richard had known other girls. If Claire had known other men, she hadn't said, nor had Richard dared to ask. At his passes, she had just said that he must wait until they were married.

They made love together as if it were completely natural between them. Claire appeared to enjoy the act as much as Richard, who was drained both physically and emotionally after the intensity of the day. Sleep was the final release for the happiest day of his entire life.

CHAPTER II

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THE HONEYMOON

They meandered along several back roads, spending nights where they pleased, for the next week. Claire had invested in a new wardrobe and delighted in showing off her new sexy lingerie for Richard. She knew the effect she was having on him and could entice him to bed, not that he really needed the encouragement, in seconds with just the mention that she had something to show him.

At a small roadside inn, just a day away from their new home and jobs, Claire suggested they attend the cabaret "for a change". Richard, of course, was still in a general state of euphoria and would do anything to please Claire.

The restaurant was full, but the hostess managed to find them a table. Their steaks were excellent, as were the steaks and the music. The five man band maintained a lively pace that tantalized both of them. Richard, in particular, was beginning to really enjoy himself.

But, just as they were about to join the packed dance floor, the band leader ended the number gracefully, rose, and announced into the microphone, "And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we bring you this evening's cabaret entertainment."

A blonde girl, her flowing hair almost white, with a silver lame dress hugging her figure tightly came out from behind the curtain which had served as a back drop for the band. As the music began, she minced forward, took the microphone, and launched off into a Carol Channing impression. She moved out toward the audience as she sang, vamping the men, sitting on their knees, and inviting them to join her song, which many did. When he approached the Archer's table, she smiled and winked at Claire. Her makeup was very thick, but her skin was quite tan and smooth. In trying to guess her age, Richard's eyes scanned down from her blue eyes, outlined so expertly with black liner and highlighted by eyeshadow above and below to her neck. The girl threw back her head to do another verse of "Hello Dolly".

As she did so, Richard saw clearly the bobble of the adam's apple in her throat. Hot chills went up and down his back as the "woman" sank onto his lap, her arm about his neck, her fingers, with their long red nails, making a mess of his hair. "She" smiled at him, but must have recognized in his stillness and lack of response how he felt, for "she" was away as quickly as "she" had come.

"Isn't he fantastic?" asked Claire leaning across the table and smiling.

"You you knew that was a man?" Richard couldn't keep the quiver from his voice.

"Of course," Claire's eyebrows knitted. "That's Bobby Austin. You knew that, didn't you?"

"No!" Richard was angry.

Bobby Austin had returned to the stage. He whipped away his long, lame skirt to reveal shapely, smooth legs, encased in dark opera hose, and a red frilled garter on his thigh. He began a dance that involved a lot of

hip wiggling and tossing of his long blonde hair about his shoulders and bust. As the fast number ended, Bobby waved in response to the generous applause, picked up his skirt, and daintily found his way from the stage.

"Didn't you enjoy his performance?" asked Claire, standing with Richard to head for the dance floor.

"No," he replied stiffly.

"Bobby will be back later," the band leader announced as the band swung into a lively number.

"Gee," Claire said looking at her husband in surprise. "I thought he was pretty good." Claire didn't want to leave until Bobby Austin re-appeared again, even though Richard suggested it several times.

When he took the stage for the second time, Bobby Austin went through impressions of several female stars, and he was quite good. At the end of his performance, he took off his wig to show himself as a dark haired young guy, incongruous in stage makeup and black evening dress.

Richard reluctantly joined the applause, consciously aware that Claire was watching him closely. Seeing such a person, with the nerve to appear in public in women's clothing, always upset him. He felt genuine embarrassment for them, sure that "ordinary" people would laugh at them, and he couldn't have borne the comments he imagined would be flung at such people. He felt a great relief when Claire finally agreed that they should leave and go to bed.

Claire was quiet as they prepared for bed despite Richard's attempts to carry on a light conversation. "I'm sorry," she said when they moved together beneath the sheets in the dark room.

"Sorry for what?" asked Richard, his body relaxing from the tension he had felt since seeing Bobby Austin in his lame dress and cotton candy hair.

"I'm sorry I took you to that show," she murmured as Richard kissed her soft cheeks and gently stroked her breasts. "I didn't realize how you felt about female impersonators."

Richard tensed a little. "I don't feel anything about people like that," he said startled.

"Well," Claire put her arms around him to pull him closer to her body. "You didn't like Bobby Austin. I thought you didn't like such people on principle."

Richard prevented her from continuing that line of conversation by pressing his mouth on hers. For a while, they enjoyed a session of french kissing as part of their foreplay. Soon, they were entwined in the most basic of male/female sexual relations. Claire was most happily surprised by the extra intensity Richard had brought to their love making that night.

• • •

There was really nothing to Richard's new job that was any different from his previous job in Ben Stacey's firm since his graduation from college. But, being alone and in charge of an office, his salary had jumped considerably. With a full order book and with demand in excess of the

possible output of Stacey's home firm, Richard found himself to be little more than a file clerk of orders placed and received. With a few phone calls each day, he was able to easily handle his business.

At first, he filled his time with Claire, but she too became bored and found a new job, as beautician in a large department store, of her own. With a lot of time on his hands, Richard soon found his thoughts straying along paths he didn't want to explore. A newspaper article on some rock group like the New York Dolls or David Bowie would set his nerve ends jangling. Claire occasionally remarked that she didn't know what got into him on those evenings. She said it, of course, with delight, but Richard didn't enlighten her. He knew full well what caused such sudden improvements in his performances in bed.

When he got home one Thursday evening, he found a note from Claire saying she would be home late. Moodily, he stalked the apartment. It had seemed so marvelous and spacious when they moved in, but now, it seemed like a prison. There was no work to catch up on and no book or magazine he hadn't already read. He was bored! He flicked on the television, but there was nothing on but games and talk shows. One talk show momentarily held his interest until he heard the host say to this beautiful, glamorous young girl, "But, that was before you changed your sex."

"Why, of course, Darling." The girl's hair and earrings quivered as she squirmed her shapely body about in her chair and adjusted her short skirt. Her pale blue dress was cut very low, showing the kind of cleavage most men could only fantasize about.

"Tell me, Cheryl, more about the operation itself," the talk show host was frowning slightly, sincerely serious.

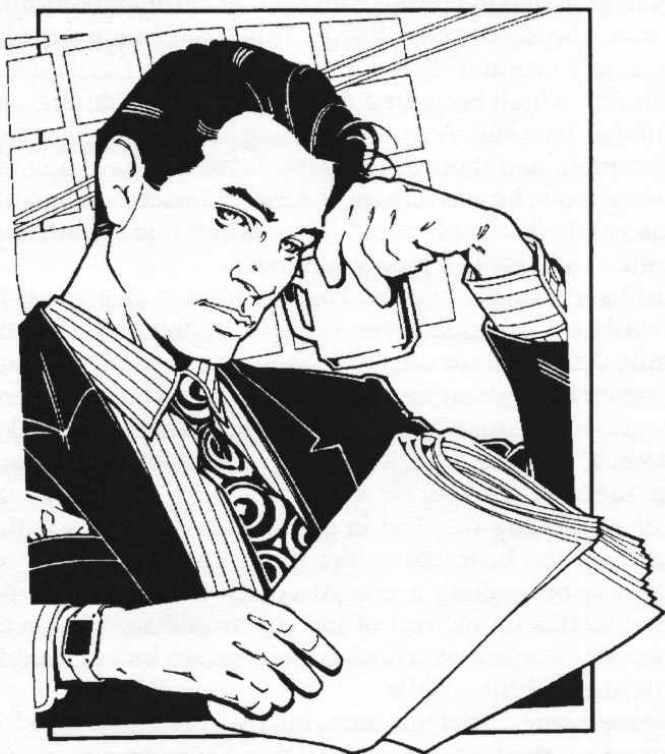
"Oh, you don't want to hear about that," she replied sexily. Her bright glossy lips were spread apart in a wide smile as her hand, with long red nails matching her lipstick, gently slapped at the host's arm.

The host smiled. "I'm sure our viewers will find that more than interesting." The smile was fixed. "When did you first actually begin to dress as a woman?"

The standard replies came out one by one, all things that Richard had heard about or read about countless times before. He sat glued to the screen nevertheless, writhing under the replies of this ever so feminine appearing creature, talking about "her" life as a man.

"Well, we have to go," said the host suddenly. "Tune in again tomorrow. Cheryl will be here, won't you dear, to talk more about cross-dressers like herself." The end of the show music started, and the screen faded to black.

His throat dry and his body rigid, Richard uttered an expletive at the casual use of the term "cross-dresser". Cheryl was clearly no cross-dresser! She wasn't a man anymore, not like himself. He knew a cross-dresser was a person who dressed like the opposite sex but was still as heterosexual as any other male. He quickly turned off the television and began to stalk the living room once again. As he thought about that



"A newspaper article caught Richard's attention."

"woman" sitting there on national television wearing a bra, panties, stockings, dress, and high heels, he felt an old, familiar, shaky feeling coming over him.

He didn't really want to, but he soon found himself standing, trembling, in front of Claire's wardrobe. He looked at her frilly blouses, short skirts, and soft dresses with billowing skirts. He knew he couldn't get rid of this feeling until he'd done what he'd always done in the past.

Slowly, he took off his clothes and stacked them neatly on the bed. Then, he put on his bathrobe and went around the apartment closing all the curtains. He made sure that both the front door and patio door were locked. Only then did he go to the linen basket. Claire would likely know where all her other clothes were, and he didn't want her to guess what he had been up to in her absence. He picked out a pair of green panties and pulled them slowly over his bare legs. Almost immediately, he could feel himself relaxing, yet quivering at the same time, as he felt the touch of soft silk on his private parts. The pantyhose slid easily onto his legs, but didn't look so well on his hairy skin. He could shave off the hair, but that would be a dead give away. There was no way he could risk that.

Claire's bras wouldn't fit his wide chest unless he pulled one of them out of shape, and again, he didn't dare. Going through her top lingerie

drawer, his fingers shaking through all the soft beribboned clothing there, he finally found the top of one of Claire's bikinis. The top was elasticized, so it would easily return to shape as soon as he had finished with it. He added a half slip which brought a cool feeling to his thighs, and he felt feminine for the first time. A front buttoning blouse and the green pleated skirt Claire complained about because it was too big, gave him the feeling he was craving. Now, he was relaxing nicely. He selected a pair of Claire's sandals, open and with small heels. Wondering if he should makeup, he glanced at the clock. He had plenty of time.

He must have struggled for over half an hour to change his face from that of Richard into something even vaguely feminine. But, even with red lips and white skin, save for blushed cheeks, and a motley group of blue, black, and white lines about his eyes, he still looked like Richard Archer in a frilly white blouse and green skirt. He glared at his painted face atop Claire's clothes. His body felt just great, but Bobby Austin and Cheryl had nothing to fear from him. He was just a mess, a silly man in a dress. His sense of well-being was lost in a sensation of disgust with himself. He strolled from the bedroom to the living room, trying to regain his former euphoria by making a cup of coffee for himself in their little kitchen. The lipstick on the rim of the cup would set him up again and make the whole escapade worthwhile. He would be released from this kind of uptight mood for a while.

The doorbell rang not just once, but two, three, and then four times. The rings were insistent, as if the caller knew someone was in, that he had returned earlier.

Panic rose in his throat. He hurtled back into the bedroom as fast as Claire's heels would let him. He shoved the shoes quickly into her wardrobe, gathered his clothes from the bed and bolted into the bathroom, locking the door behind him. Never before had he stripped off clothes and scrubbed makeup from his face so quickly. He jumped into his own clothes just as quickly, and checked his face in the mirror before walking out. In addition to his recently scrubbed look, he saw he was still wearing the gold band earrings from Claire's jewel box.

In his panic, he had thrust the clothes he had "borrowed" into the linen basket. If he had the opportunity, he would properly return them later. He half expected to find Claire or, for some reason, his mother waiting in the living room for him. But, there was no one. In fact, the apartment was singularly quiet. Cautiously, Richard opened the front door, only to find no one in the hallway. On the door knob; however, was a tab from the dry cleaners saying they had called and would call again the following day at five o'clock.

Such a feeling of relief passed over him, that he found himself shaking. He took the tab, went back in, closed the door, and went about each room opening the curtains again. Then, he remembered Claire's clothes and went to retrieve them. The skirt was the only thing that didn't look right. It showed some creases where he had sat in it. Claire never wore that particular skirt, and he was sure some of the wrinkles would

drop out if it hung there long enough. He shuddered at the remembered stroll across the living room in the skirt, his pretty panties and soft slip.

CHAPTER III

SOME SPECIAL KIND OF HANG UP

"Have you been wearing my green skirt?" Claire was standing in front of her wardrobe trying to decide what to wear to the store's annual barbecue.

"What do you mean?" Richard found his voice to be not quite right as he put cuff links into his brown shirt. Three weeks had passed since he had worn the green skirt.

"Look at all these wrinkles!" said Claire sourly. She didn't want to go to the barbecue, but she figured she must. People who bought from Stacey and Sons, and she wanted to introduce Richard to them. "I didn't see them when I hung this up." She angrily threw the skirt on a pile of clothing at the foot of the bed. Finally, she decided on a denim pant suit that Richard had suggested she wear half an hour earlier. Diplomatically, he said nothing while Claire reached for her jewelry box, placing it beside her makeup tray. "Damn!" she swore loudly.

Richard, now dressed and ready to go, turned to her in concern and asked, "What's the matter now?"

"Mrs. Morales," Claire said darkly. "She's been going through my makeup." She was twisting the lipstick, one she said she never used, the one Richard had used. "Haven't you smelled the perfume on her?" She pursed her lips. "Now, this lipstick has been used. You would think she would have the sense to leave it shaped the way she found it, wouldn't you?"

Richard hadn't noticed anything about the cleaning woman who had started the week previously. So, he gave a little shrug.

"I don't really mind," said Claire, outlining her eyes with a steady hand. "She cleans better than anyone Mom ever hired. I suppose I shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth." She frowned as she brushed mascara onto her lashes. "I wonder if she tried on that skirt too?"

• • •

Ben Stacey came to visit early the next month. Richard tried to talk business with him, but Ben was only interested in going out on the town.

Claire soon arranged a double date for them, introducing Ben, whom she well knew to be married, to Lucy, a girl from her office. Claire had already told Richard that Lucy slept around a lot.

"I don't understand you," Richard said when Claire told him of her brother's date.

"Why?" Claire's grey eyes looked at him innocently.

"You know," Richard said testily. "You setting your brother up with that that"

Claire smiled broadly. "Don't you think they deserve each other?" she asked.

"Yes, but" Richard began.

"Oh Richard!" said Claire softly while leaning against him. "You're so square and straight laced. Perhaps that's why I married you."

Richard felt a shiver pass through his body.

"Oh just relax," said Claire. "Judy," that was Ben's wife, "knows what Ben does on these Business trips. She's not as naive as all that. She told me that she doesn't care so long as he doesn't bring it home in front of the kids."

"And, you approve of that?" Richard was appalled.

Claire shrugged. "I'm not a moralist," she murmured. "Let 'em do whatever they want. They aren't hurting anyone, not even Judy. In fact, they're getting a lot of pleasure out of it."

Richard searched for a reply but could think of none. "What would her opinion be of me," he thought, "if she knew what I really am." He already knew the answer to that one, or so he thought. "It would be different if it were close to home."

Ben and Lucy hit it off famously. Their minds were clearly in tune from the first cocktails they shared in Richard and Claire's apartment.

The two couples shared a pleasant dinner and conversation in a small club that featured dinner and dancing. After they had eaten, Ben and Lucy got acquainted with each other's body on the dance floor. The after dinner drinks put everyone in good spirits, and they had a very enjoyable time.

Before long, Ben and Lucy got up to leave. Ben's arm was about her waist as he grinned and winked at Richard. "I'll be seeing you guys sometime tomorrow," he said as they went through the main foyer. "We'll be taking a taxi now."

Claire laughed as they took off in obvious haste. She was still in a good mood when she and her husband went to bed later. "Ben and Lucy make a good pair because they're so much alike. Don't you agree?"

Richard grunted noncommittally, as his hands moved about her. She was wearing one of her softest, beribboned nighties a "passion rouser", she called it. The nightie, plus her scent was having an increasingly erotic effect upon Richard.

"Richard, I asked you a question," Claire said lightly. "Everyone has some special kind of hangup, haven't they?"

Richard grunted again. "What does that mean?"

"Well," Claire didn't want to play. She wanted to talk. "Look at us. We're pretty normal, aren't we?" Richard tightened up again. Claire felt a jerking motion of his legs and made the correct interpretation. "See!" she chortled. "Some nights, we're really hot much hotter than regular times. Do you know why?"

Richard felt his heart beating heavily. "No, I don't know why," he gasped.

"It's a fetish," Claire said brightly. "Something turns you on something I wear or something you see or hear makes you feel especially sexy."

"Aw," Richard's throat was dry. "Let's just get on with it." He began to rub his hands over Claire's body.

Claire was thinking hard, trying for all she was worth to find the answer to the question she knew would enhance their sex life. "I think the best we ever were together," she said slowly and thoughtfully, "was after we saw Bobby Austin's performance. You were a real stud that night." There was laughter in her words.

Richard had an instant denial on his lips, but his anatomy betrayed him.

"See!" whispered Claire, caressing his groin. "Just the mention of that name really gets you going."

Realizing his secret was near discovery, Richard covered her lips with his and forced his love making on her, as roughly as he had ever done. Claire wasn't really in tune with him, and even though she submitted, it was clear that she received much less satisfaction from their intercourse than had Richard.

While he lay relaxing in bed, fulfilled for the moment, Claire slipped away and went to her dresser. She rummaged around for quite a while before she finally came back with something in her hands.

"Put these on," she whispered to Richard, who was so relaxed he knew he couldn't bring her any further enjoyment that night.

Into Richard's hands, Claire pushed something soft with ribbons and frills upon it. Richard went cold, and then hot, as he realized what she had given him.

"What's this?" he asked hoarsely, sitting up.

Claire's arms went about his neck. "My frilly panties," she whispered, kissing him and pulling him back to the pillow. "Wear them for me, darling. I bet they'll really turn you on." She began kissing his ears, his neck, and his chest.

A gargling sound escaped his lips. He knew she had discovered his most guarded secret, and he couldn't force any words from his lips that made any sense.

"I'm not old fashioned," Claire was whispering. "I'm not like my brother and his friends. Whatever gives you pleasure, and turns you on, turns me on as well. Please, my darling, turn me on. Wear these panties for a little while, just a little while."

Richard felt the soft garment against his skin. "I can't" he began. "I I'm not" he said shakily.

Claire was aroused now and was beginning to quiver and shake as she pushed herself onto him. She pulled the panties from his hand and put them on his feet, all the while keeping up her kisses and caresses. Richard could hardly believe the sensations he felt as Claire adjusted the panties about his waist. He tried to push them down and away, but Claire wouldn't

let him. He had rarely been able to reach climax with her on top of him, and he was sure she had never reached an orgasm that way before. But now, he really felt her, and her strictures and moans let him know she was climaxing as well.

"Oh darling," she gasped, her sweat streaked hair plastered to her forehead. "That was the best ever. Oh, I love you so."

"I love you too, Claire." Richard was just as emotionally drained as he had been on their wedding night. Claire's panties were still about his thighs, and Claire, still lying on top of him, showed no sign of moving away. With just a wiggle, the panties were in place again. Sleep came to them both, without either exhausted partner making a conscious effort.

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Waking with a pair of women's panties about his groin brought the whole episode back in startlingly quick fashion to Richard. While Claire still slept, he got out of bed in a very embarrassed state, quickly stripped the panties off, and tossed them into the linen basket. They were white with blue ribbons in and out of the frills that ran the length of the garment in row upon row.

He was dressed and finishing his coffee when Claire came yawning and stretching into the breakfast room.

"Darling," she murmured, smiling sleepily. "You don't have to make your own breakfast."

Still uneasy, Richard watched her closely. Perhaps she didn't remember what they had done in bed the night before. But, Claire did remember. She remembered very well. "Thank you, darling," she said, coming over to him and sitting on his knee. Her arms went about his neck, and she kissed him long and lovingly.

"What what was that for?" Richard couldn't recall such a scene in the morning before.

"I just love you very much," said Claire in his ear. "And, I wanted you to know that. Come on back to bed. Please!" There was an impish grin on her face.

"Work" he began vaguely.

"You set your own hours," chided Claire. "Come on, darling. Turn me on again like you did last night."

"Well" Richard returned her kiss and knew he was going to stay. He undid his tie and followed her into the bedroom. He took his shirt and pants off while she went through her lingerie drawer for a clean nightgown. She threw two onto the bed. One was a short pink gown with a soft furry lining around the neck and hem, while the other was floor length of orange silk, almost like an evening dress.

As Richard took off his underpants and reached for his bathrobe, Claire stopped him. She was naked too. "I put these out for us," she whispered, her eyes indicating the soft sexy garments on the bed. "You can choose the one you want to wear."

Richard's face must have shown his consternation. He could feel the vein hammering away at his forehead.

