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# IT STARTED WITH AN APRON

**by Monica Graz**

## EPISODE 1

Friday 9 Sept 1983

Bob Burns returned home around six this Friday evening. He found his wife Anita sitting in the living room, sipping her gin and tonic. She was obviously very tired; he could see it in her face. Her work in the boutique as chief designer was quite demanding and they both knew it quite well. After a casual hello and a kiss he fixed his own drink and stretched himself in the couch with a sigh.

"I can see it in your face, nothing happened today," Anita told him.

"I think that for the next couple of months the chances for me finding work are really slim," Bob said with a wry smile.

"I told you already Bob, you shouldn't worry, at least for the immediate future. We are doing quite well financially. With my work expanding and our savings we can last many months if not years," Anita reassured him.

"I know, but all this wasted time, it gets on my nerves. For many days now I try to figure out what I could do and I really can't find a solution", he said with despair.

"I quite understand darling," Anita answered softly, "I have been thinking about what you could do and I discussed the whole problem with Jennifer. She gave me some ideas which probably could solve not only your problem but mine also."

Bob looked at her puzzled, "now I am intrigued darling," he said.

But in the meantime Anita got up and went towards the kitchen, "I might as well prepare something for us to eat, suddenly I am starving. But I promise we will discuss the whole issue during the weekend, Jennifer is coming for lunch tomorrow."

Bob stayed behind trying to read the evening paper but he couldn't, he was too preoccupied. He started thinking instead. They were married for over a year now. At first Anita stopped working since Bob had a very well paid job in an electronics plant as an engineer. But in one of those sudden corporate movements he was made redundant being unemployed for over two months now. In the beginning he thought it would have been a matter of days before he could find a new job since he was highly qualified but the crisis proved to be stronger than he expected.

Fortunately Anita was able to go back to her old work in the boutique. She was a top fashion designer and they were very happy to have her back. As a result the house was very badly maintained and it really looked quite messy and dirty. And of course Bob was not at all in a 'housework frame of mind'.

"Dinner is ready", Anita's voice came from the kitchen. Bob realized he was starving too and he rushed to his more or less predictable hamburger and salad meal, thinking that he probably should learn to cook in order to take some of that burden from Anita.

Saturday 10 Sep 1983

Saturday morning was rather quiet, Anita was trying to bring the house back in a minimal order and Bob went to the nearby deli to get a few things for lunch.

Around noon Jennifer arrived and all three of them had lunch in a very amicable ambience. Jennifer was Anita's best friend since school days and Bob understood from the very beginning how close they were, sharing all their secrets etc. Jennifer wasn't pretty but she had class, at 5.9 she was an inch taller than him and her way of speaking and air of authority could be intimidating at times. He had the impression that she could see through him, seeing a softness of his character that he certainly tried to hide protecting his male persona.

After lunch they had coffee in the living room and finally Jennifer brought up the topic of Bob's work, "for days now I wanted to talk to both of you and mainly to you Bob because I already had a long talk with Anita and she seems to agree with me. Don't take me wrong here, I certainly wouldn't like to interfere in your married life but I am doing this with Anita's consent. Sometimes certain things can be more easily said by a friend rather than the people directly involved."

She stopped to light a cigarette, we were all happily smoking at the time, and continued after a deep inhale, "We must face the facts with simple reasoning, you Bob, as far as I know, you have no chance to get a job based on your qualifications in the near future and on the other hand Anita has a marvelous and well paid job, a job that is also very creative and fulfilling for her. She earns enough money to support both of you and if she could concentrate more in her career she could go to the top."

She stopped for another puff looking at both of them, they certainly were very eager to hear the rest of it and Bob couldn't stop himself saying, "Please go on Jennifer you have all our attention, I am very keen to hear your idea."

She continued in an effortless way ignoring Bob's small interference, "But someone has to keep this big house running and since Anita has practically no time I suggest that you Bob assume all the house responsibilities, in other words you can become a house husband." She stopped there waiting for his reaction.

"But I am totally inexperienced in that field and besides I have to mention it, though I shouldn't speak in stereotypes, it is mostly woman's work what you are asking me to do", Bob said slightly flushing.

"We are all highly educated people here and we know that the standard rule in our society is what you just mentioned, the man being the breadwinner and the woman the housewife. But we can modify the rules and in your case it is certainly more convenient a so called 'role reversal', and somehow Bob I have a feeling that you might like the change, it is a good chance for you to explore your feminine side, all humans regardless their sex have a masculine and a feminine side in varied percentages." Anita concluded in a softer tone of voice.

Bob blushed deeply once more and tried to hide it by bringing his cup of coffee to his mouth, feeling that Jennifer could read him like an open book. He managed to regain control and said in a rather meek voice, "But what am I supposed to do?"

"It is very simple really, you are going to assume all house responsibilities, cleaning, cooking, ironing, shopping like any housewife would do and both Anita and I intend to help you in the beginning. All you need is common sense and practicality and I know you have them both, after all you are an engineer," Jennifer said quickly.

Bob noticed immediately that Jennifer used this time the word 'housewife' rather than the word 'house husband' and somehow this excited him in a sinister way.

Anita all this time was completely silent but certainly full of attention. Finally Jennifer asked her, "What do you think Anita, can you see this idea working?"

"If Bob wants to go ahead with it I will be simply delighted. I must confess to both of you that I hate housework and I have been doing it for a whole year from mere duty. But of course I will be helping Bob in the beginning with your assistance of course Jennifer," Anita said with a big smile in her face. She obviously was very excited by the whole idea.