"Oh, it's alright, darling, really," Claire said. "This will make things great for both of us, you'll see." She clung to him in a strong embrace.

Richard was hardly able to move; he felt so insecure. His heart was pounding so hard.

Claire finally turned from him and picked up the long gown. "This one will be right for you. It will cling to your thighs and really turn you on. At least, it does me." She put the nightgown over Richard's head and let it fall loosely about his body.

He tried to protest, feeling that he must, but Claire babbled on, refusing to let him argue. Within moments, they were back on the bed together, no words being spoken as they explored each other in their soft gowns. As Claire had said, the long orange silk gown was so soft and gentle over Richard's body that he had great difficulty in keeping himself from ending their lovemaking too early. Claire's hands ran over his thighs and waist, smoothing the silk over his body.

"I should have had you keep your panties on," she whispered between caresses, and Richard felt himself grow even more. Claire sensed that in saying such phrases, she could arouse him to heights of activity and passion that he couldn't otherwise reach. And, she was the benefactor of any improved performance from him.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU THINK?

Claire and Richard met Ben the next evening. He was still in the company of Lucy. The Archer's drove her to the airport along with Ben to see him off. Richard drove while Claire chatted with Ben and Lucy, who were in the back seat, as if they were another married couple.

Ben slapped Lucy on the knee as Richard drove up in front of the terminal in the short time parking zone. "Thanks for the great time Lucy. I'll be back and look you up again." He looked up and grinned at Claire and Richard. "You look after this girl, you hear? Ain't no one given me what she's given me the last few days."

Lucy had the grace to look down demurely.

Claire smiled, impulsively put her arms around her husband's neck, and kissed him fervently. "I've got quite a man here myself," she said.

Ben guffawed while Richard flushed in embarrassment. "Marriage suits you Claire," Ben chortled.

Claire was still holding onto her husband. "It just keeps on getting better and better, doesn't it Richard?" she smiled.

"Sure," said Richard.

Claire walked with her arm around her husband as they helped Ben carry his suitcases into the terminal. They sauntered back, arm in arm, only to find Lucy trying to argue a stonefaced policewoman out of a ticket.

As far as Richard was concerned, nothing could dampen the love he felt for the marvelous girl he had married.

Everything was as normal as possible for the next few days. Claire was deeply involved with her job, while Richard was involved with the expansion of Stacey and Sons. He was also busy increasing the volume of sales in his order book, feeling happy and needed in his work.

"Richard," Claire put the newspaper down as her husband finished loading the dish washer as he sometimes did after dinner.

"Yes dear?" he answered, closing the machine and turning it on.

"Have you ever dressed totally as a woman?" she asked, reaching for her coffee.

Richard felt the blood drain from his face. Flustered, he tried to put on a show of indignation. "What kind of person do you think?" he sputtered, his voice unnaturally high.

Claire sipped her coffee, raised her hand to him, and shook her head. "I wasn't meaning to put you down," she interrupted. "We both got turned on the other night." She held up the paper and showed him a picture he had seen earlier. The picture showed a dark girl modeling a new dress. "I was thinking maybe you could wear a dress to Jan and Lucy's masquerade party next week."

"I can't wear a dress to a party!" he stated firmly. "Besides, you didn't say anything about a masquerade party."

"I said we couldn't go at first, because I didn't think you would want to put out the money for a costume. But, after seeing this guy," she tapped the paper, "I figured you could just wear my clothes, and I could wear yours. That wouldn't cost anything."

Flustered again, Richard could feel the sweat trickling down his back, sticking his shirt to his body. "W well," he rasped from a dry throat. He had seen the pretty girl modeling the dress in the paper, but he hadn't read the caption underneath. He wondered how he, of all people, could have missed such a picture.

It read, "French dress designer, Jean Pierre Aumont, not only showed a remarkable line of summer fashions in Paris yesterday, he also showed an unusual model. Elise, the striking brunette in the picture above, does a lot for this long skirted evening dress, quite surprising since 'her' real name is Hans Juergen, one of the city's leading cross-dressers."

Richard could feel his hand shaking as he quickly read the words. He sat down, barely able to tear his eyes away from this slim beautiful girl, her makeup so modern and so perfect, her smooth hair just right. "I I wouldn't be any good," he said, shaking his head.

"Oh, that's alright," said Claire, reaching for her coffee. "You don't have to be perfect like him, you know. This is a masquerade party, so it doesn't matter if everyone can tell who you are right away. Anyway, I'll make you up. With my experience, I should be able to disguise you well enough."

Richard was shaking his head as she spoke. "No," he said. "If we go, I'll buy us some regular costumes"

Claire stared at him, and said, "You're not afraid of dressing in women's clothes, are you? You're afraid you'll like it too much, aren't you? You didn't mind wearing my nightgown in bed the other morning. What's the difference?"

Richard flushed. "That was another day and was just between the two of us!" he said hotly.

Claire's eyes narrowed. "That green skirt," she said slowly, "Mrs. Morales wasn't the one who wore it, was she?"

Richard felt as if his whole world was crashing about him. Distraught, he tried to pretend that he didn't understand the topic. "What are you talking about?" His mouth was like sawdust.

"It was you!" Claire stated positively, as she leaned back in her chair. "Mrs. Morales was in tears when I accused her of wearing the skirt and using my lipstick. She vowed that she never touched clothes, jewelry, or makeup wherever she works. Lois Allen, who has her too, told me the same thing." She paused for a moment and observed the shaken Richard. "Admit it, you've been wearing my clothes."

"No!" Richard said as vehemently as he could. "What kind of person do you think I am?" His voice rose in faked anger, though he was trembling violently inside. "You think, because I humored you the other day"

Claire was shaking her head. She stood, came over to him, and placed her hands on his. She smiled, with a sympathetic and understanding expression as she looked into his taut face. "It really doesn't matter, darling," she said. "This isn't the Twenties, Thirties, nor even the Sixties. I've slept with you. I know what you are. Wearing women's clothes gives you pleasure. Don't you think I know that? And another thing, I'm not asking you to deny your cravings. Don't you understand that?"

"But" Richard sputtered. Even after her statement of understanding statement, he still couldn't confess his long-guarded secrets to his wonderful, understanding wife.

Claire kissed him on the lips and said, "Forget about the party. That was stupid of me. I should have understood your yearnings much sooner." She kissed him again, longer this time. Her arms tightened about his neck as she continued. "But, please Richard, don't lie to me again. I can stand anything in the world but lies. Now, let's go to bed."

So, after the emotion racked conversation he had just been through, Richard felt sure he would be unable to perform, but he was wrong. Dead wrong! And, Claire was insatiable. He sensed her determination to show her love for him. He loved her all the more for her efforts and vowed never to think of cross dressing again EVER!!!!

The two lovers drifted in and out of love making sessions all that evening, exchanging very few words. Richard was so nervously exhausted that he dozed easily, and Claire lay tucked in against him under his arm,

her head on his chest. He didn't ever want to do anything to hurt this fantastic woman, and now he knew definitely and positively, that he would never wear that green skirt again.

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The following Sunday, Richard did his normal share of the work after a leisurely breakfast. He unloaded and loaded the dishwasher while Claire tidied up. When he was finished, he went into the living room to find her reading the paper. She looked up with a guilty smile on her makeup free face. Then, he saw that she was looking at "that picture" again.

He felt himself flush under her gaze, as he could well imagine what she was thinking. Trying to ignore her, he busied himself with the vacuum cleaner, but he noticed her still looking, "studying" would be a better word, at Elise's (Hans Juergen's) picture. "You know," she said thoughtfully, "I'll bet he has real breasts and changes his sex pretty soon."

Richard swallowed. A large lump had come to his throat again. He badly wanted out of this conversation.

Claire looked up when she saw him with the vacuum in his hands. "Oh, you don't have to do that darling," she said, hastily throwing the paper back on the end table. She touched his hand as she took the vacuum from him and felt the trembling of his hand. Thoughtfully, she pushed the machine away, and softly said, "Richard, can we talk?"

"I have to take a shower," he said, edging away toward the bathroom.

"No," said Claire decisively. "We have to talk. Now!" She took his hand, led him to the sofa, and waited until he sat beside her before saying, "Look, you don't have to jump out of your skin every time I talk about someone like that near-girl in the paper. See," she lifted and squeezed his hand, "you're sweating again. Listen to me darling, I'll never put you down because you get turned on by wearing women's clothes. There's more to being a man than wearing pants, we both know that. I love you Richard, for your gentleness and kindness. Even if you have some faults, there's much more good than bad in you. Besides, I love you as a whole person, faults and all."

Richard could not meet her eyes. He was too ashamed. "I'll never, ever, in my whole life" The words came out in a torrent, and tears streaked down his face.

"Don't!" Claire snapped at him. "Listen, this is a part of your sexuality and may be why I liked you so much from the start. You are very sensitive to me and my needs, so please allow me to be sensitive to yours. We must deal with this openly, and if I make some remark, you must not think I'm directing it at you personally. Okay?"

Richard nodded hurriedly. "But, I'll never" he started again.

"Richard!" she spat loudly while shaking her head. "I know what you want to say, but I don't want to hear any stupid promises that you can't keep. In fact, I think you ought to dress as a woman today. Don't you agree?"

Richard broke free from her quickly. "No no," he said, shaking his head vehemently.

"Richard!" Claire stood up and placed her hands on her hips. She was trying to appear angry, but her smile betrayed her. "You are going to do this, and I don't want to hear any more argument! I'm a beautician, and I can help you get the most enjoyment"

"Please don't make me do this Claire!" Richard cut her off. There was much anguish in his voice. "I'm not a freak!"

"Oh darling," Claire came to him and put her arms about him once more. "I don't want to hurt you, ever, but I want you to dress up for me today. I know it will give you pleasure, and when it does, it will give me pleasure as well. This harmless dressing shouldn't be painful for you, it should be fun. I want to indulge you in your fantasy because you have given so much to me."

"I've given so much?" Richard was shocked. He had never thought that he gave her more than she would expect from any man. "I couldn't dress up in front of you," he stammered. "Really, I don't look very good. You would just laugh at me, and I couldn't bear that, not from you."

Claire hugged him again. She kissed him, and astonished, he felt her wet cheeks against his. "Bathe," she whispered, "and shave really close. Shave your body hair off too; your legs in particular. When you are finished, I'll help you." She nodded at the paper on the table and said, "With my help, you can look better than her any day."

Richard made one last feeble attempt to forestall his determined wife. "Please Claire, don't make me do this. I'll be too embarrassed."

"I told you no arguments! Now, off to the bathroom with you!" she said adamantly.

So, with few other prompting from his wife, Richard let himself be pushed into bathing and shaving his entire body. As he went through these ablutions, he felt a real intense excitement coming over him, that same excitement he always felt after making up his mind to put on women's clothing.

Claire was already dressed when he came out of the bathroom in his dressing gown. A serious look enhanced her still unmade thin gaunt face. "We'll put on our makeup together," she said, indicating two chairs she had placed in front of her dressing table mirror. "You will have to learn to do it right sometime, so I figure you might as well start right now."

"Are you sure that you want to go through with this," Richard said as he sat beside her.

"Of course I do silly," she chided him. She stared at both their faces, then stood up and shook her head. "We can't do it this way yet. I have to try some things out on you to see how they look first."

She had him turn away from the mirror, took the tweezers in her hand, and started plucking his eyebrows. When he winced, she said, "I want take out as many as I should. I'll leave you enough to be Richard later, and I can add to what I'm doing with an eyebrow pencil."

She worked away quietly, covering his face with a creamy makeup base. Her soft fingers worked away with what she called "blusher". Then, she worked gently with brushes and tissues. "I'm making this a little darker here," she said, touching the side of his nose, "to make it appear thinner. Your cheeks are like mine, too thin, so I'll try and make them seem rounded." She stopped and nodded. "That should do."

Reaching for other brushes, she began to work on his eyes with eye liner, mascara, and eyeshadow. "Your lashes are quite long for a man, so you won't need false eyelashes except when you have a heavy date." She smiled crookedly as Richard flinched. "But, it had better be with me," she added. After a bit more work on his eyes, she painted an outline around his mouth. "Most women won't go to this much trouble," she said as she reached for a pink lipstick, "but since this is your first time, it should be the best."

She smiled again, and Richard could detect nothing but love in her expression.

"Now, press your lips together, like this," she said, showing him how to spread his lipstick properly. She placed a tissue between his lips and had him press his lips together again. "You won't leave lipstick stains now," she explained. She stood up suddenly and pulled the curtain over the mirror so he couldn't see what she had done, and said, "Let's dress now."

Seeing the lingerie (white nylon panties, bra, and lacy slip) she had put on the bed for him, he was now putty in her hands and was unable to offer even token resistance to her plans. The high cut panties felt different as he put them on over his smooth skin, but Claire wasn't satisfied.

"You bulge too much," she said, heading off to the bathroom. She came back with a sanitary pad, from which she was removing some of the padding, along with a tiny strap she called a sanitary belt.

Richard blushed and made an attempt to put it on. He fumbled too much to suit her, so she put them on for him, tucking his male parts away between his legs, and rigorously tightened the strap causing Richard to groan.

"Now," Claire announced, "Your panties will fit properly."

Richard shivered with delight as he surveyed his new 'smooth fit'. The waist cinch garter belt pulled his waist in considerably.

"It has been years since I wore this," Claire said. "I almost threw it out several times, but I never did. Now, it's good that I kept it." She also had stockings ready for her husband, and she smiled when he sighed with delight as his trembling hands pulled them up his smooth shaven legs. "Smooth nylons make me feel feminine and pretty too," she said, helping him attach the stockings to the lacy straps of his garter belt.

Claire used tissue papers to fill the bra cups after she helped him put it on. The bra was a bit tight for him, but she made him wear it just the same. The straps pulled on his smooth hairless chest making him feel constricted and fully aware that he was wearing a woman's under garment. Richard wondered if he could ever get used to wearing a bra every day.

The soft nylon slip was one of Claire's he had much admired. It was embroidered around its lacy hem and was very tight about his waist and hips. As the lace of his slip touched the nylon of his stockings, he felt goose bumps rising up his thighs.

"That feels good,eh?" smiled Claire making Richard feel like a fish in a bowl. This was so different from dressing up alone.

From the wardrobe, she took out a green dress with three-quarter length sleeves and helped him into it. He hardly had to breathe in as she zipped up the back for him. She showed him how to smooth the skirt properly, brushing his slip and skirt against his nylons and bare skin, sending waves of pleasure through his body.

"I want you to wear my brunette wig," said Claire. "Styling your hair to look feminine would take too long. It's long enough, and I'll set it for you some time."

She kept her wigs so well groomed in storage that he had not dared to touch them in his previous "dressing up" sessions at home. Placing the wig on his head, she worked at fitting the heavy hair about his face. As she led him to the wardrobe to select a pair of shoes, his skirt swished nicely and femininely about his freshly shaved legs. Naturally, he chose high heels to compliment his nylon covered legs. She had not as yet allowed him to see the fruits of her labor, and he wondered how he looked.

Claire laughed at his efforts to walk gracefully. "You've got a lot to learn...just stand there," she said as she walked to the mirror and tossed back the curtain.

Richard trembled as he saw himself for the first time. Claire had far surpassed all previous efforts he had ever made by himself. A dark haired girl, with perfectly made up eyes, stared anxiously at him. She had nice ankles and shapely calves, and she was most definitely a girl. Richard moved, and the girl moved with him. Now, her pink lips were smiling at him. Her face was soft and rounded in testament to Claire's makeup skills.

"Come on," said Claire, sitting down in front of the mirror. "Let me show you how to sit prettily. We have to do our nails too. Also, you need earrings and a necklace with that dress. When we're through, we should go out and pick up a couple of guys to buy us lunch."

Richard was watching the brunette in the mirror, fascinated by her, NO!!! HIS, femininity. "The girl in the mirror" was as horrified as he; however, by Claire's suggestion.

"Oh, sit down! I'm only kidding," laughed Claire. "And, stop admiring yourself. You're not the only beautiful woman in the world, you know."

"I I can't believe it's me," Richard said in wonder, smoothing his shirt beneath him and sitting as Claire had showed him.

She nodded her approval and began to make herself up with speed and assurance Richard knew he would never master. Soon, she had him using an emery board on his nails and covering them with several layers

of pink varnish. Next came clip-on earrings that pinched his ears, but she wouldn't let him take them off.

"Girls suffer sometime to look pretty and be attractive to men," she laughed. "You're a girl now, so you'll just have to endure the same sensations."

When Claire was dressed, wearing high heels as well, she took him into the living room for lessons on walking and turning in his heels. She also started calling him "Janice", which made him quake. He couldn't think of another girl's name he preferred more, so he allowed her to continue with it.

"Janice dear, don't spoil your pretty dress sitting like that! Cross your legs at the knee, then smooth your skirt over your thighs, but don't show the tops of your nylons like that or your boyfriend will get the wrong idea."

"Claire!" Richard complained.

"Oh relax," Claire said. "Now, let's change you into another gown. That cocktail dress with the petticoats always makes me feel very feminine. I want you to wear it for a while to see if it makes a 'girl' like you feel more feminine as well."

The lessons continued.

"Don't worry about your voice, Janice darling. Just speak up clearly. We'll do exercises every day until you learn to speak with the proper pitch of a girl. Okay, let's change again. This time, try the gown with the long narrow skirt. Try these pendant earrings too. Oh Janice, you're so pretty! I really had no idea you could pick up being a girl so quickly. You're really learning to move so femininely. I agree Janice. We have worn our heels too long. Let's slip into our nighties and negligees early tonight."

Richard did as Claire requested. In a babydoll nightie with bikini panties, he was ready to assault Claire again, but he found Claire strangely different. Claire was also in a nightgown, and she cuddled up close to Janice at the end of the day. She stroked the other 'girls' hair, but she resisted Janice's attempts at sexual fore play.

"No, *Janice*," she said, letting her feminized husband kiss her but pushing 'her' legs away from her own. "You're a *girl* now! I don't make love to girls, and girls don't make love to me."

She then let Janice put her hands anywhere 'she' wanted, and clearly enjoyed the gentle caresses as much as the other, but she remained true to her word. She returned her mate's caresses, making 'her' feel overtly feminine, all the while steadfastly refusing to break the illusion of his femininity.

"Janice is a girl, and girl's are 'touchy'," she whispered drowsily in her husband's ear, "but that's all we 'girls' do." Claire refused to yield on the rules...Girls were girls and boys were boys.

Sleep, for Richard, didn't come for quite some time. Although he felt somewhat frustrated, Richard nevertheless had rarely been happier at the end of the day. As he stretched out, the thin nylon of his babydoll nightie

floating over his thighs felt divine. Hearing Claire breathing deeply beside him, he finally drifted off to a happy, contented sleep.

CHAPTER V

THE NOVELTY STORE

Claire took away Richard's wig the next morning and made no comment as Richard hastily, and with no comment, took off the nighty and panties. Even back in Richard's clothes for the day, he felt strange until he realized that he had no hair on his body, thus causing the heavy clothes to be unexpectedly rough.

When he returned from work that night, Claire was waiting supper for him, but she insisted on a bedroom visit first. "I missed Richard last night," she said when he had at last fallen from her in exhaustion. "I know you will want to be Janice a lot from now on, and that's okay but please darling, don't forget 'Claire' because 'she' needs you," she said, clinging to him.

"Never," he said huskily. "You don't know how happy you made me yesterday. Just to know that you understood after all these years I've spent"

"Okay okay," Claire said, smiling and patting his shaved knee. "Supper is more than ready. I'll go put it on the table. Why don't you put on a skirt and blouse and join me? Just part your hair in the middle and comb it to the sides. You'll be surprised how girlish that will make you look."

When his hair was combed into the prescribed style, Richard didn't think he looked like a girl at all. Despite his best efforts, the girl he had been the day before refused to appear in the mirror.

"Darling," Claire said, coming back to the bedroom. "What's keeping you so long? Oh" she made a face when she saw his makeup. She stifled a laugh and considerately offered to help when she saw how angry and upset he was with himself. First, she wiped his face clean. Then, with just eyebrow pencil, eyeliner, a little lipstick, and a bit of powder in the shiny places, she gave Richard a feminine appearance, though not as exotic or attractive as the 'Janice' of the day before.

He hurriedly put on the sanitary belt and a new pair of silk panties, but he had to settle for the same bra. He put on pantyhose for the first time, a silky nylon half slip, and the same green skirt and blouse he had worn in his dressing by himself. He looked so different now with the hint of makeup and his curved, darkened eyebrows, that he was beyond belief.

"Come on Janice!" Claire called impatiently from the dining nook. "Your supper is getting cold."

Richard was in a state of bliss as he left the bedroom with his soft slip brushing sensuously against his smooth legs. His high heels completed his feminine image.

Claire merely gave a little smile, accepting Richard as he was. "Guess what," Claire stated when Richard was seated demurely and eating daintily.

Richard was fascinated by the feel of his bra and the touch of the silk blouse on his skin. "What?" he asked, moving so his hair, long enough to cover his ears, touched his earrings.

"Lucy is really taken with the idea about her masquerade party," said Claire, smiling as she watched how he was turning himself on. He did look quite good, trying to be feminine, but he still needed a lot of coaching from a woman. "She asked if we could attend."