They both turned eagerly to Bob at that stage expecting a positive answer. Bob looked at both of them still blushing, but at the end he said in a soft voice, "Yes I agree, but please I need all the help I can get plus plenty of moral support". Somehow he found the whole idea strangely attractive.

They both rushed and hugged him and Jennifer took the initiative once more, "I guess we can start immediately and your first job will be to do the washing up."

Bob followed the girls to the kitchen feeling that his masculine side should protest but an unknown force deep inside himself was stopping him. He thought with a mixture of fear and excitement that he had after all a feminine side that started to take over!

Soon he was standing in front of the sink rinsing the dishes, as the two ladies were exchanging glances of satisfaction.

"I think Anita, he needs some protection for his clothes, he is going to wet his trousers," Jennifer said with a smile.

"Yes you are right, he needs an apron", Anita said and opened the lower drawer of the serving table and took out a full red cotton bib apron with fine white trimming and without asking Bob proceeded to drape the loop over his head and tied a large symmetrical bow in the back.

Bob's face flashed and his heart skipped for a moment. He became instantly sexually excited! All of a sudden his mind went several years back, to his family house, when he helped their maid with the housework wearing one of her aprons, with the silent approval of his mother. His excitement hasn't escaped the attention of the girls, exchanging once more secret glances.

"Turn around Bob, we want to see how you look with that apron on," Jennifer almost ordered him.

"He looks cute, what do you think Anita?"

"Oh yes darling you look very neat and cute like a dapper domestic" Anita said and gave him a sisterly kiss.

Bob stayed there awkwardly not knowing what to do. "You mustn't be embarrassed Bob, with your work in the house you are always going to need an apron so you must get used to wearing one," Jennifer said with a reassuring smile, "and besides I have a feeling that you like it Bob, don't you?"

Bob hesitated to answer but Jennifer's persistent look made him nod affirmatively.

So after showing him a few practical things the girls went back to the living room, leaving Bob alone to tidy up the kitchen. When he was through with his chores he removed his apron and joined them in the living room.

The rest of the afternoon was quite pleasant, the girls were in a very chatty mood and Bob was full of an unknown anticipation. They all watched the Saturday afternoon soaps and Jennifer departed with the promise to come back tomorrow around noon to supervise, together with Anita, Bob's early steps as a home helper.

Around bed time Bob couldn't find his pyjamas and asked Anita who already was in bed reading her book, "Darling I can't find my pyjamas, have you hidden them somewhere?"

"I am sorry Bob, I put them in the wash this morning as I was tidying up the bedroom, they were quite dirty you know," Anita answered apologetically, adding with a smile, "and I am afraid your other pair is in the wash basket as well, I told you already that I am a lousy housekeeper."

Bob was about to say that he could use one of his t-shirts but Anita spoke again, "But you can use one of my nighties darling, I have a cotton one which is like a long t-shirt, but of course you can choose anyone you like from my drawer."

Bob felt again excited like when Anita put the apron on him. He was getting more and more confused. Was the whole story a deliberate act of the two girls to feminize him, or it simply was a coincidence? But he could feel that if he accepted that nightie his life would never be the same. His male persona wanted to refuse, but an inner voice was telling him to accept the offer.

He didn't have the chance to say yes or no because Anita was already handing him a lovely blue night gown telling him to put it on.

It was a lovely garment and certainly not a long t-shirt. He couldn't resist anymore, he took the nightgown in his slightly trembling hands and in a few moments he was wearing it. It was knee length and very full. The bodice was blue with lace embroidery around the bust pockets and hem. The skirt was also blue and also laced around the hem.

He became terribly excited and Anita saw it of course but reacted very calmly. "Doesn't it have a nice silky feeling against your body?" she asked.

'Yes, it does, I rather like the feeling," Bob admitted trying to conceal the trembling of his voice.

In the meantime Anita observed him closely. "You know darling, I never noticed before your legs, lots of girls would pay gold to have them. You should be in skirts more often!" she said without any sarcasm or irony in her voice. She genuinely believed it.

Bob went in front of the mirror and looked at himself. He liked what he saw, though all he could see was a man in a nightie. But yes, his legs looked good.

Anita reading his inner thoughts said to him, "we must try sometimes to completely dress you as a girl; I think you would be very convincing. Look at your hands also; they are slim and hairless like a woman's."

Bob's heart skipped again for the third time the same day. He said in a small trembling voice, "yes darling that would have been great fun."

They went to bed wearing their nighties both of them very excited. Anita had a pleasant feeling all evening, she liked Bob dressed as he was, she somehow felt closer to him like this, she always detested big macho hairy men. She proceeded to make love to him. Their sex life until now had been conventional and infrequent. Bob was not the 'aggressor type' and his bed initiatives were very timid. Now Anita became the aggressor, clumsily at first, but soon she had aroused Bob to a fever pitch, especially when she started whispering to his ear, 'you are mine baby, you are my girl now'. They were kissing passionately and her hands were caressing his body, discovering spots that neither of them knew were so sensitive. Bob responded to the caresses and found he was giving in kind. Soon they were both spent mentally and physically and they fell asleep immediately.

Sunday 11.09.1983

Next morning it was Sunday and they stay late in bed. Bob awoke first and couldn't understand why he wearing a night gown, but then remembered last night's events and all the excitement came back. He was glad they made love in such a glorious way, it was somehow reassuring that he could perform even better dressed in a nightie. He decided to keep it on; he liked the silky feeling in his body. After a quick shower he put it on again and went to the kitchen to start breakfast.