"What did you say?"

"I told her Richard didn't want to go," she said, smiling at the disappointment, tinged with relief, that showed through his makeup. "I told her you had an out of town business appointment, but I would attend if a girlfriend who was visiting could come along with me."

Richard frowned for a moment, then his hand began to shake as he realized what Claire had meant. "You don't mean" he gasped.

"That's right," said Claire, nodding her head vigorously. "You would be too embarrassed to go as Richard dressed as a woman, since you're so authentic. So, Janice dear, we are going to a party in two weeks, and you'd better not let us down either. Lucy expects me to bring a real girl to her party and that's exactly what you will be by then."

Richard's hands shook as he pushed his plate away. "Oh Claire," he said shaking his head from side to side. "I can't I mean they'll find out"

Claire shook her head. "After I've finished with you, your own mother won't know you." She expected Richard to laugh at that comment, but his face was shocked and stricken. "Oh, I'm sorry," she exclaimed. "What did I say that was wrong?"

"Nothing," Richard cast his eyes down and pecked at his food. Richard thought of Mrs. Leland Archer, and his skin tingled with a wave of guilt. He knew she would reproach him if she could only see him now. He felt suddenly very silly to be sitting there 'pretending' to be a female, in his panties and skirt, while all the time knowing he was a man.

"We'll go over to a little shop I know in Parkton," said Claire, watching his face and the puzzling emotions that were playing there. "They specialize in gorgeous costumes, and I'm sure we can get something nice for us to wear to the party."

"But, you said before" There was again a curious mix of relief and disappointment in Richard's eyes.

Claire smiled. "I know what I said," she murmured. "But, you don't want to wear just my street clothes, darling. We can make you a much more exotic woman than that. Besides, if you get caught...we'll just chock it up to being a joke, a costume."



Ellen Mason Novelty was in the center of a long mall of shops with busy super markets at either end. There were so many cars in the parking lot that Claire had to park about twenty spaces from the door.

"I can't walk that far in public dressed like this!" said Richard with panic in his voice. He shifted nervously, his dark blue pleated skirt rustling against the ribbed car seat.

"Let's not start that again," Claire said in exasperation. "How many times must I tell you that you pass as a woman quite easily? All you have to do is behave with confidence, and no one will give you a second look. They will even ignore any masculine gesture you make because you look so feminine. And honey," she winked at the 'girl' beside her, "You really do look feminine!"

Richard swallowed anxiously. He reached for his purse and reached for a cigarette.

Claire pushed in the cigarette lighter. Perhaps it would be better to let him look around for a moment. She hadn't convinced him yet that he could go anywhere as a woman without recognition. He looked so very feminine, in fact, he looked so feminine that she was scared a little. She had failed to convince him that he needed very little makeup in public.

With his hair in a smart pageboy, curled outward to bounce off his ears and neck and with his bangs turned under across his forehead, he looked much younger. His eyes were outlined, but just lightly, with only a touch of light blue on his lids. His brows were carefully curved with eyebrow pencil, and there was only foundation cream about his eyes and under his nose.

The light blue sweater, bulging over Claire's padded "wonderbra", and looked as good on him as did the red, white, and blue silk scarf tied at his neck. He wore one of her dress watches on his wrist along with a dress ring with a green stone that looked very nice with his pink nail polish and lipstick.

Richard lit his cigarette and fumbled with the lighter as he returned it to its proper place.

Claire let him take a couple of drags before opening her door. She got out, went around the car to Richard's side, and opened the door. Richard looked at her with fright on his face. "Ready?" asked Claire, with a broad smile.

Slowly, Richard swung his nylon clad legs, with their blue three inch heels, out of the car as femininely as Claire had taught him. He stood skittishly, clutching the strap of his shoulder purse. Claire slammed the door and took Richard's hand, pulling him along. They swung their arms together as they walked toward the shop.

Richard tried to walk with short steps as Claire had been teaching him for several days now. The shoppers sauntered by them without giving Richard a second look, but just as they came even with the last car, a man came across the driving lane ahead of them. As Richard looked up, he smiled, causing Richard's nerve center to pulse wildly.

Claire felt Richard's hand tighten in hers. She glanced at Richard and saw the flush on his cheeks. His downcast eyes showed off his blue eye shadow, as he glanced back at the man to see if he was laughing or something. The man turned just as Richard did, smiled, and obviously admired 'her' shapely legs.

Claire watched Richard. She had never seen him so chagrined. Her husband dressed and doing his best to 'be a woman.' It was so humorous in a way but foreboding. Claire gave Richard an impish smile, and said, "You just made your first conquest."

"Oh Claire!" There was agony in Richard's tone as the two reached the door of the novelty store. He held back as Claire opened the door.

"Come on," Claire said, inclining her head toward the store. "Confidence doll! Remember? Just like Bobby Austin!"

The thought of the female impersonator did not make Richard any less anxious. Rather the contrary, for he realized that he was now an impersonator as well.

The young girl came over to serve Richard as Claire purposely turned away to look at a crinoline dress. "Can I help you, Miss?" she asked 'Janice'.

Richard glanced wildly around for Claire who had moved behind a rack of dresses.

However, Claire knew Richard had to grow accustomed to talking with, and being seen, others before the night of the party and this was a good place to start.

As the young girl stared at 'her' with an inquiring smile, Richard, thinking of himself only as a man in a dress, was sure the girl would break into laughter any moment as she recognized 'him'.


"C ... Claire," he gasped, conscious of the pull of his garter belt through his silk panties, to the nylons Claire had insisted he wear. She had said they would make him feel especially feminine for his "debut" and they really did!

Claire looked back at Richard, with a big smile on her face, as Richard realized that he had been deliberately left to face the sales girl alone.

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"The highly arched eyebrows made Richard look much more feminine."

Feeling a hint of compassion for her feminized husband, Claire finally spoke. "We need costumes for a masquerade dance."

The girl smiled and nodded. "Did you have anything particular in mind?" she asked, glancing from one feminine figure to another.

Claire made a face. "Nothing grotesque, I wouldn't think," she said. "This is a very respectable do, in the main."

The girl smiled again. "I see," she said. "If you will step this way, I'll show you what we have in stock for rental. If you can't find exactly what you want, we have others, like that french gown, for sale."

Claire had to take Richard's hand, as the poor girl seemed rooted to the spot, to drag her after the store clerk.

In the dressing room, Richard sat down on the only chair, as she was trembling all over. She looked at herself in the mirror and saw nothing of Richard looking back at 'her'. Near panic, he said, "Claire, I've got to get out of here!"

"Nonsense! You know we have to get our costumes. You just slip out of your sweater and skirt, sweetheart," said Claire, in a too sweet voice

and with a sparkle in her eyes, "while I select a couple gorgeous costumes for us to try."

Left alone, Richard slowly undid his kerchief with shaking fingers. As he carefully took off his girlish sweater, his hair bounced delightfully against his face and neck. He stepped out of his skirt and was pleased by his image in the mirror. He knew that his red and white flowered slip made him appear more feminine.

Claire opened the cubicle door and pushed in with a costume on a hanger.

As Richard peered closely, he swallowed hard, feeling a large lump in his throat. "I can't wear that!" he gasped.

Claire just smiled. "What's wrong with it?" she asked, holding the Arabian 'slave girl' costume against her husband, its ribbon edged diaphanous skirts swirling. "You can wear my dark wig and put it up. With this little veil over your face, it will be the perfect disguise!"

Richard wanted to argue the point, but just then, the sales girl came bustling in carrying a stack of jewelry. "Do you want me to show the makeup we recommend with this costume?" she asked Richard.

"No no, thank you," answered Richard nervously.

"Yes," said Claire. "Do her up properly so she'll know how to do it right. You never know just who might be at the party, Janice. Anyway, I'm sure you'll make out nicely. You always do."

The sales girl smiled, and Richard gave Claire a sick look. Introducing herself as Diane, the girl stood aside to allow Claire to leave. Then, she moved close beside Richard to do his makeup. Taking an eyeliner, she set about thickening and extending the lines out to a narrow vee. Next, she added mascara to Richard's lashes before working with the eyebrow pencil and eyeshadow, adding silver-white shadow below the dark brows. "This will really accentuate your eyes," she said conversationally, "if you wear the veil." She held the veil over Richard's face and tied it behind his head so that it covered the lower part of his face.

Looking in the mirror at this strange girl with the incredible, vivid eyes and fantastic eye makeup, her lipstick just visible through the soft veil, Richard knew what Claire had been hinting. There was nothing of Richard to be seen at all in that face!

Diane arranged the jewels through his hair, allowing a large glittering 'diamond' to sit in the middle of Richard's forehead. After screwing more of the 'diamonds' into Richard's ears, she said, "Wow, you look great! I haven't seen this stuff on anyone before. Do you want me to dress you as well?"

"No," said Richard in his best voice. "I can manage that myself."

"Okay," said Diane sounding regretful. She picked up her makeup tray and smiled at the mysterious veiled beauty in the mirror.

Richard slipped the bolt on the door as quietly as he could before completely undressing. Only Claire's repeated instructions got him through the session. The soft, foam filled inserts and taping gave him a

voluptuous cleavage in the eye-catching tasseled bra. Richard knew, to his dismay, that in this outfit, he would be the object of much attention from the males at the party. The fringed panties could be seen quite clearly through the transparent skirt that swirled softly about his thighs.

When Claire returned with open, silver high heeled shoes and ankle bracelets, she found Richard reeling from the thrill of wearing such feminine finery. As soon as Claire closed the door behind her, she noticed Richard's eyes shining brightly. She smiled in understanding, gently removed the veil, and gave Richard a forthright kiss on his trembling pink lips.

"Oh Claire," Richard whispered, clinging to his wife. His 'breasts' were pushing firmly against hers.

Claire hugged her scantily clad husband in turn. "You look fantastic Janice!" she said softly. "We'll have a great time at Lucy's party, just you wait."

CHAPTER VI

LUCY'S PARTY

The party was in full swing when Claire, wearing a flapper dress, and Richard, his dark wig pinned up by Claire but with a ponytail left to hang down and brush his bare back, entered the older, suburban home.

"Claire," shrieked Lucy. Her eyes were already glazed, as apparently, she had gotten a head start on drinking before the party. From the background, loud music swelled over equally loud voices. From the living room, came the calls of people enjoying a hectic modern dance.

"This is my friend, Janice," said Claire, touching Richard's slave-bangle arm as he slipped out of a sable coat.

"Hi, Janice," screamed Lucy, taking the soft fur coat and flinging it onto the pile in the little room off the main hallway. "You both sure look great!" she said as she led them toward the merriment adding, "Claire, you're lucky Richard is out of town...there are some gorgeous fellows here tonight."

Richard balked for a moment. The sight of so many people, caused him to freeze but Claire pulled her into the throng.

"Remember Janice," she whispered into her husband's ear. "You are a girl tonight, so have fun like a girl. Richard's AWAY."

Richard quivered at those words and felt nothing at all like a girl. All he could think of was that he was Richard Archer, wearing a slave girl's skirts with his toenails painted, standing in front of a pirate and a cowboy who were both eying him speculatively. They also were measuring up Claire.

The pirate reached Richard first and led him to the crowded dance floor where space was so limited the most they could do was jump up and down and shake. The pirate brushed against Richard's soft skirt, intentionally so he thought, while dancing with a lot of energy. "I'm Douglas," he leered, leaning over Richard.

"Janice," mumbled Richard through his veil.

"Let me get you a drink," said Douglas, putting his arm around Richard's waist and pulling him through the crowd toward the bar.

To drink the rye and ginger, Richard had to pull his veil to one side. "Very nice," said the pirate, pushing up his eye patch so he could ogle at the pretty face with both eyes.

Quaking, Richard ventured a little smile at him. Now he could see that Douglas was no more than eighteen or nineteen. He was trying as hard to impress Richard that he was a man, as 'she' was to make him believe he was a woman. With that knowledge, Richard felt himself relaxing. He had spent the last few days entirely dressed in women's clothing, going out shopping for the most wonderful fashions, as Claire had insisted he start his own wardrobe. This experience as a female now helped him to deal with Douglas.

He was eying Richard's cleavage like he had never seen a woman's breasts before. Maybe the silk tasseled bra attracted him. "This is a lovely party, isn't it?" said Richard with a high voice, her dark red lips shiny with the gloss Claire had shown her how to add.

Douglas looked into the dark, heavily made up eyes of his beautiful companion. "Yeah!" he yelled over the din. "Aunt Lucy always throws great parties. Shall we dance again?"

Richard puckered his lips and nodded his head, feeling his ponytail swish sensuously across his back while the diamonds on his forehead moved against him, telling him what a desirable woman he appeared to be.

"You bet!" said Douglas with alacrity. Sitting down their glasses, he took Richard's arm near his slave bracelet. Just as they reached the floor, the music abruptly changed from disco to a waltz. Douglas put both arms around Richard and pulled him against him. The jelled inserts in his bra bounced against Douglas's chest, and as he pulled him close. All this made Richard feel very uncomfortable but Douglas was experiencing pleasure from the sensation.

"You smell really nice," mumbled Douglas into 'her' bejeweled ear as he pulled him close to him so that Richard's head rested on his shoulder.

Richard felt the pressure from his rough pirate's costume against his barely protected skin through his thin transparent skirt. One of Douglas' hands crept down to caress his buttocks through his panties and to pull him closer to him with all parts of his body. Richard laughed and replaced his hand high about his waist. There was something sensual about Douglas's closeness and began to feel soft kisses on his perfumed ears and neck. 'Janice' had to get away...what if later the 'truth' came out?

Luckily, as the music changed, Douglas switched into a limited version of the Hustle. Richard smiled gaily as his skirts swirled seductively about and between his legs. He was enjoying herself immensely. She continued to do so even when Claire and a mustached football player

pushed through the crowd to change partners and split them up. Claire took over a very reluctant Douglas.

"I'm Big Al," puffed the football player, sweating under the heavy padding he was wearing. He towered over Richard, even in his high heels. "Al Morris," he went on, giving the name of the personnel director in Claire's firm. "Claire told me all about you."

"Oh," Richard smiled timidly. Where Douglas had been a boy on the make, trying to impress an older girl, this was a grown man, and the gleam in his 'experienced' eye was more than a little menacing.

"Yeah," he growled, taking Richard roughly into his arms for a waltz. To his relief, his pads kept him from embracing him too closely. "She told me your name is Janice, and you're her best friend.

"That's right," nodded Richard, hoping his relief wasn't visible to the other.

Big Al was just the first of a series of men Claire brought over to Richard. All were delighted to dance with the harem girl, taking opportunities to hold 'her' tightly and caress 'her' with their hot hands during the slow dances.

Richard was astonished at how quickly he'd become accustomed to having a man's arms around him, but he grew tired and soon his feet ached after so much dancing. On the arm of Mike Tanner, his latest partner, he walked easily to find a place to sit. As they shared a drink and engaged in light conversation about the party, Mike's hand slipped down from Richard's shoulder to his waist. He held Richard tightly so that his hip and thigh were pressed against his own.

Richard had one of his 'masculine attacks' as Mike caressed his waist and ribs. He grabbed Mike's hand and leaped to his feet, his transparent skirt swirling against him.

"What's the matter?" he asked, standing as well and holding on to the feminized youths hand so he couldn't slip away.

Richard was saved from an embarrassing reply by the ringing of the front door bell. He quickly adjusted his veil and called, "I'll get it!"

Mike followed him to the door. It swung open easily, and Ben Stacey sauntered through the door. He was wearing a dark suit and tie, in conspicuous contrast to Mike's matador costume.

Ben's eyes showed no hint of recognition as he gave Richard the once over. "Well," he leered, "what a lovely surprise! I must have lucked into something special."

"Ben!" Lucy came swaying from the living room to take Ben's hand. She gave Richard a venomous look that startled the slave girl even more. Richard couldn't believe Lucy saw him as a rival.

"I'll see you later, doll," Ben said to Richard. "Be sure to save a dance for me, you hear?"

Richard nodded dumbly as Ben winked at 'her'. He couldn't believe Richard Archer's own brother-in-law hadn't recognized him. Thinking

wildly and near panic, he knew he would have to quickly find Claire and get out of there before Ben saw 'her' again.

"You know that guy?" asked Mike, putting Richard's hand into his and squeezing the long, red tipped fingers.

"N ... no," Richard stammered, shaking his head. He wished he hadn't, as his earrings and long ponytail reminded him he was a girl for the night.

"He's a real bore," said Mike in disgust. "Chases anything in a skirt. He'll be after you, just you watch."

"After me?" said Richard nervously. "Why me?"

"Hey," Mike said reaching behind Richard's head and unfastening his veil. Laying the thin veil aside, he looked deeply into his eyes and drew him close. He felt Richard's body tremble with anxiety and nervousness but missed the true implication of the reaction. "You're the most beautiful girl here tonight," he said, "and you know it!" He bent over and kissed Richard's red, glossy lips.

Richard jumped back as if he had been scalded.

"Hey! I didn't think I was that bad!" Mike tried to pass the reaction off as a joke, but he was obviously quite angered by Richard's response.

"I ... I'm sorry," said Richard, his dark eyes glancing about furtively. "I ... I just wasn't expecting you to do that." He hoped that Claire wasn't watching.

"That's all?" There was a curl on Mike's lip.

"Really," Richard nodded hastily.

"Okay," said Mike, his dark hair falling across his forehead. "Now you're expecting it, so let's try again." He seized Richard's upper arms, pushed him against the door frame, and kissed him again.

Richard, feeling 'masculine' again, rebuffed and stiffened as he felt Mike's hard dry lips on his own. His arms pulled Richard tightly, pressing his 'breasts' against him, and slowly slipped his hands down Richard's body. As Mike's hands gently caressed Richard's feminine appearing attributes through his panties and transparent skirt, Richard tried to relax and return his kiss as would a girl, hoping he could soon be free of him.

"That was nice," said Mike huskily as he held Richard close to him. As Richard took his trembling lips from Mike's, he said, "I would like to see you again after tonight."

"Janice!" Claire shouted as she and Douglas, who was looking very sheepish, approached them. When she saw her red faced husband in Mike's arms and the smears of lipstick on their faces, she realized what was happening.

Richard looked at her with such tragic appeal that she couldn't feel angry with Richard. Mike was clearly taking advantage of 'her', and Richard didn't have enough womanly knowledge to avoid such awkward situations.

"Douglas has been asking me where you had gotten off to," said Claire. "He is just dying to dance with you again!"

Douglas looked suitably embarrassed, knowing that they had obviously interrupted something..

“By the way, did you see my brother?” she asked as Mike let Richard away from the wall, though he kept holding his hand.

“I let him in,” mumbled Richard, as he replaced his veil. “He wants to dance with me later. We have to go.”

Claire threw back her head and laughed, looking most attractive. “Oh, that’s too much!” she giggled, as she broke Mike’s hold on Richard’s arm. “Come on Mike,” she said. “Dance with an old married lady for a while.

Richard was dumbfounded at his wife. He had felt sure Claire would want to leave right away to insure that he wasn’t discovered, especially since Ben had arrived. Not only did his wife show no desire to leave, she had not even commented upon the fact that he had been kissed, not another woman, but a man!

“Janice, would you dance with me?” Douglas asked the striking brunette falteringly. He was sure Janice would rather be off with the older, more mature man.

“Why yes, Douglas!” Even through his veil, Richard’s smile was dazzling. “I thought you would never ask.” he answered, putting his arms about Douglas’s neck, he could do little else but place his hands on Richard’s hips, feeling his soft silky panties with their tasseled fringes. Douglas puffed up and pulled Richard closer. Richard felt more under control didn’t seem to mind. He was enjoying the attention and tried to relax.

• • •

Ben Stacey joined the party despite his lack of costume, and found that he knew most of the people there, including Lucy, who was trying to monopolize him. He knew Big Al Morris and Mike Tanner, who worked at the same store with Lucy and Claire. He had expected them to be there but was surprised to find his sister, who was looking very delightful in her ‘Roaring Twenties’ flapper style costume.

“Claire!” he yelled from the bar when she danced by in the arms of Mike Tanner. “I called your place earlier, and when you weren’t there, I came over here. Is Richard around?”

Claire stopped dancing and mumbled something to Mike, who went off laughing. She turned to her brother and said, “He’s away for the weekend on a fishing trip with the boys.”

Ben eyed his youngest sister with concern. His look said, but he didn’t ask, what was she doing at a swinging party like this without her husband. He only nodded, “Looks like you’re doing a little fishing yourself.”

“He knows I’m here,” Claire said with a large smile. “Just like I always know where he is. We trust each other, you know.”

Just then Lucy came back with two large drinks, one for Ben and the other for herself. “Don’t get too close to this guy Claire,” she said unsteadily. “I saw him first!”

Claire and Ben laughed. Lucy was startled, and it took Claire a moment to see the extent the strong drinks were affecting her friend. Lucy had obviously forgotten that she was Ben's sister.

"Say," Ben said, casually indicating the dance floor where a pirate and the harem girl were doing a very suggestive Bump. "Who is the brunette? I don't think I know her."