Anita awoke to the smell of fresh coffee. She had a quick shower and put her 'Sunday clothes' on, jeans and a long sleeved t-shirt. She felt very comfortable like this. She joined Bob in the kitchen as he started cooking bacon and eggs, a ritual they always kept on Sundays. She noticed with satisfaction that he kept his nightwear on and she gave him a warm good morning kiss. Breakfast was pleasant and conversation cheerful.

When they finished eating, Bob cleared the table and started to do the washing up. Anita stayed to finish her cigarette and seeing Bob in front of the sink half ordered him, "Darling, put your apron on, you must learn to do your chores with an apron on."

Bob was only too glad to obey. When he finished in the kitchen he continued working in the house under Anita's supervision. He was a fast learner and Anita was pleasantly surprised with his aptitude. She was more and more certain that this was the correct move for both of them.

Around noon the door bell rung. Bob was busy in the kitchen preparing lunch and before he had any time to react Jennifer entered the kitchen followed by Anita. When she saw Bob's outfit she exclaimed, "I can't believe it, what a change! You look so cute Bob, a perfect housewife's appearance!"

Bob felt a bit uneasy dressed as he was standing in front of Jennifer and tried to change the subject, "I have been busy Jennifer and Anita kept me busy all morning with various chores and now I try to prepare lunch."

But Anita ignored him and said excited to Jennifer, "Don't you think Jennifer he could make a very convincing girl, look at his legs!"

"I bet he could!" Jennifer answered enthusiastically, "I suggest that after lunch we can try and see what kind of girl we can turn him into. You surely could find some clothes for him Anita, after all he is very slim and your size would be correct for him, I can see it from the nightgown he is wearing."

It was funny, but the two girls spoke together without including Bob to their conversation. Somehow they were certain he was going to agree and they were dead right, Bob was nearly trembling from excitement and he couldn't hide it anymore.

Soon they were eating lunch served by Bob with the utmost care. He was trying his best to please them. Jennifer observed him closely and when he was in the kitchen she said to Anita, "I think Anita your problem is solved the best possible way, with the right training Bob can become a very efficient housemaid, he is very suitable for that role. I have been watching him serving us lunch; he was nearly curtsying when he was addressing us!"

Anita had a pensive look and answered in a soft voice, "I think you are right Jennifer, he loves his new role and he really is looking forward to dress like a girl. I must admit you opened a completely new way for him and everything is developing very fast now, like a snowball. I don't think I can control things anymore, so let's go ahead and dress him up."

At that moment Bob came back carrying in a tray two cups of coffee. Jennifer noticed that he wasn't bringing a cup for himself. He was already acting like a maid! She took the initiative again and said to Anita, "I think you probably could take him to the bathroom and help him remove all the unnecessary hair from his body, fortunately he is not that hairy. Then we can proceed with his dressing and some make up probably?"

Bob nearly dropped the tray as he was serving them the coffee, they were ignoring him and that excited him even more.

Finally Anita turned to him and said, "Right Bob, you heard Jennifer, go to the bathroom and start preparing yourself, have a shower and I'll come in a minute and help you and look for some suitable clothes for you, Off you go then."

Anita acted bossy for the first time and she immediately realized how naturally that happened to her. Bob's attitude was encouraging her in her new more assertive role.

Bob by that stage was acting like a robot. He was living in a dream, he couldn't say a single word and he simply obeyed those two assertive females. Anita joined him soon in the bathroom and helped him shave his legs and armpits and some very sparse hair in his chest. She handed him a pair of frilly white panties saying to him to put it on after his shower. Bob was puzzled because he never noticed Anita wearing them before.

Soon he joined the girls wearing his new pair of panties, feeling very embarrassed and excited at the same time. His excitement was too obvious to hide.

Jennifer noticed it of course and said, "We have to do something about this unladylike bulge in front of you Bob so put this on under your panties."

And she handed him a little satin flesh coloured supporter. Bob took it from her and turning his back to the girls he quickly slipped off his panties and stepped into the tiny device. It was designed in such a way that most of the pouch was located in the crotch and it completely enclosed and captured his genitals. He slipped his panties back on and turned to the girls for inspection.

"That's much better", both girls said in unison and started giggling after that. Bob joined them in their giggles and soon all three of them had a small laughing fit.

Anita managed to stop first and said in a still cracked voice, "look Jennifer how smooth and soft his skin is without all that hair" and she started running her hands over Bob's chest and down over his legs. "Now let's go into the bedroom and work on him."

So the two girls took Bob's hands and led him into the bedroom, where he immediately could see various clothes spread on the bed and his heart skipped once more.

Jennifer took the initiative again, "It's good that you are slim without a tummy Bob, so you won't need a panty girdle, at least for the time being, I think a pair of Anita's panty hose will do to start with."

Bob noticed again that both girls were discussing something more permanent, not just a fun dressing up game. Anita handed him a pair of opaque panty hose and instructed him how to put them on. As he was drawing them up over his freshly shaved smooth legs and around his loins he felt once more terribly excited.

Then Jennifer opened a shopping bag by the corner of the bed and produced a white lacy bra, heavily padded, perfectly matching the panties he was wearing. As she adjusted it around his chest Bob understood clearly that the underwear wasn't belonging to any of the two girls.

Jennifer read his thoughts because she said, "Yes dear, I bought them especially for you. Those are the first items of your new female trousseau. I can tell you now that I was nearly certain that you would love this transformation, though Anita was a bit hesitant, but as you see I was right."