Lucy gave him an angry glance. "Who did you come here to see?" she demanded with strong acid in her tone. "That's the second time you've noticed her."

Ben shrugged and took his eyes off the thin girl who twirled her skirts about her as she danced.

"Why don't you ask me about her?" asked Claire in a bantering, teasing tone she knew would annoy Lucy. "Janice did come with me, after all."

"Janice?" asked Ben with a frown.

"Yes," smiled Claire. "She is a friend of mine, and she is staying with me while Richard is away." She giggled at her own private joke. "She is wearing a wig, and with that veil, you can't see what she really looks like."

"In that outfit?" asked Lucy spitefully. "She's showing just about everything she's got."

Richard chose that moment to turn in their direction. As he leaned forward with his arms tight to his sides, he gave them a view of what appeared to be real feminine cleavage.

"I see what you mean," Ben said dryly. He raised his glass to the harem girl in a mock toast, which served only to infuriate the half-drunk Lucy even more. She left them curtly to talk to others of her guests.

"She's jealous of you," Claire said to her brother.

Ben nodded gloomily. "I hoped she would be different. I guess I'll have to dump her." He looked at the bumping Richard, who was laughing gaily at his pirate partner as they turned back and forth in time with the music.

"Not at her own party," said Claire with alarm, watching where Ben's eyes were roving. "Even you couldn't be that cruel. Why don't you go to her and apologize?"

Ben smiled thoughtfully. "Only on one condition," he said after a pause.

"Which is?" asked Claire.

"That you introduce me to Janice another time," he said with a leer. His attitude didn't amuse Claire this time. In fact, it served only to make her feel slightly sick.

"She she has a boyfriend," Claire responded slowly, desperately to get out of granting her brother's request. "And, she is engaged to be married."

"No matter," said Ben to his sister. "She's the kind of girl I go for in a big way. Maybe this time I'll get lucky, and she'll go for me in the same way."

"I doubt it!" There was a shudder in Claire's voice.

He looked at her with astonishment. "Just promise to introduce me to her," he said insistently. "Nature will do the rest!"

CHAPTER VII

"YOU CAN'T BE A GIRL ALL THE TIME"

At home Richard fell onto the bed, still in her costume. Her face was a picture of contentment. He had survived the evening with the only problem being that he was too attractive as a woman.

Claire quietly hung both of her furs up carefully, slipped out of her flapper costume, and slipped into her nightgown. When she was ready, she lay down beside the 'exotic girl' on the bed, her feminized husband. His perfumed fragrance filled Claire's nostrils as she pulled him into her arms.

Richard's green-shadowed eyes opened, and his red lips parted. "Thank you, Claire," he whispered. "That was the most fabulous party I've ever attended in my life." There was a feminine rustle from his skirt as he moved closer to Claire.

Claire put her arms about the ladylike figure and kissed her husband, tasting lipstick and enjoying the sensation until she remembered that there was none on her lips. Her husband's breasts were pressing against her own in a most erotic fashion. She wanted very much to continue to make love, but something held her back. "Richard," she sighed, as the his skirt entwined with her nightgown, and she felt his body against hers. "I had to promise Ben that he could meet Janice if he made up with Lucy at the party, which he did. After all, you were the cause of their fight."

"Me?" Richard squealed, still speaking in the tone Richard had practiced, by reading aloud incessantly for days. He raised himself up on his elbow, his earrings falling forward onto her neck.

"Yes darling, You!" said Claire, reaching up to touch his earrings which were still tightly screwed to his lobes. "I made you too beautiful, I'm afraid." As she caressed Richard's shoulders and slid her hands down to his cleavage, she felt her husband tense under her playful fingers.

"Oh Claire," there was desire in Richard's husky voice. He put his arms around her, and kissed her again and again on her lips and face as she ran her hands over his tasseled bra.

"No," said Claire in regret as he tried to mount her, his earrings and hair brushing over her face. "No *Janice!*" she insisted as his nyloned thighs crossed hers. "I've told you before that I only make love to Richard. Now," she kissed his sticky lips and teased his bra again, "If you only want to play, I'm game because I like you a lot. But, that's all there is going to be between us girls." She let her hands wander over his silk panties caressing his soft hairless thighs along the elasticized fringes and using his diaphanous skirt to make him shiver. "Make up your mind, Janice dear," she said, continuing her efforts to make him very uncomfortable in his tight panties. "Do you want to play for a while before we

go to sleep, or is this for real?" She ran her tongue over his lipstick again, allowing his long thickened lashes to flicker over her face. She added, "Those luscious lips that the boys loved to kiss!"

"You bitch," groaned Richard as his wife chuckled. Slowly, and very reluctantly, Richard pulled himself to her feet and began the process of stripping away his femininity. Creaming away his eye makeup and lipstick took quite some time, and it had to be completely removed before Richard could return to his wife's arms.

When he finally returned, she made no comment about his finely plucked eyebrows, that she had been thinning day by day until they were clearly feminine. She further did not comment on his femininely styled hair, or the red polish on his finger and toenails that he had forgotten to remove. She herself was very anxious as well because several nights had passed since she had shared her bed with Richard. Janice had pre-empted him, and Claire was clearly in no mood to quibble over minor imperfections in her husband's masculine appearance.

• • •

After a night and morning of ardent lovemaking, they ate breakfast during the noon hour. Richard quite naturally dressed in one of Claire's bathrobes over his own pajamas. His hair was losing the set Claire had given it the day before, and his face was smooth from the bleaching and waxing she had given his soft light beard.

As he sat reading the morning newspaper, his almost non-existent eyebrows knitting, traces of makeup still showing at the corners of his eyes, Claire realized for the first time that she had over-feminized him. He was to the point now that he looked more like a woman than a man.

"Richard," she began.

He looked up from his paper. "I know," he said. "I had better get to the office and get some work done." Over the past few days he had been in to collect messages and to direct orders to their correct destinations as 'Janice', with Claire accompanying 'her'.

"Yes," said Claire, as he stood up. "Ben will probably be in today, even though I didn't tell him when you would return from your fishing trip."

"Did I catch anything?" he asked with a chuckle.

Claire smiled at his quip. "Nothing you could bring back home with you," she answered, still wanting to speak with him about his extraordinary appearance. However, he was moving away, wrapping Claire's dressing gown about him and swaying girlishly as he headed to the bathroom.

Everything turned out the way Claire had feared. He was distressed almost to tears by his attempts to comb his hair out to a respectable male style. "Look at my eyebrows!" he wailed at Claire when she entered the bathroom. "I can't go out looking like this! I would be the laughing stock of the building, or maybe even get arrested!"

"I know dear. That's why I got you these," said Claire soothingly, showing him a slim plastic box. "False eyelashes are for women. These are false eyebrows for men along with the adhesive to hold them ... just like a false mustache. In fact, I think we should look for you a good false mustache as well. It would help to make you look more masculine."

Richard was aghast, but she quickly took him in hand, doing a thorough job of cleaning his nails and lashes of their adornments. "You still smell of my perfume," she said as she brushed his hair into his normal style. "I think I should trim your hair as well."

He pulled back from her hands, frowning.

"Oh, don't worry," she said crossly. "I can give you a layered cut that will work really well no matter what gender you are."

Richard remained skeptical of her manipulations with his hair. However, when he was dressed, he looked like the real Richard Archer, and he was truly regretful not seeing 'Janice' looking back at him from the mirror. He sighed and adjusted his tie as Claire came out of the bathroom.

Hearing his sigh, Claire was a bit annoyed. "You can't be a girl all the time," she said.

"No," said Richard in a disappointed tone, "I suppose not."

Claire gave him an encouraging hug and kiss as she accompanied him to the door. As Richard left, walking along familiar paths, riding the customary elevator, and even getting into his car, all he could think of was how well Janice had done.

He found that he had to concentrate not to walk like 'her', not to look away demurely when people, particularly men, passed by, and not to enter the car as if he were wearing a tight skirt. By the time he had the car on the road, his perspiring hands made gripping the steering wheel difficult. His clothes felt heavy, coarse, and uncomfortable, making him perspire more as he tried to concentrate on his new role that of being 'Richard'.

Ben was in his office when Richard arrived. He was leafing through a batch of orders Richard had prepared for transmittal to the main office. "You're late," he said as Richard entered his neat and orderly office.

Richard smiled thinly and confidently replied, "I have been out of town on a fishing trip. I just dropped by to transmit these orders to you at headquarters."

Ben nodded and tossed the raft of papers back into the OUT tray. He looked weary and reached into his inner pocket for the thin metallic flask Richard had seen the day of his wedding. Uncorking the flask, Ben took a long shot before offering it to Richard, who refused to partake.

"I'm not the man I used to be," Ben said as he replaced the top on the flask. "You know, you have done much better here than I ever expected," Ben said indicating the orders. "You sell everything we can supply from the factory."

"There's nothing to it," said Richard, playing down his role. "Stacey furniture sells itself. Actually, I could sell more if I had the inventory."

Ben nodded, looking bored with the business talk. "Sure," he said, nodding and rubbing his bloodshot eyes. "You know, I really shouldn't be here, but I just had to get away from Judy for a while. And this morning, I had to get away from Lucy." He glanced up at Richard, who was still standing and shook his head. "You really have a gem in Claire, and I'm not saying that because she's my sister. Judy ain't a bit like her, and neither is that damned Lucy," he grimaced.

"You have a bad night?" Richard tried to fake sympathy.

Ben nodded. "Claire must have told you about Lucy's party," he said raising his eyebrows. "She told me you knew she was going."

"Yeah," Richard nodded. "She said she had a good time."

Ben smiled with an suspicious look on his face. "And, you let her go to that wild party without you?"

Richard smiled and nodded his head.

Ben looked very cynical. "You're more trusting than I am," he sighed. "Anyway, my visit wasn't totally wasted. I met this really cute chick named Janice. She's a friend of Claire's. Do you know her?"

"N ... no," said Richard hastily, causing Ben to give him an inquisitive stare.

"Oh," Ben replied with a shrug. "Claire took her to Lucy's party last night, and she's going to fix me up with her real soon. We can probably make it a foursome like the last time."

"Probably," said Richard, feeling uncomfortably hot and flushed. Luckily, Ben moved on to other things.

"You know, Richard," he said, "You're making good money for us while not doing bad for yourself, but you shouldn't be doing this job, you know."

"Oh," Richard was bewildered.

"No! You should be more ambitious," Ben said studying his brother in law. With his fashionably long hair, he was quite a picture of the modern young executive on the way up. "You have a business degree, and you should be using it," he went on rifling through the orders. "This is money in the bank, I know, but it's never going to really put you in the chips."

"Well," Richard knew full well why he had gotten the job in the first place. "This job is helping us to get on our feet," he said defensively, "and I really needed a good position after college."

Ben quickly agreed. "Yeah, I know, and there weren't many graduates getting good jobs anywhere last year, were there? Anyway, any time you feel the need to move on, to improve your situation, we won't stand in your way. By the way, get yourself a girl in here. I know you don't think she can justify her pay, but she can answer the phone and do the typing and filing. This will allow you to expand your line of merchandise and increase your profit."

Richard was astounded by his brother in law's offer. Ben was, in fact, encouraging him to use Stacey and Sons to further his sales. The only thing he wasn't entirely sure about was whether Ben wanted him to set something up as an affiliate to the Stacey firm or go out completely on his own as an agent of many lines.

Ben's next statement; however, made that question perfectly clear. "You know how to set up a company, don't you?" Ben asked. "You can even get a tax break, but I'm not telling you anything new, am I?"

Richard shook his head. He hadn't expected Ben and the Stacey family to be so generous. Perhaps he was considered to have passed his apprenticeship in the family and was now considered a 'Stacey'.

Abruptly; however, Ben changed the topic of their conversation. "By the way," he growled, standing and stuffing Richard's orders into his brief case. "I saw your mother last week. She's a real lady, your mother, isn't she? I can tell you, she's very mad at you!" he pointed at Richard. "She is waiting impatiently for you and Claire to invite her for a visit. If you don't ask her soon, I'm afraid she will hop a plane and come down here without an invitation."

When Richard relayed Ben's message to a strangely moody Claire, she sighed and nodded. "She hints at it all the time in her letters," she said, eyeing Richard in an intense manner.

"What's the matter with you," Richard asked.

"Did Ben talk to you about Janice," she asked.

"Well, yes," Richard said defensively. "He told me about meeting her at the party."

"He is really stuck on you. On Janice, that is," said Claire. "You wouldn't consider no, of course you wouldn't!"

"What?" asked a puzzled Richard.

"I'll bet Janice could go out with Ben, and he would never know she was you," Claire said twirling her empty wine glass and holding it for her husband to fill.

"You've got to be kidding!" There was anguish and shock in Richard's voice, and his hand shook as he filled her glass.

"I suppose so," said Claire gloomily. She knew very well why she was irritated. She had grown accustomed to the presence of 'Janice', a shy girl, easy to tease, yet anxious to learn from and to please her. Claire was outgoing enough, but she'd rarely had a close girlfriend. Even in college, she had roomed alone. But, to bring 'Janice' back and to give herself the pleasure of the girl's company, Richard would have to disappear again. As much as she felt she could understand Richard's dressing as a woman, Claire was apprehensive about the effect his cross dressing would have on him and on their marriage. He was already having difficulty reverting back to being Richard, and he had only been dressing completely and convincingly for a very short time. Also, Claire had seen the way Mike Tanner treated Richard. What if Richard smarted liking masculine atten-

tion and affection, and she changed all the way into a woman permanently? Her mind recoiled from that thought, and her body shuddered.

"What's wrong now?" Richard asked anxiously.

"Oh, nothing," Claire snapped irritably.

Luckily, Richard was sensitive enough to her moods to withdraw from the conversation and give her time to think.

Indeed! He was far too considerate, thought Claire, as she wondered how much her husband's sensitivity and empathy to her moods had to do with the fact that he was a cross-dresser. His cross dressing had only improved his bedroom performance, despite her refusal to let him dress in her nighties when they made love. Claire couldn't imagine sex with a man other than Richard. Her mind turned to her earlier experiences, and they paled into insignificance when compared to her relationship with him. She reached across the table and took hold of his sleeve.

Surprised, he set aside the evening newspaper and eyed her quizzically.

"Let's go to bed now," she said huskily.

Richard looked at her with open surprise, glancing at the dish laden table.

"Forget that for now," she said urgently. As a reward for being good, she thought, she would let him dress up and become Janice later in the evening. He could even wear her babydoll nightgown to sleep in if 'she' wanted. And, Claire was positive 'she' would want to.

CHAPTER VIII

JANICE GOES TO WORK

"I think Ben's idea of setting you up in your own business is just the right thing for you," said Claire as she set and curled Richard's hair the following day. It had not taken her long to persuade Richard to go to work 'dressed' the next day. Claire also planned to meet Richard for lunch and some serious shopping. This was something she could never get Richard to do. He was always so embarrassed to be seen sizing bras, panties, and



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cute little dresses. He was also bored, having to wait hours for her to try on clothes until she found just the right style, size, and color. Janice; however, wouldn't get bored since she would be trying on dresses too.

"You know, there's always the chance" Richard began as he sat there in his bra and panties in front of the dressing table mirror. Claire had only touched 'her' eyes with a little eyeshadow and brown eyeliner. He was somewhat disappointed not to see the glamorous and striking eyes he'd had worn to Lucy's party. But, as Claire had pointed out, 'Janice' was simply aspiring to appear feminine not trying to attract attention at work.

"You must become more ambitious, Janice dear," said Claire with a smile.

"More aggressive?" asked Richard, his pink coated lips breaking into a smile.

"More masculine," responded Claire in as deep a voice as she could manage. They both giggled. "It's true," said Claire, stepping away from Richard now that his hair was styled just right. It was set in a wavy shag, close to his neck, and curling out. She handed Richard a pair of button earrings, before he could get into the dangling pendants. Richard really had a lot to learn about toning down his appearance to fit the occasion. "His desire is to be more feminine than anyone else, even true females," thought Claire.

"You know, I've been thinking of setting up my own beauty shop, too. You could run the business side for me, couldn't you?" She chose a slip for her husband that wouldn't show through his lacy white blouse with the cowl neckline. With his padding covered, Richard looked thoroughly female. "The white suits him better," thought Claire, "than the black lace he wants to wear every time I give him a choice."

"Sure," said Richard, "but you would still need operating capital and a good attorney."

"Oh, I've already had an offer for both of those," said Claire. "Amanda Clarke, one of my regular clients, told me that her husband, who's a lawyer, would finance me any time I wanted to go out on my own. She said it right in front of Al Morris and Mike Tanner. Boy, were they snippy with me after that!"

Richard put on his pantyhose, which were very sheer and showed off his pretty well formed legs, and his dark grey pleated skirt that Claire had laid out for him. Richard chose grey suede pumps with black patent leather heels, he'd bought on an 'expedition' before Lucy's party and shivered as he slid them on his stocking covered feet.

"You need a complete wardrobe of your own," Claire went on, "if you intend to keep this up. You're stretching a lot of my things out of shape. We'll start on the basics."

Richard looked startled. "I'm that much bigger than you?"

"Only one size," answered Claire, "but that's enough. We'll start at lunch and fit you out with lingerie and cosmetics of your own."

“So, that’s why you wanted me to dress today!” exclaimed Richard in the high ‘feminine’ register ‘he’ practiced every day. Richard was in a dream like state. Was he really going shopping to buy lingerie and dresses of his own?

“Of course,” smiled Claire. “We can have a real girlie lunch break and shop all afternoon. I know you’ll just love my beauty shop in the store.”

“But, your bosses....” Richard began anxiously. Her hand, with its shaped, pink nails, clutched the cowl neck of her pretty soft blouse.

“They won’t recognize you,” said Claire. “Not with the curl I put in your hair. Besides, they have met Janice, not Richard. So don’t forget, you are a woman. You look, dress, act, and smell like a woman. Who else but Janice will they be expecting? If you are confident in yourself, no one will give your gender a second thought. It would be absurd for anyone to consider that you could possibly be a man.”

She giggled at her husband who was turning this way and that to see how his blouse and skirt fit and how neatly they showed off his feminine figure, that was enhanced by padding at the chest and hips. “If anyone notices your resemblance to Richard, I’ll bet they think you’re his sister.”

Richard smiled, watching his reflection. He felt very good as his slip and skirt swirled about his thighs, touching his skin so flirtatiously. He pursed his lips into a little pout, and amused himself with girlish poses while Claire got herself ready.

Claire dropped Richard off at the Stacey and Sons office, promising to pick him up later. Richard felt strange, yet thrilled to walk through familiar doors and to have them held by men who had been just faces before, but were now smiling and courteous. Upon reaching the office, Richard sat quite a while at the typewriter in the outer room to quiver and regain his composure after ‘running the gauntlet’ alone and for the first time. As he typed, he found himself making error after error as his attention kept wandering from the words to his lacquered, feminine nails, as his fingers depressed the keys.

In disgust, Richard tore out his tenth attempt at a letter of intent necessary to set up a sales company. He had thought the typing would help recover some of Richard’s business sense to type something of importance, but it wasn’t working. While wearing women’s clothing, Richard was able to think of little else but ‘Women’s Thoughts’, things like how he felt and looked in his skirt and blouse.

Richard went into the inner office, thinking all the time how he would repair his makeup without Claire. Deep in thought, he put on the kettle to make a pot of coffee. Just as the whistle blew to show that the water had reached a boil, he heard the sound of the outer door opening. Sure it was the postman, Richard decided to confront him. He tripped out of the inner office with a bright smile on his pink, faintly glossed lips to find Ben Stacey standing over the typewriter. He was looking over the latest of his efforts at precision.

"Oh!" He couldn't avoid the startled expression escaping from his mouth. Fright overtook him as he stepped hastily back toward the inner office.

Ben's face wore a frown as he followed him. "Hey!" he said, brightening in looks as well as tone. "You're Janice, aren't you?" He laughed as the frightened girl retreated from him. "Don't you recognize me? We met at Lucy's party the other night. I'm Ben Stacey, Claire's brother and a stock holder in this business."

"How ... how d..do y..you d..do?" stammered Richard nervously. He became fully of his tight fitting bra that was jiggling with the extra fabric Claire had put in the cups.

"Hey, don't be scared of me," said Ben jovially, spreading his hands wide apart from his stocky figure. "Didn't Richard tell you I was in town?"

"He ... he th..thought you'd l..left," Richard said anxiously, as he kneeled down to unplug the kettle, his skirt gently caressed his nylon covered calf and ankles.

"I'll have a cup of that, too," said Ben to the back of the girl's wavy hair. He clumped over to Richard's chair, and threw himself down. The chair creaked loudly in protest against the unaccustomed bulk. "Richard said he didn't know you," he said, staring at Richard's bra straps through the thin material of his blouse. "How long have you been working for him?"

"I..I only started today," pouring a cup of coffee, black with sugar, the way he knew Ben drank it. Ben took the coffee, smiling broadly. Richard flushed, realizing what he had done. "M..Mr. Archer," he stammered, "told m..me h..how you l..like your coffee."

"This is great!" Ben smiled in encouragement at the shy girl. To him she looked very sweet and innocent in her white blouse and dark skirt, not heavily made up like the slave girl he had in mind when he thought of her. He almost didn't recognize her without her long brunette wig, not that her hair wasn't neatly arranged now. There was; however, something about her, probably her beautiful blue eyes, that made him think he knew her from somewhere. "You're typing Richard's incorporation papers, aren't you?"

Richard was still extremely nervous as he daintily sipped his coffee. His lips pouted and left a pink stain, like the color of his nails, on the cup. He nodded a reply, before looking away demurely. "I..I have t..to go out," he said. "R..Richard w..wanted me t..to s..see a lawyer f..for him."

"Oh," Ben was surprised. "He's moving fast, isn't he?" He followed Richard and stood in the doorway as he gathered his handbag and thin woolen sweater from the secretarial desk. "Who is his lawyer?" he asked gruffly.

Richard thought quickly, and the name Claire had mentioned popped into her head. "C..Clarke," she answered.

"George Clarke, eh?" Ben's mouth moved in an appreciative grimace. "Richard has big ideas, doesn't he? Best thing about Clarke, anyway, is his wife Amanda. Now there's a real looker!" He smiled at a flustered Richard. "Speaking of which, Janice, what are you doing for lunch today?"

"Oh, I..I have an engagement f..f..for lunch." Richard had reached the doorway, unaware that his heightened color had brought out his charms even more to the point that Ben was determined not to let him go.

Ben eyed Richard's shapely legs appreciatively and followed him as he tripped away on his pretty high heels. "Dinner then," he said, going after her all the way to the elevator. "Hell," he said angrily as he reached for the DOWN button, pushing it with a ring free left hand. "I don't care what Claire and Richard told you about me," he went on. "You don't have to be this frightened of me."

The doors opened to reveal an open elevator. Stubbornly, Ben followed the timid girl and placing his hand on hers, pressed the Main Floor button along with her.

"What do you think you are doing," Richard asked, his voice overflowing with anxiety, his eyes flickering nervously.

"I'm not giving up," insisted Ben. "You're gonna go out with me, Janice, or"

That caused such alarm in the girl's manner that he pulled back with uncertainty. No girl had ever Just a damn minute! This wasn't a beautiful sexy girl named Janice! This was his brother in law, Richard wearing a dress! No wonder he thought he recognized her!

The girl was anxiously watching the floor indicator.

The M turned orange just as Ben felt his stomach tighten. He completed his threat, "..... or I'll shout out to everyone in the building that you're Richard Archer, you son of a bitch!" He was unable to keep the sneer from his voice.

Richard's lower lip quivered, and he almost sprang out of the enclosed space into the wide lobby.

Ben followed him angrily. He sensed he would have shouted across the crowded foyer, as he threatened, and he returned to him. Both fear and desperation showed vividly in his lightly made up eyes.

"You really had me fooled," said Ben grudgingly. "You led me on and made an idiot out of me, and I'm gonna return the favor!" He looked menacingly across the area.

"Please," the red-faced boy begged.

He still couldn't think of Janice as Richard.

"P..Please, I beg of you," he whispered. He swayed on his high heels and turned pale as if he might faint.

Ben smiled. Richard looked so utterly feminine, even to his rounded breasts and narrow waist, that Ben wanted to take him right away to a hotel room. But, when he thought that this made up, simpering, perfumed 'woman' was actually Richard Archer, his sister's husband, he felt rage

stirring inside him. How could Claire not know her husband was a drag queen? Perhaps she had known had even married 'Janice' because he was a queen!

"Dinner," he snarled. "I'll pick you up at Claire's. Wear a low front evening dress. That's the way I like my women." Fuming, Ben turned on his heel and stalked back into the elevator. On his way back up, he remembered that Claire had brought Richard to the party, and he wondered how he could have been so stupid as to make a date with his brother in law!

• • •

"He knows all about me! He'll tell EVERYONE!!! Oh, why did I let you talk me into coming to the office in a dress???" A distraught Richard confronted a serene Claire in the parking lot for lunch.

"Slow down," said Claire with concern in her voice. "You're behaving like a hysterical woman and I can't tell what you're saying. Now, calm yourself and tell me who knows all about you and is going to tell everything."

Richard gave out a sigh and tried to compose himself. Mascara laden tears streaked down his cheeks, ruining his makeup. He felt nothing like Janice now, nor had he since the confrontation with Ben. Now, Richard felt very silly, his body was as hairless as a young girl's and covered with clinging silk and nylon. Even the small clip on earrings felt all wrong on his ears.

'He' had returned to take possession of his body, and he felt very masculine and absolutely absurd, as he had many times before when his infrequent masquerades were over. Yet, here he was in public wearing a skirt, pantyhose, lace frilled panties, high heels, and feminine makeup. "Ben knows!" he shouted. "He knows everything, and if I don't wear a low cut dress and go out with him on a date tonight, he will tell everybody about me!"

"Let's go eat," said Claire slowly. "I'm starved. Besides, we can think better on a full stomach."

"No, Claire! We've got to go home so I can get out of these clothes!"

"I don't think that would be a good idea," she said thoughtfully, "unless you want to shop for and try on low cut evening dresses as Richard. If you ask me, your best interests will be served by composing yourself, repairing your makeup, and remaining dressed as you are."

At lunch, Richard only toyed with his food. He was conscious only of the glances of others, mostly the men, in the crowded restaurant. His wonderful life was crumbling about his 'pretty' shoulders.

"I wonder why he would want to go out with you," bemused Claire. "I mean, you would expect someone like him, a big he-man, to fire you on the spot or maybe even slug you. But, he did neither, did he?"

"No," Richard replied gloomily. He was still feeling like Richard. "He just wants to humiliate me in front of everyone," he sighed, more in

control than he had been for the last hour. "I guess the worst has finally happened."

Thank goodness Claire still seemed to want him, despite her brother's discovery. "Well, that's the end of one young executive, I guess," he added. "One promising career bites the dust."

Claire put out her hand, bejeweled with rings and bracelets, on Richard's. "Don't worry so darling," she whispered. "We'll work this out together like always." As she spoke softly, trying to calm her feminine appearing husband, she sensed someone standing beside her. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw the always impeccably dressed Amanda Clarke smiling down at them.

"Claire dear," Amanda said in her usual soft, seductive tone. "I hope I'm not intruding, but I hope I can join you for just a moment."

"Amanda!" said Claire, holding onto Richard's hand as she tried to withdraw. "I'd like you to meet my best friend, Janice ... Smith. Janice, this is Amanda Clarke, who wants to set me up in my own shop." Smiling at Amanda, she said, "By all means, join us. We were just about to have coffee."

As Amanda sat, gracefully and completely lady-like, beside Richard, she glanced in amazement at Claire's hand, which still rested on Richard's and occasionally gave it a reassuring pat.

"Janice has had a bad time today," said Claire by way of explanation. "Her boss wants to take her out tonight, and she is sure to lose her job unless she goes along."

Amanda's beautiful features grimaced in distaste. "Men!" she said with a shake of her ash-blond hair. "Why do they always take advantage of pretty girls like you?" she asked Richard in sympathy.

Richard shook, not feeling like a pretty girl at all and certainly not with the gorgeous Amanda sitting beside 'him'. Guessing Amanda's age was very difficult because she was so attractively groomed and made up. She could have been a model, prepared for a display in *Vogue*, so exquisitely done were her eyes and face. Despite the fact that the blush on her cheeks was makeup, she had a freshness and vitality in her friendly smile that charmed even the upset and disgusted Richard. Studying her, so attractive in her tan skirt, jacket, and white silk blouse, 'Janice' felt he should never again think about imitating a woman. He could never project even a fraction of the femininity of this beautiful woman beside him.

Amanda smiled, aware of the upset girl's scrutiny and accepting it as quite natural. "Well, Miss Smith," she said, delaying the surname as long as Claire had during the introduction. "Why don't you just turn your boss down or even quit your job?"

Claire answered for Richard. "She has an executive job, and there aren't many jobs like hers for women. If she quits this one, she may never get another even though she has a business degree."

"Ah," Amanda's head nodded in understanding. "I was arguing with my husband only this morning about the necessity of providing more

opportunities for more women in business. I have gotten him interested in your business, by the way. He sees no reason why I shouldn't invest, as long as he does the legal work."

Claire was stunned! "You mean you'll finance a beauty shop for me?"

"Why not?" Amanda's mouth curved into a beautiful smile. "You're the best in the business, and I depend on you so much. I couldn't possibly lose you, and that could happen if your husband got a good career opportunity."

Claire's hand shook. "I suppose so," she said, her eyes flickering to Richard, a movement that was not lost upon Amanda.

"We're having a party at Standen this weekend," said Amanda. "Why don't you and Richard come for the weekend, Friday to Sunday? That will give us a chance to corral George and get you set up in business."

"Richard will be away on business combined with a fishing trip," said Claire, with another glance at Richard. "So, I won't be able to make it this time."

"Oh," Amanda smiled. "What if you brought Miss Smith here?" Turning to Richard, she asked, "Could you come along with Claire for a nice weekend away from your troubles? With your business expertise, you could even give Claire some valuable advice."

"Well" Richard was tongue tied for the moment. He was also shocked by Claire's out and out lie, not realizing what Claire intended. That would mean he would have to spend a whole three days as a woman in addition to his date tonight with the revengeful Ben. This was too much! He had sworn to himself not more than an hour before never to dress as a woman again! Now, his wife was setting him up in another no win situation. How could she do such a thing to him?

"Do say yes, Janice darling," drawled Amanda with a gleam in her dark eyes. "If you come, I'm sure Claire won't be lonely, and if you agree, she can't very well refuse, now can she?"

Richard nodded in agreement. "What difference does it make," she thought. "By the weekend, Ben will have told everyone about me, and I'll be ridiculed by all my family, friends, and business associates." Being womanly was extremely hard while sitting beside the attractive and outstanding example of womanhood presented by the lovely Amanda..

"Okay, that's settled! You absolutely will come, won't you Miss Smith?" cooed Amanda. "I especially want to show you off to George. He doesn't think a woman can do anything in the business world. I'm looking forward to seeing you both Friday night." She stood to leave just as the waitress served the coffee. "I also want a complete report on what you decide to do about that chauvinistic boss of yours, and don't leave out any of the juicy details!" With that, she gave them a dazzling smile, and with a gentle sway of her hips, she sauntered out of the restaurant.

Richard sighed as 'she' watched Amanda walk away.

Claire snorted, bringing Richard's attention back to his wife. "She even makes me feel like half a woman," giving Richard a smile of resignation.

"Does she ever appear, well, just ordinary?" asked Richard.

Claire shook her head. "Not even when she gets her hair done. Let's pay the bill, get out of here, and get on with some serious shopping. We have to find you a dress with a plunging neckline, remember? Then, there's your wardrobe for the weekend, not to speak of the lingerie you'll need." She was rather pleased when her bantering tone brought distress to her husband's pretty, made up face.

CHAPTER IX

INTERLUDE

The way Claire stood, with her hands on her hips, after flinging the door open, let Ben know his sister was very angry with him.

"Now, don't you say nothing to me," he snarled.

Claire silently glared at him, her eyes narrowed to slits, her dark robe open enough to show she was ready for bed.

"How could you have married a damn fairy like that?" Ben spat, with deep contempt in his voice.

The anger on Claire's face made even the husky Ben retreat a step. "Richard Archer," she hissed venomously, "is a finer man than you will ever be! He is kind, considerate, and gentle. So what if he likes to wear women's clothes once in a while? What harm does it do? This is a different world from when you were young, Ben Stacey! Perhaps, just perhaps, Richard is such a fine sensitive lover because of his cross-dressing."

Ben quivered and thrust himself into the room, slamming the door behind him. "What can you possibly see in a sissy like that?" he asked, putting on an exaggerated shudder.

"If my husband is that repulsive to you, why on earth do you want to date him?" countered Claire.

That was the moment Richard chose to make his grand entrance into the living room, where Claire and Ben stood arguing. Almost everything he wore, from his hairpiece to the tips of his silver four inch heels was new. As Ben had demanded, he wore a low cut royal blue evening dress that showed off his taped cleavage which was made even more voluptuous by his new elasticized push up bra. To further accentuate his figure, he wore an extra tight waist cinch garter belt. Claire insisted a garter belt and panties would be more feminine than pantyhose.

Claire spent a lot of time with her husband's hair and makeup. She swept up his dark hair and added his new hairpiece to create a mass of curls atop his head. Kiss curls and twisted strands of hair framed his forehead and set off his glittering pendant earrings and his heavily made up eyes. He fluttered his false eyelashes and rustled over to the sofa to put down his sequined evening purse, his thin skirt tugging tightly about his

gartered thighs. As he glanced up, he saw Claire giving him a smile of approval.

Ben was aghast! He could not believe it possible for his brother in law to present such an overtly feminine image, nor that he had taken him up on his proposed 'date'.

"I don't have to introduce you to Janice, as you two have met previously," Claire said, speaking very quietly and softly to her brother but in a mocking tone added. "I've told her all about you, and she has promised to be everything you want in a woman tonight."

Richard, still feeling very much himself despite the tiny straps over his bare shoulders, flushed as he recalled Claire's instructions to him during the afternoon. She insisted that he be girlish and feminine at all times while out with Ben. "Don't hold back. Just show him how much of a woman you really are when you're dressed," had been Claire's proposal. To ingrain her instructions into Richard's subconscious, she had delivered them when Richard was shivering as he tried on his new lingerie. It was so silky and so flimsy that she appeared to be wearing almost nothing.

"I don't want Janice home late," said Claire, hoping one date with Ben would do for Richard what it did for most regular girls put them off men for quite a while. "She has a date with me after she's finished with you." She gave Ben a beaming smile, picked up her book, and retreated to her bedroom.

Nervously, Richard glanced at his date. "You don't have to" he began huskily, feeling his earrings quiver and a feminine fragrance wafted to him from his neck and shoulders.

"Get your wrap!" ordered Ben, turning and striding towards the door.

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When Richard had slipped into Claire's silk lined silver fox coat, he found that Ben had gone on ahead without holding the door. As he walked daintily across the parking lot by himself and seeing Ben already seated behind the steering wheel, Richard decided to press an issue. Approaching the car, he refused to get in until Ben came around and opened the door for him.

"Look," he said, "I went to a lot of pains and expense to look good for you. Now, if you don't agree to treat me like a lady, I'm going back upstairs right now."

Ben stood moodily as he held the door for this attractive figure to enter the car. He noted with pleasure; however, as Richard's skirt slid up to expose his shapely thighs in their silver mesh stockings. Looking with surprise at him, Ben realized for the first time that this was a very feminine creature, and a beautiful one at that. He could take his brother-in-law anywhere, even the places Judy would never go and all the places he needed to be seen with a beautiful, sexy woman for business reasons. "Geez, Richie," he said as he got into the car and slid under the steering wheel, "how the hell can you stand to be dressed like that and have people look at you, especially in public? Do you really want to be a woman?"

"No, only to look and feel like one," Richard responded. "You don't know what a cross-dresser is all about, do you?"

"Oh, I've been fooled before," said Ben seriously. "I've even had one or two like you in bed. I even originally thought maybe... Anyway, you're quite safe from me. I would never do anything to harm my sister's husband...."

Richard shuddered. "I'm not gay!" she snapped. "And, neither are most other true cross-dressers. Dressing as a woman is just something that gives us immense pleasure." He opened his purse, showing off his glossy red nails. "I guess someone like you could never understand that."

"I don't have to," answered Ben grimly. "At any rate, you're out with me tonight Richard, and you look like a lovely girl and that's how I expect you to act."

Richard trembled inside his tight skirt and his face burned as if by flame when Ben turned into the drive of the St. Regis Club, one of the most exclusive clubs in town and where Lucy had boasted of Ben taking her.

A doorman held the car door as Richard slipped femininely out. His smile of approval was enough to unnerve Richard even more.

Almost grudgingly, Ben came around the car and offered his arm to his 'date' and ushered 'her' toward the door. The doorman flashed an appreciative, yet envious, smile toward Ben.

Richard, as well as Janice, had a most difficult evening. On his other outings with Claire, he had felt very differently when someone treated Richard as a beautiful woman. There had been a camaraderie with Claire that made each compliment a shared one. But tonight, Ben's sneer at everything that happened to Janice as a beautiful woman, just because he shared the secret that 'she' was a man, kept the striking brunette in a state

of nervousness all evening. Then too, Ben would only dance the slow waltzes in which he could squeeze the 'girl' close to him scrutinizing his uneasiness.

Ben even encouraged several other men to dance with Richard while he sat back with a big smirk on his face. To Ben there was something lecherous about watching some man pursue and clutch his feminized brother-in-law.

Richard experienced quite a relief when Ben finally agreed to take him home. As Ben helped Richard with his wrap, another couple came out of the lounge. The man was much older than his lovely companion.

"Why Janice!" exclaimed a soft, lilting voice.

Richard turned to look into the sparkling, amused, grey eyes of Amanda Clarke. She also wore a dress with a plunging neckline, but her figure was fuller and more clearly real.

"This is the young girl I was telling you about George," said Amanda, turning to the grey haired, distinguished man beside her, clearly many years her senior. "Janice, this is my husband, George Clarke."

"And, Ben Stacey, isn't it?" asked the tuxedo clad attorney, extending his hand toward Ben.

"Why yes," said Ben, pleased, and yet surprised nevertheless, that such a well known lawyer would recognize him.

"You're a pretty sharp fellow, Ben," said George with a twinkle in his pale blue eyes. "I don't know of too many employers who would give a pretty girl a real chance in business like you've given Miss Smith here."

"Now George," Amanda slipped her arm through his and turned her exquisitely made up face toward him. "Let's not discuss business now. You can talk to Janice all you want this weekend."

"I'm certainly looking forward to that," said George gallantly, taking Richard's hand and brushing his lips over his soft skin.

"So you really know him," Ben said in a tone Richard had never heard, when the Clarks had departed.

"Not yet," said Richard, trying to regain his composure.

"And, he doesn't even see you're a guy," Ben whispered with disbelief in his voice.

"Most people don't," snapped Richard, "and neither did you for quite some time!"

Ben, obviously deep in thought, cast Richard a quick glance. "HMMMMM, this could actually work out quite well for all of us," he mused. "You know about George Clarke, don't you?"

"I know he's very wealthy," said Richard carefully, drawing on Richard's business knowledge.

Ben snorted in disparagement. "That's hardly the word for it!" he said. "Everything he touches takes off like a rocket. He can franchise anything, and it turns into a gold mine. He is the main reason we opened an office here. What is he doing for you?"

"Claire's beauty salon," answered Richard.

Ben's eyes opened wide, and he fell into a thoughtful silence for the remainder of the trip back to the Archer's apartment.

"Claire," Ben said as soon as his sister opened the door. "You didn't tell me you knew George Clarke!" He ignored Richard as he stomped into the kitchen and went to the refrigerator.

Claire eyed her husband warily. His perfect makeup was hardly mussed at all. "Did you have a good time darling?" she asked, thinking how striking his blue eyes were when made up like a woman's. The were so ordinary without the false lashes she had made him wear.

"Miserable," said the brunette, rustling steps into the living room. He took off her coat and hung it neatly, as Claire had said a girl should.

When he came back into the living room, Claire saw him as a woman, rather than as her husband, for the first time. Richard looked so sensuous in his low cut dress that Claire was shocked by how feminine she had helped her husband become. She knew she would have to stop. Richard was becoming 'desirable' as a woman, and she had no doubt that was why Ben had blackmailed 'her' into going out with him. He would chase anything in a skirt. She couldn't allow that to continue. There might be some man out there who wouldn't care about Janice's real sex not when he looked as girlish as he did now.

Striding back from the kitchen with a can of beer in his hand, Ben said, "We've been trying to get George Clarke to handle the firm's affairs for nearly ten years. He's the best corporate lawyer around."

Claire turned away from her husband, who had glided to an armchair, slipped off his high heels, and wiggled his stocking covered feet on the shag carpet. "So?" she asked with a puzzled frown.

"So, now you come along, and he picks up your business idea just like that," Ben said, snapping his fingers. "I tell you if you really want to please your brother and the rest of the family you'll get George Clarke to take over the Stacey and Sons account."

"And?" Claire was still unsure where her brother was heading.

"We could go national with confidence," answered Ben. "We have tried franchising schemes before, but all of them would have led to a break up of the family business if they had worked. With George Clarke setting up our corporate structure, we could turn Stacey and Sons into a multi-million dollar business, and everyone involved would be happy with the deal. Don't you see the potential?"

Claire blinked. Her husband had leaned back in his chair and was squirming from the discomfort of his tight waist cinch and bra. He smiled; however, at Claire's bemused scrutiny.

"What would be in this for Janice?" asked Claire.

"For him?" Ben couldn't keep the disgust from his voice.

"Yes," snapped Claire. "For him!" She pointed to her husband who was shaking his head, his earrings swinging crazily against his face and neck.

"Oh, alright," said Ben after a scornful glance at the brunette 'girl' sitting prettily across the room. "Judy doesn't like business affairs, so I guess he could be some kind of hostess. He's pretty enough, but I had thought of you for that job. You'll have to keep all this to yourselves though."