She turned to Anita and gave her a meaningful smile as she finished adjusting the bra. Immediately after Anita handed him a white slip of hers and Bob acting in his robotic way put it on instantly. And finally he put on a royal blue jersey shirtwaist dress with a flare skirt that fitted him perfectly. The hem was a couple of inches below his knees. The girls were thrilled with the fit and Anita offered the dress to Bob as her first present for his new female persona.

They sat him down in front of the dressing table and Jennifer proceeded to shape his eyebrows with a set of tweezers. It was painful but he willingly endured it. Then she applied a base of light make up, eye liner and eye shadow and she touched his lips with some lipstick, explaining to him all the steps, because he had to learn to do it himself in the future, as she firmly said to him.

All this time he was facing away from the mirror, waiting for the next step as the girls discussed whether to put a wig on him or not. After all his hair was rich and long enough to be styled in a feminine manner.

Finally Anita said that as he was going to stay indoors until his adjustment to his new role was complete, it would be better and more comfortable for him not to use a wig, which among other things would obstruct him during his many housework hours. And with the aid of an instant hair setter she gave him a most convincing page boy style.

He was almost ready except for shoes. Anita selected a pair of black medium heel pumps. It was good they had been well broken in, because their fit was very tight. The nylon hose seemed to help a lot, as his feet slid into them.

"Now get up carefully and try to walk around a bit." Jennifer commanded.

He was unsteady for the first few steps but soon he was able to walk with slow and careful steps, as both girls were advising him to shorten his stride and keep his feet close to each other.

The girls seemed greatly pleased with their work and Bob was only too eager to see for himself. The girls sensing his anxiety took again once more by the hand and led him back to the living room where the large wall mirror was located. Looking at his womanly reflection Bob nearly fainted from excitement. A woman, even if she was quite plain looking, but definitely a woman, was looking back at him!..

Jennifer's voice interrupted his thoughts, "Yes dear, you are quite convincing, but you have a very long way to go in order to be more naturally feminine. That will take time but I can tell, you are going to be a total success."

She stopped and turned to Anita, "What do you think Anita, shall we explain to him our newly formed plans?"

"By all means", Anita answered excited and turning to Bob she said in a rather firm voice, omitting the usual 'darling'. "Go and make some coffee Bob, with two cups, you can have yours later in the kitchen. And could you please put your apron on to serve the coffee?"

Her tone of voice made Bob answer with a 'Yes Anita, right away.' He went to the kitchen, put his red apron on, prepared the coffee and had a small quick sip, knowing he wasn't allowed to have one with the girls. In a few minutes he was back, keeping his apron

on, as instructed, carrying everything in a tray and served the girls, sitting comfortably by now in two armchairs, smoking their cigarettes. He noticed that Jennifer was using his preferred armchair.

He would love to light a cigarette and have a cup of coffee himself, but somehow he felt it was not proper. He went across the room to sit down but Jennifer stopped him with a nod.

“We would prefer if you could stand in front of us to hear the final speech”, she said firmly using the ‘we’ mode; obviously meaning that Anita was agreeing with the whole procedure.

So Bob stood awkwardly in front of them, feeling oddly humiliated and excited at the same time.

Jennifer wasn’t in any rush to talk; she smoked calmly exchanged a few indifferent words with Anita and sipped her coffee. That made Bob more nervous and he started playing with the edge of his apron. Finally she raised her eyes to face him and started to speak. Bob felt that it was more appropriate to lower his eyes, looking down at the hem of his dress and apron.

“I am not at all surprised in what I face at this moment; somehow I felt from the very beginning that you would adore your transformation and your new female persona. Of course we can’t call you Bob anymore, you need a new name and we thought with Anita that Betty would have been quite proper. Anita said to me that you always liked the name Elisabeth or Betty for short.”

She paused for a moment and Bob raised his eyes and looked at his wife. Was she agreeing with all that? Anita had an amused look in her face, but she was quite calm and she looked in piece with herself. Bob could see that she was in total agreement with the latest developments. That put his mind at ease, he wanted to be sure that all that had Anita’s blessing, after all she was his partner and she was the person he dearly loved.

Jennifer continued in her usual manner, “Could I have your attention please Betty?”

She called him ‘Betty’, he started trembling again and he felt many butterflies in his empty stomach, too much excitement in a few hours.

“Yes Jennifer, of course,” he said with a tone of respect in his voice.

“Good girl”, Jennifer said without the slightest trace of irony in her voice and continued, “We thought that we should lower you status in this house and you can start as a housemaid, rather than a housewife. That will be beneficial for you and convenient, for Anita of course, but for me as well since I will assume the responsibility of training you to your new role.”

Bob looked at Jennifer with mixed feelings. A maid? Was the whole story going a bit too far? Okay, he agreed to become the ‘house person’, he was feeling excited in a sinister manner, the way he was transformed to a woman. But to assume the duties of a housemaid in such a short notice? He looked at Anita’s direction for some reaction; he obviously wanted her point of view.

Anita sensed that and spoke for the first time since his transformation, “How do you feel being called Betty? Can you picture yourself in a subservient female role? I want to be

certain that what ever we decide here today will have your full consensus." She stopped and looked at him in an intense way.

Bob felt he had to answer and he wasn't certain what to say, he was confused. He looked all red as he continued to play with the edge of his apron.

"Come on girl," Jennifer said in an anxious tone, "we don't have all day, and this is not going to be something irreversible, we are not asking you to have a sex change!"