"No deal!" exclaimed Claire, as she sauntered over and stood behind Richard's chair. Her hand caressed the bare shoulder crossed only by a thin silken strap. She felt 'Janice' quiver at her touch. "You want him to do all the work and set up a deal you couldn't make in ten years, and then reward him with only a hostess job? Are you out of your greedy mind?"

"Okay okay what do you want?"

"How about ten percent of the stock in the new corporation, leave Richard in charge of the operation here, with 'Janice' as his executive assistant? That way, they would both be employed. You see, I married them both, two people in one. Richard is still my husband, and you'll see him again. As such, he deserved a much higher position in the family business, don't you agree? And, Janice is a pretty liberated girl. 'She' doesn't want to be just an adornment for the company! 'She' wants to stay on the job and work for Richard. Think how much a girl like Janice, with Richard's business background, will bring you in future sales."

Ben showed his distaste, but he knew she had him. "Ten percent! That's a helluva lot for that pansy, you know!" Ben spat.

"That's right!" countered Claire. "Ten percent! Because if he doesn't get George to structure the deal, you don't get to go national. In other words, you get one hundred percent of nothing or ninety percent of a gold mine. Which do you want?"

"If nobody knows about ... 'him'," he said. "I guess I could go along with your deal. But, if you don't get George Clarke to handle our business, the only job for her or him will be as a hostess," he scowled at Richard who was leaning back with his long hair resting on his shoulders. "You can agree to that, or we have no deal at all!"

Claire glared at her brother. "My deal if we get Clarke, yours if we don't," she said, offering to shake Ben's hand.

Taking her hand and looking her in the eyes, Ben said, "Deal, and a Stacey never breaks his word, at least not to another Stacey."

Later that night, Richard said to his wife, "It's okay. Either way we'll do our best to make Ben happy with the deal. After all, he's committed not to reveal our secret."

CHAPTER X

WEEKEND AT STANDEN

As the car slowly neared the elegant, columned entrance to Standen Manor, the shale of the twisting drive rattled against the under side of the car. Richard exclaimed in delight at the manicured lawns and neatly clipped hedges in front of the mansion. Since his outing with Ben, he had not switched back to Richard once. He even slept in the red and black

nightgown Claire had insisted he buy. It all seemed so strange yet so natural.

Claire savagely braked the car to a stop before the stone steps that led up to the inlaid oaken doors. Richard still seemed oblivious to the mood that had gripped his wife for the last few days. The brave words she had uttered to her brother about being married to two persons in one were but a memory.

Since that fateful night, she discovered that she was married to only *one* person, an attractive female person named Janice. As the week had drawn on and on, the fun of being married to Richard-Janice had lessened to the point where Claire was totally exasperated with her feminized husband. He seemed uncaring about her needs, even as she helped him pursue some exotic dream fantasy of his own. He was focused on one goal...perfecting the feminine role.

Richard was unbuckled and out of the car in a flash to exchange a friendly greeting with a tanned Amanda, who was gorgeous in a short tennis dress.

"Oh, leave the bags, Claire," Amanda called to her while slipping her arm around Richard. "Marks will bring them. Come on, and I'll introduce you everyone."

There were not one, but two tennis courts located in a hollow surrounded by trees. George Clarke was relaxing on a small patio overlooking the courts, a long drink in front of him. Opposite him, an older man with a grey mustache, was relating a story punctuated by smiles and animated gestures.

"Frank!" Amanda held onto Richard's hand, even as she bent over the grey haired man to kiss his ear. "Here's a girl for a chauvinist like you to contend with. Janice is actually a business executive. Janice Smith, I would like you to meet a dear friend of the Clarke family, Judge Francis Masterson. He lives right next door in his family's estate."

Since next door, in the direction Amanda had indicated, had a ranch with a prized herd of cattle, at least according to a sign on the highway, both Richard and Claire blinked at the dandified, older man.

"Oh please, Amanda," Judge Masterson's features formed a pleasant smile. He eyed the girl introduced to him, taking in her slim figure. She wore a sleeveless tan dress that was belted at her narrow waist. She was very pretty, but so were all the girls invited to Standen, though few could compete with Amanda. "You must call me Frank," he smiled to Richard, nodding amiably to Claire. He caressed Amanda's hand just a bit longer than was polite or necessary.

Claire glanced at George, and was surprised to see gaiety in his eyes at the Judge's performance with his wife.

"Please Frank," Amanda was amused. "I just wanted to introduce you to Janice and Claire before the weekend gets into full swing." She withdrew her hand from Judge Masterson's grasp and stepped between Richard and Claire to usher them forward to meet the tennis players.

Amanda introduced the 'girls' to Peter Richards, a young lawyer and a junior partner in George's firm. His playing partner was a model named Annabelle something or the other. The girls names all ran together in Claire's mind, and she never did sort them all out.

Upon seeing Claire and Richard with Amanda, Peter abandoned his beautiful playing companion and made a bee line for them. He was especially taken with Richard, as he looked at 'her' with sensuality and desire, causing Claire's stomach to lurch. She could almost feel the bottom dropping out of her world, as Richard was obviously pleased by this masculine admiration. Claire wondered. Had she been too modern, too cool, or too understanding of her husband's unique obsession?

Richard returned Peter's smile, teased him with a pout of his glossy red lips, and a sensuous sway of his hips as he walked away.

Peter got the message, Claire was sure. She knew Richard was sending signals like a woman does to let a man know she is interested and available. Her own husband was using definite feminine mannerisms to show he was available as a woman!

All through the other introductions, Claire watched her husband carefully for other signs of femininity. He showed not the slightest sign of nervousness in his manner as he met the other guests. All of the men eyed Richard's nylon clad legs and the rest of his padded feminine curves with great interest. What was worse, Richard seemed to enjoy all this masculine attention. He didn't even seem to mind the more than cursory scrutiny from the other girls as they eyed this charming new rival. Richard just flicked back his hair and smiled in spite of this close inspection of his makeup and dress, just as if he had done this every day of his life.

Claire had not thought this weekend completely through, for only when Amanda showed them to separate rooms, at either ends of a long hallway, did she realize, that as girlfriends, they would be expected to sleep separately. She would have to sleep alone for the first time since her marriage.

"We're only having a small party this weekend so we won't have to double up like usual," said Amanda as she showed a dark, young boy where to deposit the luggage. She glanced at Claire, who was obviously disturbed, while Richard started opening her suitcases.

Richard was confused about the unpacking, never having done such a task for himself as a girl.

"I'll help you unpack, Janice," Claire said deliberately. "Then, you can help me."

Amanda smiled pleasantly. "I must be getting back to my other guests," she stated, while not showing any reaction to Claire's words.

"What's the matter with you?" Richard asked anxiously as soon as Amanda and her servants had left. He had seen her discontent. "Don't you want to be here? Would you rather forego the deal with the Clarkes?"

Claire snorted, took the panties from Richard's uncertain hands, and stored them away in the dresser. "The business end of this weekend is not what's bothering me," she said harshly.

"Then, what is?" Richard's almost non-existent eyebrows contrasted femininely with the thick false eyelashes he now wore all the time. "You haven't smiled once since we arrived."

"You've made up for everything I've missed!" snapped Claire.

"W...What?" Richard stepped back after taking a pretty nightgown out of his pink suitcase.

"I saw the way you flirted with that Peter Richards," said Claire testily. She was glad to see the shock and dismay on the pretty face before her.

"I...I didn't," Richard gasped. His hand, coming to his mouth, showed the color of his long painted nails perfectly matched his lipstick.

"Oh, don't deny it!" Claire snarled. "I think you're getting to like being a woman a little too much, aren't you? A lot too much if you want to be my husband, which you haven't been for over a week now!"

"Claire!" There was anguish in Richard's husky voice, as he jumped up from the bed.

"No! Don't!" snapped Claire, as she ran toward the door. "I can't bear to have you touch me! I don't ever want to hear that voice again or to see you as Janice unless it's absolutely necessary!"

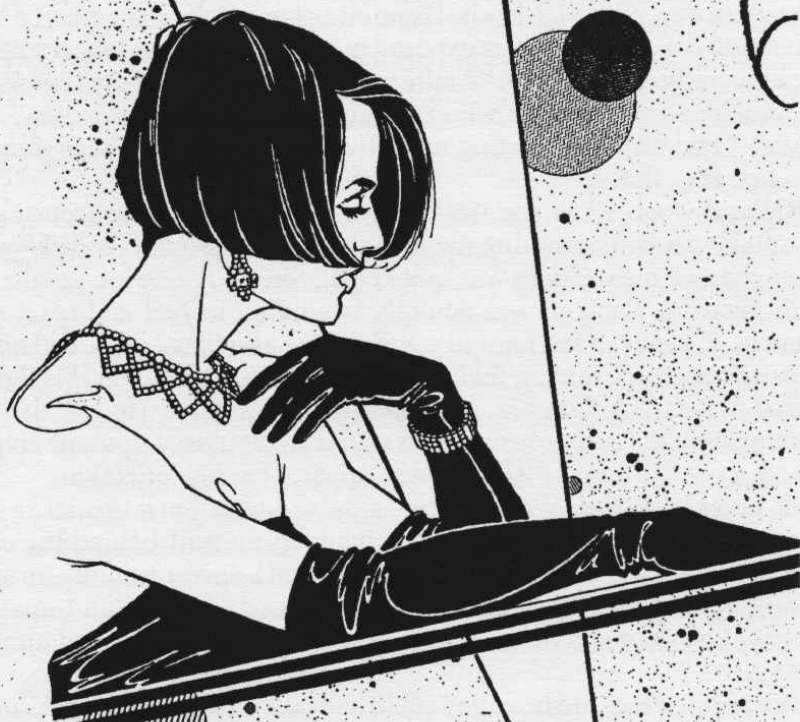
Stunned, after his wife had left, Richard sank once more to the bed, and looked down at the tan high heels below his shaved, nylon covered legs. He had felt so great until a few moments ago. He could hardly believe Claire's tirade. Her anguish must have been building up for quite a while, and he had failed to notice because he had been enjoying being Janice too much. Pacing the floor and contemplating this latest development, he looked at his image in the mirror. As a highly attractive girl looked back at him, he realized that he would have to break this habit as soon as possible.

Amanda did not leave Richard and Claire alone for long to unpack before she came looking for them. "Oh, there you are," she said to Richard, as she came into her room after the softest of taps. Richard had changed into a sleeveless, rust colored silk dress with a vee neckline. "Karen and Kurt say" she said as she sat daintily on Richard's bed. Then, recognizing her guests despondent mood, said, "Just a minute! Have you and Claire been having words?"

Richard turned quickly from the dresser, not wanting her hostess to see the extent of her depression. "N...No," he gasped. His inexpert fingers were unable to get his hair the way he wanted it.

"Oh?" Amanda said with a gentle, understanding smile. "Well, why don't you change into something a little more dressy and come to meet the Walkers? Kurt is George's favorite accountant, and as you can probably guess, he is a bundle of laughs."

Richard looked at her dress, and asked, "How dressy is dressy?"



"Richard felt so strange out on a date with his brother-in-law. The tight dress didn't help."

Amanda chuckled, went over to the mirrored wardrobe, and swung it open. "This little black dress is perfect," she said smiling and shaking her blonde curls. "It fits almost every occasion." She handed it to Richard and sat on the bed, waiting for him to change into the chosen dress.

Richard was hard pressed to hide his embarrassment. 'She' just couldn't change dresses in front of this beautiful, sophisticated, blonde woman, who appeared so elegant in her Parisian dress, but he was trapped and apparently had no choice.

"Oh, I'm sorry," exclaimed Amanda, jumping to her feet. "You will want to change in private, of course. We get along so well, I was thinking of you as an old friend." She smiled and checked her exquisitely styled hair in the mirror. "I'm sure we'll be old friends one day, and I will show you the beautiful wardrobe George has bought me over the last few years."

When Amanda was gone, Richard removed his tan dress and stood before the mirror in his short, black slip. The embroidery around the hem and bodice was a lacy flower pattern that took one's eye away from his rigid figure that was compressed tightly by his waist cinch and padded bra. The little black dress slipped over Richard's head without disturbing a curl, but he was disturbed because he had never had to close the back zip of a dress for himself. He went through several frenzied contortions before the dress was finally closed. His only black shoes were patent

leather with thin, four inch heels. Examining herself, he remembered how much nylon covered thigh was exposed by this dress with its short straight skirt, especially when sitting. "Claire seems to be jealous of my femininity even though she is the one who encouraged me to look this way," he thought. "The way she's acting now, I wonder how she'll accept me in this short, sexy dress?"

Richard wobbled as she walked to the mirror in the unaccustomed high spiked heels. Examining herself, she knew she wasn't likely to be challenged as a man. Claire was quite right. She had done too good a job on her husband. Richard was actually beginning to feel and react as a woman now. He even felt natural wearing the short black dress and heels. He turned before the mirror, feeling the tight skirt on his thighs, his tightly gartered nylons, his tight bra, and his soft silky panties. He felt 'Janice' becoming agitated and aroused as he stared at his glossy lips and vividly made up eyes. No sign of Richard was apparent in his reflection.

He quickly picked up a small black purse, stuffed in a lipstick, a few tissues, and a bottle of perfume after dabbing himself behind the ears, between his breasts, and on his shoulders. With a shiver running through his body, Richard left the sanctity of the bedroom. He couldn't imagine what he might do if she were to continue for any time thinking of himself this way.

The party, if it could be called such, had moved from the tennis courts to what Amanda called "the East Family Room". The L-shaped room was panelled in dark oak with various animal trophies, skins, and weapons decorating the walls. Thick pile carpeting and a deep-cushioned sofa, together with a roaring fire in the fireplace, gave the room a cozy feeling.

Richard saw that Claire had already come down, and when she went to sit next to her. Claire excused herself and went upstairs. Richard wanted to follow however, Peter Richards, now dressed in a dark sweater and slacks, blocked Richard's way and handed him a glass of champagne.

Amanda came over to welcome her late arriving guest. "Peter has been chomping at the bit waiting for you darling," she said flashing a gorgeous smile. "Don't let him monopolize you. He has a habit of trying to take over the prettiest girl at all my parties."

"I do not!" stated Peter firmly, but there was a gleam in his eye that nearly unnerved Richard. "But, I do intend to try and monopolize Janice this weekend."

"See what I mean," Amanda said, turning away to speak with a handsome young couple. They must have been the Walkers, for they were the only ones Richard had not met.

"Amanda told us you're a business executive," Peter said, taking Richard's arm to steer him to a buffet in front of the curtained windows. A white-coated youth, still in his teens, expertly carved slices from a roast, as Peter handed him two plates.

"You don't approve," Richard responded. The touch of the tight skirt on the back of his thighs was an ecstatic reminder of how 'he' was dressed and his role.

"It's not that," Peter said quickly. "I just thought you were a model, like Annabelle, or maybe an actress. You're so beautiful, you would be a natural."

"I'm not at all like Annabelle," Richard trembled as Peter's hand slid from his elbow to his back to direct him towards an unoccupied love seat near the fireplace.

"You can say that again," said Peter enthusiastically, completely unaware of the cryptic meaning of Richard's words.

When Richard was seated, his skirt rode high on his thighs, as he knew it would. Peter sat beside Richard with his thigh resting against Richard's. No matter how minutely Richard moved to try to create some distance between them, Peter always seemed to move just the right amount to contact him again. Clearly, he understood the effect his touch would have on a young woman. Richard realized that he too had a part to play in this game, and that he mustn't appear too upset, lest embarrassing questions arise.

As they ate, Peter probed into Richard's background, but he skillfully got him talking about his business instead. Amanda finally rescued Richard when the two had finished eating.

"I warned you, Peter," stated Amanda in mock severity as she took Richard's hand. "There are others here who want to meet Janice, you know. Also, Annabelle is very angry with you! After all, she did come with you, and you've hardly spoken to her all evening."

"We didn't really come together," Peter rebutted. "I gave her a lift out because you asked me, remember?"

Amanda's dazzling smile smoothed out any dissension Peter might have felt, and he smiled ruefully at his hostess. "Okay, okay," he said in resignation. "I'll go do my duty."

Amanda held onto Richard's hand. "Poor Peter," she mused, and led Richard toward her husband, Judge Masterson, and the fair haired man Richard had yet to meet. "Peter has been divorced twice, you know. He's awfully nice, but he does fall in and out of love very easily and very quickly."

Richard found the warning comical, realizing that Amanda knew much more about Peter Richards than she did about 'Janice' Smith. Richard only wished Claire was there to share the joke with him.

"Ah, Miss Smith," said George smiling and greeting his wife with a little hug and a kiss on her soft cheek. "You've met Frank, of course, and this is Kurt Walker, who keeps track of all our money and investments."

The fair haired man turned a somber face toward Richard. "You work for Ben Stacey, Miss Smith," he said matter of factly.

Richard was surprised. His piercing look seemed to go right through 'her' peering into every cranny of 'her' brain. "F...For the moment," he muttered nervously.

"Oh," said George jovially. "What's Ben up to these days?"

"He's still after a national franchise deal," Richard said bluntly. "He asked me to raise the possibility of your handling the legal work for him this weekend, if I got the chance" he said, letting her voice trail off.

The knowing smiles of the men told Richard a great deal.

Amanda laughed. "They have discussed nothing else for the past hour, darling," she cooed to Richard while leaning back on her husband's shoulder to give him a peck on the cheek. "So, don't let them think they're doing you a favor. They see ways to make a lot of money on the Stacey deal. Just be sure and get your share for putting the parties together."

"Amanda, Amanda, Amanda," Judge Masterson said while putting his arm around his hostess' slim waist. "Don't tell this lovely girl all our business secrets. Let her use her feminine wiles to worm it out of us." He smiled and kissed Amanda on her gold, hoop earring.

Richard joined in the jubilant laughter. He felt incredibly warm and secure to be so readily accepted as a woman, a real woman, by this group of men.

"Okay Judge," said Kurt, his face creasing with a smile. "You're the only bachelor in the group. Janice will have to practice on you."

Amanda eased free of the judge's grip. "Yes Frank," she said. "It's time you got married again."

Richard could hardly believe his ears, hearing this conversation. His whole body was trembling, but Frank was an ample match for his would be tormentors. "If I could find someone like you, Amanda," he said laughing, "maybe I would give marriage another go."

"Oh Frank," Amanda blushed. "Whatever will Miss Smith think of us? Please pay no attention to him Janice. I can't imagine what girl would be brave enough"

"Or, dumb enough," interjected the judge.

".... to put up with Frank Masterson for longer than ten minutes!" she finished.

This light banter continued for a while until the group down by the fire called out for a game of 'Charades' the men against the women.

Frank begged off in dignified fashion and disappeared quickly from the room.

"Why doesn't he ever play?" Karen asked, as Amanda took Richard over to join the girl's team.

"He dislikes being made a fool," said Annabelle cuttingly. "That's why he only flirts with married women. He can't get hurt that way."

"He's a very gentle and sensitive man," said Amanda quickly. "I like him a lot, even though he does have an exaggerated sense of his own dignity. Being a Judge doesn't help him unwind either. Now girls, let's

hurry and let Janice in on our secret strategies to beat the men. We have a long record of victories, and we don't want to lose to them tonight."

After a long game that grew more and more suggestive as more alcohol was consumed, Richard was glad when George and Amanda broke up the activity. She felt strange, yet pleasant, to be treated as one of the girls both by the girls and by the men.

Early morning horseback riding was promised for all brave early risers, and the ladies, victorious as usual, left in a giggling group.

Claire had retired early, and there was no light beneath her door as Richard walked down the carpeted hallway. Carefully, he slid the bolt on the door before changing for bed. He felt strange preparing for bed, wiping off his makeup with cold cream, without Claire's supervision. He then removed his hairpiece and combed out his natural hair. Devoid of makeup, false eyelashes, and hairpiece, he looked like a curious effeminate version of Richard Archer. He looked like a sister to himself. Slowly, he removed his dress, slip, nylons, and with relief, his waist cinch. Being feminine wasn't always comfortable.

In panties and bra, he inspected himself in the mirror. As he stared at himself, he remembered his earlier declaration about cross-dressers looking at themselves, and he shivered. He just couldn't help himself for the moment because he liked the feminine image that stared back at him. Satisfaction with his ability to fool everyone as to his true gender, filled his psyche.

Even this close, he could fool Peter Richards. At the thought of Peter, a wave of nausea passed over him. This was the one thing that the books on cross-dressing never really paid proper attention. When a man could pass as a woman, he entered an entirely different world in relationships to both men and women. How was one supposed to behave? Claire had wanted him to be cute and sexy with her brother, but look where that led! Richard wanted to be as attractive as possible, so he would just have to learn to deal with guys like Peter. He shuddered. He might have to let men kiss him if this real life 'Charade' continued? Could he get used to that too?

Maybe the answer was to let Peter know Janice was interested in someone else. Richard wanted desperately to talk these latest developments with Claire, but she was unavailable. Would she understand? Sighing, Richard took off his bra and put on one of the babydolls. The skirt barely reached the hem of his panties, and he was, he had to admit, downright alluring maybe even inviting. Still, he had a right, didn't he, to be the most attractive girl possible? How could Claire say everything was alright, but then go only so far? If only she would sleep with him when he was dressed like this! He could be a woman in bed, if only Claire would let him. He thrilled at the thought and resolved to talk this over with her soon. She had understood him before, maybe she would again.