That did it because Bob recovered from his trance and said, "Oh, I am sorry I was just thinking." He realized then that Jennifer was calling him for the second time 'a girl' and he seemed to accept it quite eagerly, in fact that excited him again. He continued in a small voice, "I will try and be as truthful as possible with both of you. I am totally immersed by what is happening to me, I seem to enjoy every single moment of it, I love to be dressed as a girl and I felt quite intrigued by your suggestion of becoming a maid. I know my male persona in a logical manner reacts, but something deeper tells me to go ahead. I don't think I can refuse any more, yes I want to continue in that path and become a housemaid and follow all your instructions. Yes I really want that!"

He was quite emotional when he stopped talking; he was on the verge of tears. Both girls noticed that and Anita approached him and gave him a hug, "It is going to be all right Betty, you are going to enjoy your new status, Jennifer was correct from the very beginning, you do want this to happen to you, so let yourself free and stop Bob interfering you your Betty side, send Bob to the closet and let Betty come out!"

"Yes, I want to be called Betty, and yes, I want to be a housemaid, assess!" Bob said that in a nearly hysterical voice and then he went and collapsed in the couch opposite the girls.

Anita and Jennifer looked at each other surprised but in a satisfied way. What an emotional reaction. They knew now that they had to proceed cautiously but firmly. Betty was now ready to 'be broken', like an animal that is about to be domesticated.

Anita nodded at Jennifer to proceed.

"We are both pleased that you agreed to our proposal Betty and we would like to set certain rules. This transition for you to your new phase in life must be real and convincing," Jennifer started saying and she instantly gained Bob's attention.

In a spontaneous move he got up and went to stand in the middle of the room again, as expected. 'I must think of myself as Betty from now on, I must think that I am 'a she'. Bob went to the closet; it is me Betty now out here'.

"And to start with," Jennifer continued "the fundamental rule for a servant is to show respect to her betters so I am 'Miss Jennifer' for you and Anita is your Mistress and you will address her as 'Ma'am'. It is harder than you think, even if you are a willing pupil, to change quickly. You spent many years, being an 'alpha male' so it is going to be not that easy to become a subservient female. But I will certainly try to instigate the correct frame of mind for your new station in life. You will have to learn very quickly that you are going to be the last in any pecking order. Am I clear so far?"

"Yes Jenn,..sorry Miss Jennifer," Betty managed to say and then asked in a soft manner, "Am I expected to wear a uniform?" looking at both ladies.

Anita decided to answer that, "Yes of course, this should be the correct way. But don't expect anything fancy, functional working clothes, like neat poly cotton dresses and aprons, probably a black and white one for serving. Jennifer will take care of that tomorrow."

"And coming to clothes," Jennifer continued, "You will now go and pack all Bob's male clothes, as you will not need them for the near future. Nothing should stay in this house that could revive Bob."

That created a certain anxiety to Betty and she looked questioningly towards Anita.

"Do I have to dispose Ma'am of all my male clothes, what if I have to go out urgently?"

Anita seemed pleased the way she was addressed, "I quite liked that 'ma'am', I think I'll enjoy having a maid around the house. But to answer your question Betty, yes, all Bob's clothes will go tonight. If you have to go out urgently, you will go out dressed as a woman. It's up to you to try hard and improve your feminine looks."

"And in fact," Jennifer continued Anita's thought let's go now all three of us and pack Bob's clothes, I will have to go after that."

A full hour later three large suitcases were standing in the hallway waited to be carried in Jennifer's car. Betty felt very vulnerable after that, but there was nothing she could do, her fate was sealed. She had to stay dressed in female clothes from now on. What a sinister and excited turn, she thought.

She had to carry the suitcases to Jennifer's car as Anita was kissing her goodnight. She felt strange as the night air caressed her legs and lifted her apron. Jennifer came out and said in a fairly friendly manner, "Good girl Betty, you did very well today, I am certain you will make an excellent maid. See you tomorrow."

Betty rushed back in as a neighbor was coming out from the house opposite, she was feeling a bit uncomfortable being alone with Anita, dressed like this and thinking of all the commitments she made today. She hesitantly went back to the living room where Anita was sitting.

Anita saw Betty's confused expression and she smiled warmly at her and without a word came and gave her a long and passionate kiss in the mouth. "This is to thank you for being so cooperative and such a good sport," she said to her (her). She had to train herself, to start thinking of maid Betty and not of Bob, she thought as she signaled to Betty to come and sit next to her in the couch.

"What a day!" she started saying as Betty sat comfortably next to her, "I am very pleased dear for the turning of things. I am happy for you also because it appears that you found your preferred role in life, or let's hope you did, because it will be difficult for things to change now. I am thrilled that you will be doing all the housework, you know how miserable I feel about it and I will be able to concentrate on my work and become a good breadwinner." She stopped and looked at Betty, as she was playing again with her apron. "But I must emphasize to you that everything has to be real and I rely on Jennifer for that. You must become a convincing female and a true maid. And I have to try myself to instigate that to you. So from tomorrow I will be more formal with you, but don't worry, we will have our 'informal moments'" she concluded with a mischievous smile.

Betty felt more reassured after Anita's little speech. She was pleased that Anita seemed to be so kind and understanding.

Soon after, they went to bed, both exhausted from the day's tensions. Betty little did she know that this would have been the last night she was sharing the marital bed.

## EPISODE 2

Monday 12 Sep 1983

Monday morning was quite hectic for Bob turned Betty, she struggled out of bed a bit after 7.00am, feeling once more startled. She instantly realized there weren't any Bob's clothes left in the house and not many clothes for Betty to wear. She decided to keep her nightie on for the time being. She rushed to the kitchen to start breakfast.