CHAPTER XI

“YOUR HUSBAND FOOLED ME”

Claire again treated Richard as coolly and casually the following day as she had the night before. She completely ignored her husband on the ride through Standen Wood and across the meadows of Frank Masterson's property to the breakfast cooked by the youths who worked at Standen. The boys were dressed in cowboy boots and hats, and were obviously enjoying their work.

They showed all the girls, including Richard, in unaccustomed jeans and man's checkered shirts, how to gallop their horses, and they were always there with a steady hand for any girl who got into trouble.

As soon as they returned to the manor, Claire and Richard were whisked into George's study where the business of the weekend was rapidly addressed.

Richard's expert eye found several objectionable clauses, both in the setting up of Claire's business and in the proposed franchise scheme for Stacey and Sons, that he requested be redrawn. As he read through the papers, he was aware that his makeup was in need of repair from Claire's expert hand. Richard wanted to rush through the papers, but as he found more and more objectionable phrases and sentences, he forced herself to slow down and properly inspect the documents. After pointing out several of these, he noticed the amused glances between Frank and George, as well as Kurt's frowns, and realized that these documents were a test of 'her' competence. He read and crossed out several more clauses in Claire's papers before saying, "I think I found most of the traps you set for me, but I would like to go through them again later." He pushed away an errant lock of hair, realizing how much he needed Claire's help. He must look a real mess to these men. "I may have missed something in my haste."

"Believe me, Miss Smith," growled an exasperated Kurt. "You didn't miss a thing!"

George let out a bellowing laugh. "Kurt didn't think you were what you claimed, Miss Smith," he chuckled while Claire looked on, obviously pleased with her husband's proficiency. "He thought you were just a lovely piece of window dressing for Ben Stacey's firm. Everyone who knows Ben's reputation is aware that this is the kind of stunt he would pull. In any event, thanks for proving Kurt wrong. Now," he said, handing both Richard and Claire a single sheet of paper, "as you know, I require expert help to run all the businesses in which I, or Amanda, have an interest. Janice has proved to be the caliber person I need to assist me in this respect. Therefore, I expect you, Claire, your husband, and your brother to appoint Janice to an appropriate vice presidential position in your firms. She will also be an employee of Kurt's and report directly to him on these firms."

Richard was staggered! "B...But I..I can't" he gulped.

Claire cut him off. "I don't doubt that this scheme suits Janice very well," she said icily. "But, I want to look over your documents with my

husband. I'm sure Ben would like a look to safeguard our interests as well."

George showed surprise at her tone. "But of course," he replied courteously. "Please, my dears, take all the time you need to study our proposal. I feel sure you will find everything in order and beneficial to everyone concerned."

As Richard and Claire walked up the winding staircase, they met Amanda, who had changed into a little yellow tennis dress and had a racket in her hand. "Oh good!" she smiled. "I'm glad the business didn't take too long."

"Everything went well," said Claire, "but we want a day or two to look over the papers a little more completely."

"That's very wise," said Amanda, "but I'm sure you'll find that George has prepared the deal to everyone's benefit. Now, hurry and join us for tennis and a swim afterwards. We can't let Annabelle have all those gorgeous men to herself, now can we?" She tripped away lightly as the Archer's continued up the stairs.

"Come into my room, and let's talk," Richard said with pleading eyes.

"I think we had better change into our tennis outfits pretty quickly," Claire said, looking straight ahead. "We can't let Annabelle have all those gorgeous men to herself, now can we?"

"Please Claire," Richard's voice quivered. "Oh gawd, don't cry," Richard said to himself, biting his lip and tasting lipstick. "You can't be a weepy woman every time something upsets you."

"You're about to cry!" There was anger as well as disbelief in Claire's tone.

"Wouldn't you," snapped Janice in Richard's voice, "if the person you loved the most treated you like a lump of dirt?"

Claire stiffened, and strode a few more paces down the hallway away from Richard's room, but then, turned on her heel and walked back. "Alright," she said grimly. "Let's talk."

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"Do you think they had a fight?" Amanda asked her husband anxiously while sitting on his knee and allowing him to caress her legs the way he loved. His fingers were trembling as they edged up under her short skirt to the hem of her lace panties.

"Something is definitely wrong between them," George's voice was muffled as he kissed his wife's upper chest above her low cut dress. "They could be lesbians, even though they're very nice."

"Well, I told you about them holding hands," said Amanda thoughtfully, as she directed her husbands to her ample breasts, "but I doubt they're lesbians. Everyone says Claire and Richard are the perfect couple, and Janice had something going with Peter last night. No," she shook her hair about her neck, "they're not gay. I'm sure of that, but something is definitely wrong."

George didn't answer. It wasn't often that Amanda let him fondle and caress her like this. She must be after something, but what? They both knew George would give Amanda anything she wanted, reasonable or not.

"Just a few minutes more, my darling," Amanda whispered in his ear as his mouth reached her breast teasing the rosy nipples. "I really must attend our guests."

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Claire had intended to hold herself from Richard, but as soon as they were alone in the bedroom, just the touch of his hand was enough, and soon, she was entwined with him on Richard's bed. He was wearing a bra, of course, under his shirt, and panties under his rough jeans. He, at least, felt and smelled more like a man after the morning ride, more particularly if Claire closed her eyes.

Stripping out of his clothes, he was glad to be rid of his jeans and shirt, but he felt strange without his panties, bra, and napkin. Their love making was more intense, more urgent, than they had experienced since right after Claire discovered his love for women's clothes. How long they would have gone on with their love making, and its resulting arrangement, became merely conjecture when they both heard the unmistakable click of the bedroom door.

"Don't come in!" Richard called out in a poor rendition of Janice's voice. His warning was too late. Amanda was already in the room and had a look of pure astonishment on her face. A naked Claire clutched a sheet to herself, while her husband buried himself under the covers.

"This is not what it seems," Claire gasped, reaching for her clothing that was strewn beside the bed.

Amanda's eyes had already spotted the padded bra on the other side of the bed where Richard had thrown it in a rage of passion. "Th...That voice," she stammered, pushing the door shut behind her. "J..Janice is a man!"

Claire felt the color leave her face.

Richard was shaking beneath the blankets, unable to show himself.

"Please Amanda," gasped Claire. "Let me get dressed, and I'll explain all this to you later."

"She's a man!" Amanda said with disbelief as she sat on the vanity stool. "I can't believe it! She's a man, and she fooled me completely! I told George something strange was going on between you two, but I didn't think you were lesbians."

"We're not!" snapped Claire defensively. "Janice is my husband, Richard Archer, if you must know, and he is definitely not queer!"

Amanda stared at Claire, who was hurrying to put on her under clothing. "He is a cross-dresser!" she said, her hand flying to her glossy lips. "Your husband is a cross-dresser! Why didn't I think of that?"

"Yes, it's true," said Claire, picking up her riding shirt and jeans. "He likes to wear women's clothing, and it makes him feel very sexy," she added defiantly.

"I have no doubts about that," answered Amanda shaking her head, "but I can hardly believe how he fooled me. Whew! This will take some getting used to. When you're both dressed, come join the others."

Amanda reached the door before the stupefied Claire could find her voice. "Please don't tell the others about Janice," she pleaded.

"Oh, I won't," promised Amanda. "How could I? After all, there are at least three other cross-dressers here this weekend, although only one of them is dressed as a woman like Janice." Shaking her head and punching the still covered Richard, Amanda said, "Just take your time and dress as prettily as possible, and I'll make excuses for you." She flashed them a dazzling smile and was gone.

"I can't do this any more. How can I face the others now?" Richard said as he sat up in the bed. He was flushed and shaking. His whole world had crumbled.

"You're not the only cross-dresser here," persisted Claire. "At least, that's what Amanda said. I wonder who the others are?" She selected a short, white tennis dress from the wardrobe.

"We have to leave," Richard said. There were smears of makeup about his eyes and mouth. "I won't be able to bear the shame when the other guests find out about me."

"Amanda said she wouldn't tell," answered Claire. "I tell you what. Take a nice long bath and get dressed in these." She held up a pair of frilly panties with the dress. "I'll even do your hair and makeup if you like. We can't desert the wonderful business opportunity. We have to trust Amanda to keep her word, and in turn be congenial guests. Otherwise, she will be sure to tell our secret."

After little additional persuasion, Richard was convinced she was right and went into the bathroom to take his perfumed bath. Half an hour later, he emerged as a new and refreshed Janice, fragrant and eye catching. He stepped into his frilly panties, slipped into his padded bra, and sat at the vanity for Claire to style his hair. Richard quickly came to like himself again as Claire's expertise entirely disguised the fact that he was wearing a hairpiece with his natural hair.

"How do you feel now?" asked Claire as she helped her husband attach his false eyelashes.

"Better, thank you. Much better!" said Richard frankly, as Claire started working eyeshadow above his lashes. "I think I can make it through the afternoon if Amanda keeps her promise."

"There will be dancing tonight, and we will have to wear our evening gowns," Claire said apprehensively. "Do you think we ought to fabricate an excuse to go home?"

Richard thought for a moment, then smiled as he reached for a tissue to blot his lipstick. "No, I don't think so, if you will promise to relax and enjoy yourself."

"And, no one will find out?" asked Claire.

Richard stared at her for a moment. "And no one will find out, if Amanda keeps her promise," she assured Claire as she stood admiring her figure without the waist cinch.

Claire finally stood back and watched her husband as he daintily applied blush to his cheeks like she had taught him. She didn't understand. He had been found out, but he didn't want to leave because, for now at least, he was accepted as a glamorous woman. Claire felt her fear taking over in the absence of his.

Richard put the finishing touches on his makeup and put everything away in his purse. As he bent over to pick up the tennis racket Claire had dropped, he showed Claire his frilly panties, slightly padded to create a soft feminine derriere. With his slim, rounded legs, he was every inch a girl in appearance. His makeup was so perfect, he could have stepped from of a fashion page.

"Let's go play some tennis, shall we?" said Richard eagerly when Claire was dressed in her stylish tennis dress.

Claire; however, wasn't caught up in her husband's enthusiasm to join the group. Anxiety was gnawing at her again.

Richard passed off the afternoon easily enough despite Claire's fears. Amanda kept him moving from partner to partner, not allowing Peter to monopolize him, which eased Claire's worries minutely. Amanda was sweetness in itself to Richard, showing no awkwardness or hesitation in treating him as a girl.

As Claire watched Richard playing a doubles match with Frank Masterson, against George and Annabelle, Amanda came over and sat beside her. The sun was gentle, and the two girls stretched out to take in the rays.

"Your husband makes a very beautiful girl," said Amanda softly. Richard was giggling after Frank made a disastrous muff of a routine volley. "He has a most attractive feminine personality, the guys love him."

"Doesn't *he* just," said Claire with an edge in her voice.

There was a slight pause as Amanda considered her tone. "I can tell you're very worried about him," she said at last.

"Wouldn't you be worried about him?" asked Claire, her low murmur stressing the last word.

"Why, he was making love to you, wasn't he?" asked Amanda. As Claire made an imperceptible nod, she went on. "Well, you seem to have very little to fear. Richard is just being the beautiful girl he's supposed to be when he's dressed that way. He isn't that way at home or in bed, is he?"

"How would you know?" asked Claire, desperately seeking answers. "He is becoming more and more like a woman, and I can't stop him. I don't even know if I should try."

"How would I know?" repeated Amanda, ignoring the rest of Claire's words. She stretched her shapely body on the lounge, leaned on one arm,

and smiled at her despondent companion. "I told you there were three others here like Richard, didn't I? Well, you may have guessed that the Judge is one of them. He's very much repressed, and I expect he wouldn't admit his secret even under oath."

Claire eyed the fussy, neatly dressed, older man with Richard. "So, I see," she said. "You think it's better to be like him than like like my husband?"

Amanda shook her head, causing her earrings to swing around. "No," she said softly. "You miss my point. The Judge is very unhappy, and subject to terrible moods and rages, just like George used to have."

Claire turned pale and gasped, "He's a cross-dresser too?"

"Well, not really a practicing one, like Richard," answered Amanda. "He was hurt in the Army, you know, and as a result, sexual relations are very painful and degrading for him. That's why he married me," she added carefully. Her blue eyes, delicately outlined, were watching Claire closely.

Claire was too stunned by her personal revelation to completely follow what this beautiful woman was saying. "But, how can you put up with him being a cross-dresser?" she asked, ignoring the other vague details.

"Well," drawled Amanda slowly, "since I am a cross-dresser myself, just like Richard, I understand George better than anyone ever has before, including his first wife."

Claire stared open mouthed at the golden haired woman lying so seductively beside her. "B...But you can't be...." she stammered in amazement.

Amanda smiled tolerantly. "Believe me, I am a man," she whispered, glancing out to the court where her husband George was shouting in delight and claiming a point from a statue-like Richard, who was biting his bottom lip and apologizing prettily to his partner.

Claire sat up, feeling waves of sickness in her stomach. She rose to her feet and retreated quickly toward the house.

Amanda came running after her, and slipped her arm around Claire's narrow waist.

Peter was coming down the steps, followed by Marks, the young butler, and a maid, each carrying pitchers of cold lemonade. "Where are you two beautiful ladies going?" he asked brightly.

"Claire isn't feeling well," answered Amanda. "We're going in for a while."

"Look at you!" Claire said accusingly, when they were inside and alone. "You can't tell me that those aren't real!" She was pointing at Amanda's full, rounded breasts. "And another thing, how could you marry a man if you're a man yourself?"

Amanda settled back in the large chair and said, "Like everyone, I've made a few decisions in my life that I may regret later. The Judge helped us with the legalities of George's divorce and his marriage to me." She

gave a regretful smile. "He was green with envy when I came down the aisle in my lace wedding gown because he didn't think we would go through with a real marriage."

"Why did you?" asked Claire. Her mouth was dry. She just couldn't think of Amanda Clarke as a man!

Amanda sighed. "I was a skinny kid, so when I cross dressed and looked pretty real, I was bothered by guys, just like Richard. Since I became Mrs. George Clarke, and now, the bantering with men only goes so far. Everyone treats me as George's wife, and that is very different from being a beautiful young woman like Janice. As you can see, she is fair game to all the men! You're a woman. Think how the men treated you before you were married. Think of the propositions, the 'accidental' caresses, and the ones who wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. Give this some thought, and I'm sure you'll better understand Richard's plight."

Claire could hardly look at the soft, rounded woman in front of her who spoke of herself as a boy. "But legally...," Claire asked?

"The Judge took care of it all...one day I was a boy...I signed some papers...the next day I was legally a female," Amanda said with a bit of hesitation in her voice added, "And before I knew it I was a man's 'wife.' When I go out now, it's Mrs. Clarke at hotels and restaurants. My husband's associates know they can admire my curves, and that's all!"

"Your husband.....?" Claire almost choked on the words.

"Yes, it's funny, isn't it?" said Amanda, her pink lips curving into a smile. "I do all the girlish things he wishes he could have done in his life. That's why he indulges me on any whim I have, like a shop for you. All I have to pay back is affection and a little petting from time to time."

"But, what about sex ...?" Claire stopped, uncertain how to phrase her query.

"That's the hard part," agreed Amanda, her lovely face clouding. "I used to have a girlfriend. She wanted me to live with her full time, but I couldn't give up George's lavish lifestyle and freedom then, I thought. I don't think I could give up George now, even though there's no sex between us at all. I have been a married 'lady' for nearly ten years, and George has done everything possible to make me into a perfect woman." She touched her breasts and the smooth skin of her face. "I go to a plastic surgeon on the coast, and everything is paid for by George. I owe him something for that, don't I? I give him a life partner."

"Then, you haven't been operated on for....?" Claire couldn't say the words.

Amanda was shocked and distressed. "No! I'm not a transsexual," she said. "I'm not gay either. I have taken female hormones for many years to round out my figure but that's all I want. Don't you see what an advantage this marriage is to George and me? No one has ever questioned me about my gender since we were married. I able to express and explore every part of my feminine soul. I'm accepted wherever I go just as a person, a feminine person. If I wanted the 'operation', I'm sure George

would pay for it but I think we both have more enjoyment with me being a feminized male."

Claire needed a drink, but as she poured, she was hardly able to hold onto the bottle. Her hand was shaking visibly.

"I admire you so much," Amanda said softly, "and I'm very jealous of Richard because you understand and tolerate his desires. You accept him, and you have encouraged him to accept himself for what he is. I know George wouldn't stop me from going off with a woman, if I found one who loved me as you love Richard, but finding a woman like you is virtually impossible."

Her tone was soft, almost beseeching, as if she were trying to convince both of them that her statement was true.

Claire drained her glass in one gulp. Her ears were hot and ringing from Amanda's words. "No, no, no," she said, shaking her head fiercely. "I've gone too far! I should never have insisted on going to that stupid cabaret show, and I should never have encouraged him to dress for me! I'm not going to put up with this foolishness any longer!

Amanda's beautiful face was a picture of concern. "So, that's what's causing the friction between you two!" she exclaimed.

"Yeah," said Claire bitterly. She picked up her purse and strode for the stairs, away from this beautiful 'man'. "My husband is not gonna turn out to be more of a woman than me, and certainly not a freak!" She paused. "Or, like you!" she erupted at Amanda. "And if he does, he's not going to be my husband very long!"

CHAPTER XII

A PROPOSAL TO JANICE

Richard didn't notice Claire's absence until he went inside with the rest of the group to grab a bite to eat from the buffet. "Where is Claire" he asked a quiet Amanda, who was nursing a stiff drink to calm her nerves.

Amanda eyed the pert, slim figure of the man who had fooled her completely. Even now, hot and sticky from perspiration, his makeup a bit untidy, he would be unchallenged as to his femininity by anyone present at the weekend party. "I'm afraid she went home early," Amanda said softly. "She wasn't feeling well."

Richard's face was a picture of consternation. "But...but she wouldn't..." he stammered.

"Let's go upstairs and get ready for the dance," Amanda said abruptly.

"I don't understand...." a confused Richard began as Amanda pushed him up the stairs.

"I told Claire," Amanda purred, "who the other three cross-dressers were here at Standen this weekend." She closed the door to Richard's

room behind them and leaned against it. "She was very upset to learn that one of them is me!"

"You???" Richard had to sit on the bed, so shocked was she by these words.

"Yes," said Amanda in her soft, ultra-female voice. "I am a man, a cross-dresser, and so is George. Only, in his case, he is repressed. He gets his kicks from encouraging me to do all the girlish things he could never do."

"But..." Richard's eyes were open as wide as was possible.

"I tried to tell Claire," Amanda continued, "but she wouldn't listen. George and I both love women, but he can't make it with them since Vietnam. So, he lives vicariously through me. As far as he is concerned, I can have any girl I want. In fact, he encourages me in that direction all the time. But, what girl would have me now?" Her slim hand, with its long pink nails, brushed shakily against her darkly fringed eyes.

"How can you be married?" Richard was also uneasy, fidgeting with his skirt hem and patting stray curls back into place.

"Being married gives me a fantastic advantage," said Amanda with a sigh. "When you look and dress like a woman, being Mrs. Clarke stops all the wolves. Men look and admire, but I don't get the Peter Richard's type hanging all over me. Look," she spoke firmly. "Tonight, Claire will be better off on her own. Why don't you and I help each other dress, just like girlfriends?"

"I...I don't know." Richard was doubtful. He was torn between his desire to go to Claire and reassure her and his aspiration to keep the weekend going as long as possible. He knew 'she' would certainly have to disappear for a while, to reassure Claire of her husband's masculinity, as soon as he got home.

Amanda was insistent, and despite her recent revelation, Richard was still not immune to his friend's feminine wiles. Soon, Amanda was checking through Richard's wardrobe, but nothing Claire had packed suited her taste.

Very little persuasion was needed for Richard to be lured into Amanda's bedroom, where the vast selection of dresses took his breath away. After yet another perfumed bath, Richard put himself in Amanda's capable hands. The other 'woman' was ecstatic with the opportunity to exchange help and advice, on dress and makeup, with another like 'herself.' This also gave Amanda an unique opportunity to gossip about the other guests.

Amanda selected new underclothing for Richard from her own over-filled drawers. She also dressed herself, naturally, as if she were an old girl friend of Janice's. She chose a soft, seamless bra for herself because she had ample flesh to fill the cups. Richard stared at 'her' with strong emotion tugging inside himself. He could hardly imagine the sensation of being male, and yet, to have full, perfectly formed breasts like Amanda's. Points necessary for being a wife.

Amanda helped Richard into a tight bra with elastic tabs in the straps so it appeared to move a bit. Then, she gave Richard new jelly filled inserts, that she, Amanda, had worn before she received her implants. The feeling of bounce brought a blush to Richard's face, while Amanda smiled knowingly asked, "Would you like to feel them?" They were perfect.