She knew Anita, her Mistress, as she should start thinking of her now, wanted a cup of tea in bed by 7.30 and then breakfast at 8.15. She remembered to put her red apron on and started breakfast. At 7.30 she carried in a small tray a cup of tea upstairs to Anita and went to the bedroom, feeling for the first time slightly as an intruder in this room. Anita opened her eyes as Betty said to her in a half playful manner, "Good morning Ma'am, your tea is here."

She looked at Betty also a bit startled and then a smile formed in her pretty face. "Well, good morning Bob...oops, I mean Betty. Thank you for the cup of tea; it is such a treat to have a maid."

Betty felt a bit embarrassed but managed to say, "Thank you Ma'am and I am sorry I still wear my night dress, I have no proper clothes to put on until Miss Jennifer brings some for me later in the morning."

"Yes of course, I forgot about that," Anita said in a vague way, thinking already that she had to rush and start getting ready for work, "I expect to see you properly dressed in your uniform when I come back this evening, now run along and start my breakfast because I have to rush myself."

Soon Anita was out of the house and Betty sat down to have her own breakfast in the kitchen table.

It was around 10 o'clock and Betty still in her nightie was occupied with various chores when the door bell rang. She was certain who that was and she rushed to open it quite excited to see what sort of clothes Jennifer was bringing.

And Jennifer it was indeed. When she saw Betty still in her nightie she frowned and said rather sharply, "Now this is not a sight for a maid, you look quite disheveled girl, but I guess it's not your fault, soon you will be properly uniformed as a domestic. Now grab those parcels and take them upstairs to the master bedroom."

Betty was barely able to hide her excitement as she picked the parcels and ran upstairs followed by Jennifer. Soon were spread on the bed three complete maids' uniforms, two for morning wear and a more formal black and white one.

The two morning ones were identical in style, but in different colours, one light blue and one pink. It was a basic short sleeved poly cotton frock buttoned in front, with white

collar and white piping around the sleeves and the two front pockets. Both dresses were accompanied by identical cotton white bib aprons, with shoulder straps that crossed in the back and buttoned to the apron strings and small white caps.

Soon Betty was dressed in her first maid's uniform, the blue one.

Jennifer adjusted her apron's bow in the back explaining to her that she expected a symmetry, fixed her page boy style hair and added the cap. A bit of make up, some red lip, the shoes she was wearing yesterday completed her appearance.

When she was allowed by Jennifer to look at the mirror she nearly fainted from excitement. She was the archetypal maid, nothing fancy, just a young and rather plain looking woman ready to start performing her domestic duties.

Jennifer was also very pleased with the result. The reality was beyond her expectations. Betty looked quite real and it was only the beginning.

She didn't have to be pretty or particularly dainty; she had this efficient look that a servant should have.

And then the rigorous training started and Jennifer proved to be quite a demanding mistress for the new maid. But Betty was eager to learn and fast to perform, she was like putty in her hands!

In the early afternoon everything in the house was in complete order and dinner already planned and organized. Jennifer sent Betty upstairs for a small rest and she departed herself for her own house saying to Betty that she would be back for dinner at about 7.00pm. She instructed Betty to change to her afternoon black and white uniform and wait for her Mistress' arrival.

When Anita arrived at about six o'clock Betty waited for her, properly dressed in her afternoon black dress and



pretty white apron and cap. When she saw Anita coming in she performed a curtsey, quite clumsy and comical though, saying in her most low and feminine voice, "Good evening Ma'am!"

Anita stopped in her tracks, stunned for several seconds as she looked at Betty and then she exploded, "Oh, my God, I can't believe it, what a sight!"

Betty, started going in a panic mode thinking that Anita was disapproving of her but her fear didn't last long because Anita continued, "My God, you look absolutely fantastic darling. That uniform suits you. I never expected to see such an unbelievable change in such a sort time. I must congratulate Jennifer and you of course for being such a good sport."

And with that remark she took Betty in her arms and hugged her very strongly. All Betty managed to say was a 'thank you Ma'am, I am happy you like me dressed like this.' She also was confused and preferred to stay silent under such bizarre conditions.

Betty went back to the kitchen to finish the dinner preparations as Anita rushed upstairs to have a shower and change to something more homey and comfortable.

As soon as Jennifer arrived, dinner was served and Betty waited on them as instructed. The two ladies praised Betty for her cooking though they both said she had a lot to learn. They told her to clear the table as they moved to the living room, asking her to serve coffee after she had her own meal and before the washing up. They had to talk to her.

Betty finished her meal quickly, after all she wasn't that hungry with all that excitement. She prepared the coffee and carried it in a tray to the living room. She found the door closed and she managed to knock with one hand, holding the tray with the other like a competent waitress. She heard Anita's voice saying, 'come in' and she entered carefully. She served them and they allowed her to have a coffee as well, sitting in a chair opposite them.

Betty felt awkwardly sitting down like this. It was amazing, how the way she was dressed affected her. She was feeling already her role to the bone. She sat at the edge of the chair, knees together sipping her coffee as delicately as she could, waiting for the ladies to talk. They both smoked but they didn't offer her one and she didn't dare to ask, regardless the huge craving.

Both ladies agreed that Bob's transformation to maid Betty was a full success so far, emphasizing his/her complete cooperation. Anita in her usual direct way asked Betty, "Now Betty I want a truthful answer from you. Do you have any reservations, or any other objection concerning your transformation to a female domestic? You are an intelligent person and I repeat, I want a truthful answer, if possible without any emotions."

She stopped and looked at her intensely. Jennifer as well was looking in a similar fashion.

Betty's stomach tickled once more and this peculiar feeling of inner piece combined with an unknown form of excitement prevailed again. She felt the bra restriction around her chest, she felt her nylon clad legs touching each other, she looked at her frilly apron modestly covering her black serving dress and she felt ...happy like this! Yes, she knew

that her answer would probably mark her foreseeable future but she knew also that she had to go ahead and accept her present condition without any reservation.

She answered trying to use a softer, more feminine voice, "I know that it is not logical from Bob's point of view what I am going to say, but there is a much stronger voice now inside me that urges me to accept my present condition, I feel that I discovered inside me a hidden side that I like, a side you two ladies try to bring out, so I can say that I want to continue this transformation, I want it to become more permanent." Betty finished her sentence with a certain amount of emotion, though she made an obvious effort to keep her voice even and calm.

Both ladies were impressed seeing that inner need coming out so strongly and Jennifer thought once more that her assessment on Bob's character was correct but even she was surprised with the force everything came out.

Anita spoke again and Betty realized that she gradually was taking the initiative from Jennifer who started it all. Somehow Anita appeared to be mentally involved in that transformation more and more.

"So we should become practical here and make everything as real as possible. I will contact all Bob's close friends and colleagues and tell them that he suddenly found an excellent job abroad under a two years contract and had to depart at once. Nobody will be surprised since Bob was desperately looking for a job for several months now."

At that point Jennifer interfered and said, "I fully agree, but I want to add here that you probably should move house and go to a different neighborhood where Bob or rather Betty will be known from the beginning as the live in maidservant. Then she will be able to circulate around for shopping and errands, as soon as we think she is ready of course, so don't panic Betty this will not happen for some time."

Jennifer looked at Betty smiling mischievously. At that point Anita interfered again and looking at Jennifer said, "And probably this is the correct timing Jennifer to announce to Betty that you could move with me, since you have to change house within the next couple of months and Betty here will be our shared housemaid. How that sounds to you Betty?"

Betty was overwhelmed; she was taken by surprise once more, she simply couldn't think clearly anymore, but she managed to say something totally innocent, "I guess it is all right with me if you two ladies agree to that."

Of course at the same time her mind was running with a thousand miles per hour. She was going to be the maid of both of them? And how her marital relation with Anita will develop? And is Anita sexually challenged by Jennifer, in other words are they about to start a lesbian relationship those two? She was thinking all that as she was sitting modestly in the chair, looking at the hem of her dress and apron. Life plays odd games sometimes. And yet she was excited and thrilled at the same time. After all she was convinced by now that she probably was destined for that role!

It was Anita who broke Betty's reverie. "You can go back to the kitchen and do the washing up now dear and in the future you will do it immediately after you serve the coffee."

As soon as she had finished tidying up the kitchen she went back to the living room to collect the coffee cups, but as she entered the room Jennifer called sharply, "I didn't hear you knock before coming in Betty," and it was clear that her coming interrupted something.

"I'm so sorry Miss..." Betty replied abashed.

Then Anita spoke, "You should really have apologized to me dear. But I have asked Jennifer, Miss Armstrong that is, to help me get you properly trained as quickly as possible. She allows you addressing her as 'Miss Jennifer' but please remember to describe her as 'Miss Armstrong' when speaking of her. Also remember when speaking of me to describe me as 'Mrs. Burns' for you are now 'Betty the maidservant' and not 'Mr. Burns'. Now you may take the coffee things and finish clearing up in the kitchen."

Betty did not risk disturbing them again. About half an hour later she heard Jennifer preparing to leave and overheard her saying to Anita, "...I'll contact my solicitor for you, in strict confidence of course, and I'm sure she will advise on legal formalities..."

As soon as she had gone Anita called Betty to go upstairs with her to the box room. This was a very small room with a bed in it which was used only in emergencies, because all the remaining space was occupied with cases and household things. She had Betty rearrange things to allow access to the bed, then sent her to fetch sheets, pillowcases and blankets and had her make up the bed. Next she sent her to bring her nightie, some other clothes and alarm clock. Not until all was ready did she explain to Betty what it was all about.

"From now on you will not sleep in my bedroom". Betty instantly noticed the emphasis to the 'my and not our bedroom'. Anita kept talking, "You will come to me when I want you and otherwise enter the room only as necessary in your duties. The alarm clock is to help you get up earlier. I want you to get up in time to wash, dress and bring my morning tea up to me at half past seven. Whilst I am drinking it you can be laying the clothes I choose to wear and run my bath. I am sure I'll enjoy having you to wait on me. You will then have to hurry downstairs again and have my breakfast on the table by quarter past eight. Remember those times, tea at half past seven, breakfast at quarter past eight."

Betty was thrilled to have been given the duties Anita had described and eager to show that she could do them well. but she was also shocked by her dismissal from the bedroom outside the course of her maidservant duties. But she didn't have an answer to that, so all she could say was, "Yes, Ma'am, I will remember that."

Anita then said, "I am afraid this room is not much for a maid to sleep and spend her spare time in, but I hope it won't be for long. Good night!" Her own face taut she studied Betty's face for a moment, thinking that probably she was a bit harsh with her, but suddenly, as if a decision was made, she turned away saying very softly to herself, 'Well, so be it then' and went into her own bedroom and shut the door.

Betty stood looking at that door for a long minute, wondering if she dare go in. Then she looked down at herself, every inch a maid, with nothing else to wear except her other maid's uniforms. But what about the pretty nightie Anita herself had given her? That had played a big part in her submission to a position of servitude. So she accepted that her situation was now beyond her own control. She felt she had no choice of her own.