Panties were the same for both, though each modestly put them on while out of sight of the other. Amanda insisted on frilled 'French' garter belts for them both. "They make you feel so feminine!" she said, pulling her shoulders together excitedly, accentuating her cleavage. They each rolled on their nylon stockings, straightened them while feeling the pleasure of their thighs rubbing together, and fastening them tightly to the dangling garters.

Amanda suggested they wear short cocktail dresses with rustling petticoats. "So the guys can see our legs, too," she laughed.

Anxiety covered Richard's face as he posed the eyebrow pencil near his feminine brows. "You don't do this to attract men, do you?" he asked.

Amanda tossed her long blonde hair back over her shoulders. "Of course not!" she said, holding an imported silk dress against her near naked body. "But, men do have a way of letting you know you're an attractive girl, and in a very direct way. You'll do well to get used to it as soon as possible."

Richard shuddered, causing him to smudge his eyebrow. He scowled, and for an instant, he looked somewhat like Richard again. "I don't think I'll ever get used to their attention," he whispered, as he reached for a tissue.

"Then you should marry," said Amanda, wriggling into a slip with several flared, frilly hems, "like I'm married to George."

Richard's astonished and carefully made up face turned abruptly around to face her confident hostess.

"If you were married, you could do whatever you liked socially, and you would never have to worry about the end of evening consequences," Amanda continued, tapping a long, lacquered fingernail on the dresser. "I'll speak to Frank about such an arrangement. He really does need a wife to take charge and look after him. After all, he is quite wealthy and could provide you with anything you desired and a wonderful house."

Richard was aghast with horror at the suggestion. He jumped to his feet, feeling absurd at the sensation of garters pulling on his nylons, while his eyes were heavy with mascara covered false lashes, and long dangling earrings caressed his neck and cheeks. "I'm already married!" he stated flatly, not revealing how odd his voice sounded coming from an attractive girl in dark, sexy lingerie. "I love Claire! In fact, I think I should go home to her right now!"

"I'm sorry Janice, darling," Amanda said, becoming instantly contrite and solicitous. "I keep forgetting how different you are from me. Please don't run away on account of my stupidity. I won't mention anything else about you and Frank, and I'll try and head George off before he does."

Richard was putting on the green silk dress Amanda had selected for him when he heard these words. "You told George about me?" he gasped in panic.

"Of course," said Amanda, as she spun her new 'girlfriend' around to zip up the back of his tight dress. "He's my husband. We tell each other everything!"

Richard felt suddenly very ill. He now had no desire to go dancing. In fact, all he wanted to do now was to get out of 'her' clothes and the impossible situation he was in. He had never wanted to become Richard Archer so badly in his life. He suddenly realized how much he missed Claire, and he wondered despondently how he could arrange a ride from Standen to get home and back to his wife.

Amanda; however, was insistent, and soon she and Richard made a grand entrance into the family room where the furniture had already been rearranged to make room for dancing.

At George's smile and his low whisper, "You look lovely," to Richard as he took his wife off to dance, Richard was aware of his knees shaking. He had little time to ponder his situation, or to think about George's knowledge about him before both Peter and Judge Masterson were asking him to dance. Quickly, he accepted the Judge's offer, and not until he hugged 'her' tightly and felt the man's trembling hands, did he realize his mistake.

"Please" he began.

"My dear," said Frank, as his smooth, yet lined, face lit by some inner excitement. "you and Amanda are clearly the most beautiful girls in the room tonight." His tone emphasized the word 'girl'.

In Amanda's heels, which were higher and tighter than those he was accustomed to wearing, Richard had difficulty avoiding the Judge's kisses to his perfumed ear and soft cheek.

"You'll spoil my makeup," Richard ventured as a last resort, but the Judge only smiled, and his hand slipped even lower down 'her' back.

Richard was relieved when Peter finally broke in and took him in his arms. For some reason, Peter's advances, though almost the same, were more honest and much less threatening. He endured the advances of the two men for the rest of the evening, to the amusement of George and under Amanda's rueful smile.

Late in the evening, Amanda rescued Richard, feigning fatigue after the strenuous exercises of the day.

Looking daggers at each other, Peter and Frank retired with George for a last cigar with the other men, while the "ladies" prepared for bed.

Surprisingly, as soon as he was in his nightgown and in bed, Richard fell asleep with no dreams arousing her from a deep, satisfying slumber.

CHAPTER XIII

"WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO MY SON?"

The sudden slam of a heavy car door alerted Claire. She edged to the window, wondering what sign she could use to warn Richard, but when she saw the silver Continental parked at the curb, she hoped it might not be 'Janice' who had arrived. The sound of the key in the lock a few minutes later; however, prepared her for the worst.

"I'll take this in for you," said Judge Masterson's voice, as the door swung open.

Richard stepped into the apartment. His hair was more loosely arranged than when he had left three days before. His makeup was also a bit heavier, particularly his rouge and blusher. "Thank you," he said. Even his voice sounded higher in pitch. He gave Claire a desperate, helpless glance before turning to the Judge and saying, "I would offer you a drink, but...."

The Judge's face lit up as he stepped into the apartment.

"He knows all about Richard," thought Claire in alarm, "and he doesn't even care! Why, he's treating him just like he would a real girl on a first date!"

"I would love a drink," he interrupted, placing the tan suitcase by the telephone table.

"I'm sorry Judge," said Claire, "but we have another visitor here just now." She stared at Richard. "You see, my Mother-in-law is here on a surprise visit."

"What....." said the Judge in puzzlement.

Richard's face turned from dismay to outright despair. "She's...She's here? Now???" The words blurted out huskily from his peach colored lips.

Claire nodded grimly. "I made up a case for you," she said, reaching for the dark handled twin to the case Frank had deposited inside the door. "I suggest...." She had wanted her husband to get somewhere, ANYWHERE, to a hotel, or even to his office so he could turn himself back into Richard before his mother had a chance to see him.

"Claire!" Mrs. Archer's voice emanated from the guest bedroom as she threw open the door and burst into the living room. "Is that Richard already? You said Oh!"

"No, Mrs. Archer," said Claire, edging slightly in front of 'Janice'. "Janice just came over to borrow one of my dresses."

"Oh well, don't send your friends away on my account," said Mrs. Archer, smiling to Judge Masterson who was a trifle open-mouthed, as he realized the extent of Richard's predicament. "Why don't we make coffee for your guests, unless they would prefer something stronger? Oh my," she suddenly exclaimed, pointing to the Judge.

Claire's heart almost jumped out of its cavity in shock.

"I know you!" Mrs. Archer said excitedly. "You're Judge Masterson, aren't you? I was in your courtroom once with Leland. He was a witness in a fraud case involving a man named Sanderson. I wonder if you remember that? And, this is your daughter?" she asked sweetly as she moved closer to the girl Claire was still partially shielding.

"No, I'm not married," the Judge snapped quickly. "And, I must be going. Nice to have met you, Mrs. Archer. Janice, if I am to give you a ride, it will have to be right away."

Richard nodded and bent to pick up the suitcase Claire had offered. He did not dare to look into the eyes of Mrs. Leland Archer, his mother.

"I'll see you later," said Claire, turning away from Mrs. Archer while still trying to block the older woman's view.

Richard nodded again and turned away. Frank had his hand under his arm as if to hurry him away when they were stopped by an awesome gasp from Mrs. Archer.

"What is it?" asked Claire, turning hurriedly back to her mother-in-law.

"R..R..Richard!!!!" Mrs. Archer had slumped into an armchair. "R..Richard," she repeated. "Is that really you?"

Slowly, Richard felt the flush ascending his body. "You had better go," he said turning to Frank.

"Sure," he replied, licking his dry lips. "I'll see you later, Janice. I mean...." He hesitated, shrugged, and darted off as furtively as possible for a dignified man of advanced years.

Richard turned back to face his mother. He could feel her eyes examining him from his open toed pumps, up his smooth nylon covered legs, and his straight mini-skirt skirt as he removed Claire's coat to show his slim waist and his blue and white striped blouse. She even stared at his painted nails and his padded chest. Tears formed in her eyes and ran down her cheeks as she studied his perfect makeup and his curly hair. He wore more makeup, particularly about his eyes, than she had ever worn in her life. His earrings were tiny buttons, like her own. Forcing her eyes away from her feminine appearing son, she turned suddenly and accusingly to Claire who had seated herself on the sofa. "What have you done to my son?" she asked in a strident, belligerent tone.

The unfairness of her question was too much for Claire. She stood up and stomped away to the bedroom. "He's your son," she said, "and he likes to dress like a woman." Her voice rose. "In fact, he loves it! He doesn't do anything else these days except dress like a woman! I guess he just likes to be nice and feminine for guys like the Judge!" Her shoulders slumped as she paused in the doorway. Not looking at either of the Archers, she continued. "Maybe I've been too understanding, too modern. I don't know, but that's my problem, I guess. Now, look what I'm left with." Her arm made a hopeless gesture toward Richard, but she still didn't look at him. "Well, Mrs. Archer, he's all yours!" Tears were now streaming down her face. "Son or daughter, he's yours, and I don't care one bit!" The door nearly came off its hinges as she slammed it behind her.

"Mother," Richard said. He knew he had to go to Claire right away, but he had to make his mother understand too.

"Oh Richard," Mrs. Archer shuddered, looking at his feminine figure. "Get out of those ridiculous clothes this minute! It's a good thing I came to visit you, but don't worry, I won't let..." She stopped suddenly, and tears streamed from her eyes.

Richard was grief stricken. His mother had begun to speak of his father as if he were still alive. "Mother, this is not as bad as you think," he stated, sitting beside her.

"Oh?" she gasped, seizing his hand, touching the jade rings she had sent to Claire, and running her fingers over his long, curved, polished nails.

"Claire and I are happily married. Really!" he said in desperation. "She understands all about males who like to wear women's clothes occasionally. Wearing them takes the pressure off and lets me relax. She knows that men who wear women's clothes now and then make excellent husbands if their wives give them a little understanding." He felt himself was floundering as he realized his mother would never understand 'Janice', no matter what he said.

"And, the Judge?" she asked, looking at her son as if he were something that just crawled from under a rock.

"He was nice enough to bring me home from a party Claire and I attended," Richard answered. He was speaking in a normal tone, realizing how odd he must sound considering his feminine appearance. "Claire was ill and came home early. I must go to her now."

He tried to rise, but his mother held onto his arm. "Oh Richard," she said. "It would have killed your father to see you like this. You must promise me that this is going to stop."

Richard pulled out of her grasp, stood up, and smoothed the wrinkles from his skirt. "I can't Mother," he said, kicking off his high heels. "I'm never going to stop, I know that now. I like being dressed like this. I like to feel feminine and to look pretty. You will just have to get used to 'Janice', now that you know about me, just like Claire and her brother. If you love me, you must love and accept 'Janice' as well."

CHAPTER XIV

THE RESURRECTION OF RICHARD

Claire was lying on the bed when Richard entered their bedroom. He softly closed and locked the door behind him, leaving his mother to her tears. After removing his earrings and placing them on the vanity, he lifted his skirt, sat on the bed, and unfastened the garters from his stockings. He enjoyed a brief moment of pleasure as they floated down his smooth legs before he rolled them off his feet.

Claire rolled over toward him and reached out to touch his arm. He put his arms about her and fell back on the bed beside her. Pulling her tightly against him, he kissed her long and passionately.

She responded to his advances by moving close against his femininely shaped and padded body. "I'm a bitch," she whispered with tears running down her face, "but you don't know how lonely I was without you last

night." She was now crying softly and uncontrollably. "I'm a real shrew, aren't I?"

"Oh no, Claire," he answered quickly. "Never, never, never! Mother had to be told off. She didn't understand then, but I think she does now. Anyway, both you and I know she can't blame you for what I am, and she knows that as well. She was just lashing out at the nearest target because she was so mad at me."

Claire caressed her husband, slowly unfastening his blouse, as she pulled down the zipper of her pants suit. "But it's true!" she insisted urgently. "I made you what you are today."

Richard shrugged. "You made me feel good when I dressed as a woman," he said, as the skirt followed his blouse, and he was left in a satin slip over his panties, bra, and garter belt. "But you make me feel even better as a man. I was so desperately unhappy before I met you. Now, I know what true love really is. Taking the other person for what they are, not what you want them to be."

Claire trembled as she slipped out of her pant suit, and she too was in panties and bra. As their foreplay progressed, she removed his bra, and he became flat chested again. Before they made love, she succeeded in freeing 'Janice' of all 'her' feminine clothes, but she didn't insist on his makeup or hair being changed, as she had before.

Richard was too busy, too relieved, and too happy to notice this at first, but as he realized that she was caressing and loving him, even with his face and hair so stylishly feminine, he loved her even more deeply. He was sure that the sounds of their lovemaking were audible to his mother in the living room, but he didn't care.

"Does Frank Masterson know about you, too?" asked Claire as they began to recreate Richard. Their lovemaking was over after a short, fierce, though very passionate session.

"Yes, and he wants me to be his wife," said Richard as Claire played with the long, dainty curls from about his neck. He sat in his jeans as she tried to de-curl his feminine hair. With false eyebrows, rather than false eyelashes, he appeared more like 'Richard', but he was still very sissy in appearance. Although, that was no wonder after all the time 'Janice' had been in control of his body.

Claire's hand shook as she combed his hair. "You don't have to tell me...." she began. An anguished look covered her face.

Richard lifted his hand, which still appeared very feminine even with unpainted, though long pointed nails. "I want to tell you everything," he said slowly, but definitely. "You certainly have a right to know the whole story."

Claire shook her head. "I...I don't" she began again.

He ignored her protest. "Everyone else had left by noon, and I still didn't have a ride home. Amanda and George wanted me to join them on a picnic lunch. They said they would take me home later, so I agreed. I dressed in that blue mini skirt and halter top we bought the other day

because the sun was pretty hot. I didn't realize Frank would be with us too, nor what effect mini skirts had on him. He was waiting in the back seat of the Lincoln when I got in, so I didn't have a choice at that point. I think Amanda planned the whole thing! Frank put his arm around me right away, as if he expected me to behave towards him like Amanda did with George. I've never seen them so loving, either! I think it was all for my benefit, perhaps to encourage me to do likewise. Anyway, we went for a picnic up on German Pointe."

He flushed as he recalled the events of the early afternoon.

"There were lots of other couples there, mostly young lovers. Amanda and George carried on like newly-weds." He gave Claire a clandestine glance, but her face showed no emotion as she methodically combed his hair out straight. "You know," Richard went on, "they were kissing and rolling around together on their blanket. Frank expected to do the same with me," he blushed again, "but I knew Frank and I couldn't be like Amanda and George." He shuddered violently at the thought. "Anyway, Frank said he wanted to marry me. He promised me an elaborate wedding and I would be a bride in white lace and frills. He further promised me freedom to do whatever I liked with whomever I liked if I would live with him and let him dress me like George dresses Amanda. He promised me that Mrs. Frank Masterson would have the ideal marriage."

Now was Claire's time to shudder. "Weird," she muttered in a low, carefully neutral voice.

"Repressed," said Richard, standing to go into the bathroom for his nail clipping scissors. Only his pinched in waist and soft skin from all the emollients Claire had tried on him were the giveaway signs that 'Janice' had ever existed. He needed rougher skin, but there was no way save for aging, that would bring that about. "That's what repressing cross-dresser tendencies will do for a person."

"Are you going to marry him," asked Claire uncertainly.

Richard smiled and took his wife in his arms. "No, but I don't plan to be repressed like Frank and George either. I'll be Janice again in the future, with pretty dresses and makeup, and we will go out and dance with men like Frank and Peter, and even with Ben if I must, but that will be all. I'm your husband as long as you want me under those conditions."

Claire smiled. "That will be forever, my darling," she whispered. Yet there was still a bit of doubt and hesitation in her manner as she went out to appease Mrs. Archer who was certain to be distraught about the way she had seen her son dressed.

Richard stared at his image in the mirror when his wife was gone. Remaining in his jeans took a major effort and a strong will, when there was such a cute little white dress with ruffled sleeves in the wardrobe that he desperately wanted to wear. The thin, slightly effeminate man who looked back at him hardly resembled the exciting, attractive Janice who had spent the afternoon cuddling with Frank at German Pointe. Richard could never tell Claire how much like a real woman he felt under the

Judge's caresses. He had even coaxed the marriage proposal out of him, but he turned him down because he was ashamed of his conduct.

Claire would probably be delighted to learn that 'Janice' had, through this experience, confirmed both his own heterosexual preferences as well as his love for Claire. Still to be a wife and be pampered with dresses and attention all the time....

He sighed at his mostly masculine image, wrinkling his nose and seeing a flash of Janice in the gesture. He had experienced quite a month, he thought as he sat and tried to put his thoughts in order. In just one month, he had faced up to his cross-dresser leanings and been discovered by his wife, his boss, and his mother. He had even received a proposal of marriage from another man. All his fears about how others would react when he was 'read' had proved largely unfounded. Richard; however, knew that Claire and her acceptance of him was the reason the others had accepted him as Janice.

Reassuring Claire that he was still the man she married would take some time, especially after Amanda's revelations, but both he and 'Janice' would work on that. In addition, Janice would just have to go on the shelf for a while. Claire deserved that much for her forbearance of 'Janice' this last month.

"Maybe Janice could stay away for a month," thought Richard, but then he smiled to himself. "Well, perhaps a week at least." He thought a while longer. "Maybe until Tuesday anyway," he thought ironically, as memories of silky panties and sexy dresses with tight skirts floated through his mind.

With a scowl of disappointment with himself, Richard shook his head in an effort to change his thought pattern. His image did the same. Experience had been a great teacher, for Janice as well as for Richard. He had found out graphically that he didn't want to be a real girl and that he was happy as he was with, as some might put it, "the best of both worlds".

He thought of Frank. Though Frank was nice enough towards Janice, Richard in no way could enter a dead end arrangement like Amanda. A few kisses and caresses might have been a fair enough price to pay for being adored, but they meant nothing to 'Janice'. They simply aroused nothing in 'her' but the idea of being a 'married woman' was titillating. To be socially accepted as a 'wife' and 'woman' was a most fascinating image. Maybe Frank would just 'pretend' with Janice? He hadn't told Claire of Frank's offer to pay for 'breasts'.

But there was much more to Richard Archer than his femininity. He was a man and a husband who had discovered that he loved his wife, something not every man did. If his marriage could only continue as it had in the past month, with Richard and Janice satisfying Claire, he would be truly happy. He would have what every cross-dresser longed for, but what few accomplished or could even hope for, a near ideal marriage!





“Richard’s mother was outraged. Her son in a skirt and being brought home by a date.”

Epilogue

Richard stood motionless before the full length mirror in their deeply carpeted bedroom. He was beside himself, his curled hair and makeup eyes gleaming, his face flushed with excitement. “Oh Claire,” he said with tears in his eyes, “I love it.”

“It’s my way of saying I’m sorry for how I had acted,” Claire apologized as she watched her husband in lingerie and a slip about to put on her gift. The black silk, shift dress she’d picked for him looked good on the satin hanger and hopefully would be impeccable on him.

Richard held the dress up to his waist in a girlish motion and carefully unhooked the eight large buttons up the back. Richard had wondered why Claire had suddenly decided to help him with his makeup and the *gift* had caught him off guard. “It’s beautiful,” He said, adding, “And so are you!”

The dress went over his upthrust arms, and over his head, settling smoothly around his feminized shape. It fit as if it had been made just for him, every curve: his breasts, hips and tiny waist, everything intruded and obtruded properly. Nothing was tight, or too loose. Nothing pinched or pulled. The dress was exquisite on him.

The mirror confirmed that Richard was lovely, and so was the dress. The mirror also communicated that Richard’s eyes realized how much having his wife buy him the dress meant. They filled with tears. Claire

saw his expression and was a little angry with herself for getting caught up in his 'moment'. Richard was so charming, helpless and needy like this...she adored him. Her eyes also filled.

From inside the dress, Richard shivered, "Claire—"

"Shhhh," Claire sniffled, "You look—so beautiful—so, so feminine."

A tear rolled down Richard's cheek.

"The dress!" Claire warned, "you'll stain it. Here." She handed him a hanky which he delicately patted a tear.

Claire was melting. She knew she couldn't keep Richard's feminine tendencies hidden. Like a seed, they wanted to bloom and flourish. She wished that she could have her old Richard back but he had changed...the seed had begun to germinate. She could try to kill it or she could allow it to blossom.

Seeing her husband so radiantly feminine scared her. She knew she would have to allow him—even encourage him to journey into his feelings. She loved him enough to allow him freedom. Maybe her image of him would shift and change? Maybe their relationship would also shift and change? It was a case of innocence lost and womanhood found.

Claire stood next to Richard and ran the fingertips of one hand over his protruding bust and whispered, "Since everyone knows, maybe we should try it the other way...maybe you should become a woman all the time. Would you like that?"

"What?"

Claire answered, "Maybe switching back and forth is the problem. You could work in our beauty shop and I'd help you become as girlish as you wanted."

Richard buried his face into the bright halo of her hair and felt a cold knot of fear tighten in his gut. For the first time in his life, there was nothing to protect him from having his dreams. "Oh, yes!" Tears between the two flowed. Each was willing to give in order to make the other happy. They loved each other which truly makes the most IDEAL MARRIAGE.

The End

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