She went downstairs again, checked the locks and put out the lights.

These actions were almost automatic. But her return to the room now allocated to her was at a snail's pace. She set the alarm clock to ring at half past six, undressed, put on her nightie and got into bed. It was a long time before she went to sleep in those unfamiliar surroundings and she woke with a start when the alarm went off.

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Her mind was clear however on what she had to do and at half past seven precisely she knocked on Anita's door, waited five seconds, then carried the tray, saying, "Good morning Ma'am, shall I pour your tea now?"

"Yes please," Anita replied without any further comment. Betty set the tray on the bedside table, milked the cup and added the tea to suit Anita's taste.

"Oh! I left my handbag downstairs last night; please fetch it for me," Anita said as she started sipping her hot tea. Then, as she watched Betty come back with it she noticed her nice and tidy appearance. "Thank you Betty" she said, and added, "I must give you credit for coming in right on time and looking so neat."

She opened her bag and said, "I have a note here for you from Miss Armstrong. She will not be here until this evening; she will be busy making some inquiries for me. This is the list of household jobs due to be dealt with today in addition to those on the daily chores list in the kitchen. You will have to do your best to get them done properly without supervision."

"Yes Ma'am, thank you Ma'am," replied Betty and was about to turn away when Anita added, "and now I want my clothes for today, I'll wear my black skirt suit with the white silk blouse and under I'll have the pale green undies set and darker shade tights." With some help from Anita Betty found them and laid them out across the bed as required.

Time seemed to be slipping by so she ran to get the bath running and as soon as Anita let her go she ran downstairs to prepare the breakfast.

Fortunately she knew that unless told otherwise she need only make coffee and toast and put some cereal in a ball. Nevertheless, she was only just in time for Anita was down at exactly quarter past eight.

In fact Betty was helping her put on her coat, with five minutes to spare and she was about to go, but Betty then turned to her and said hesitantly, "Ma'am... could you spare me a few cigarettes and bring some in for me tonight? You can take the money from..."

Anita cut her short saying, "I don't approve smoking by a maidservant, but to help you break the habit, here is a packet with seven in it, which you may smoke one a day, in your own room, nowhere else in the house mind you, and when they are gone you have more. Is that understood?"

Betty was clearly disappointed, but as Anita stared at her awaiting a reply, it finally came, "Yes, Ma'am."

Then Anita went to the door. Betty opened it and watched her, a very smart, business-like lady, as she got into her car and drove away. At that moment she was intensely proud of her Mistress.

But when she had shut the door she looked at the cigarettes Anita had given her, fingered one, then hastily shut the packet and returned it to her apron pocket. Then she stood looking up the stairs absentmindedly trying to understand Anita's change of attitude towards her; previously it had been Jennifer who had been sharp with her. She couldn't get an immediate answer. Then she thought about Miss Jennifer's enquiries on behalf of the Mistress and of her reference last night to legal formalities. Remembering how she had been named 'Betty' she supposed she should have a surname to go with it. Perhaps that would involve legal formalities. Suddenly she knew what she would like it to be, her mother's maiden name of 'Martin'. She had been very fond of her mother and would have loved to have been a daughter to her and to have grown up to be like her. 'Elisabeth Martin' she thought, I like that!

She shook herself mentally and physically and went to the kitchen and was reminded that she had not yet had her own breakfast, she made coffee and toast for herself. This would have not been sufficient for Bob, but her instructions about food for herself were, that unless told otherwise, she could have the same as the Mistress's meals at home and tea and sandwiches when the Mistress had a meal out.

She was washing up when the door bell rang. Hurriedly drying her hands, she went into the hall and then hesitated, wondering if she could cope as a maid answering a caller. The figure of the man at the door moved as he heard her coming, so she opened the door a short way and then she saw it was the postman with a registered letter for Mrs. Burns.

"Just sign here please Miss," the postman said and added, "You are new here aren't you?"

She was afraid to speak so she just nodded and accepted the offered pen to sign the receipt. As Bob, she had taken in similar letters in the past, signing as 'R.J.Burns'. Obviously she could not do that now and it seemed natural to her to sign "E. Martin".

The postman looked at her signature and said, "Thank you Miss, Miss Martin, is it? And as Betty nodded again, he added, "Nice to see you here Miss, good morning to you!"

She closed the door with a big sigh and returned to the kitchen to finish clearing up there. After checking her progress with the daily chores list she drew from her apron pocket the list that Anita gave her this morning with the other jobs for the day. The first item on that was 'hand- washing' on which Miss Jennifer had given her one lesson. This was to wash by hand and rinse out undies etc.. Too delicate for machine washing.

She collected the items from the baskets upstairs and after washing them put them out on the line in the little courtyard outside the kitchen. As it was a fine day, it needed but a short time to dry them, but putting them out and bringing them in again involved some risk of being seen by a neighbor. So she performed both of these operations as quickly as possible and with intense concentration, without daring to stop or look around.

She felt that the other jobs she had to do that day were not likely to involve any risk of detection, so she relaxed and once more looked at those cigarettes. Anita had made it very clear that she was determined to impose a ban of smoking to Betty. But she had offered the

allowance of one per day for seven days. Betty thought about it and decided she might as well make the best of it and follow her Mistress's instructions. She had her light lunch of tea and sandwich and then she put a box of matches in her apron and went to her little room. She lit up and the first few draws on that cigarette were sheer joy.

While she smoked however her thoughts returned to the events of the previous night and she wondered what would have happened if she had stripped of her maid's clothes outside that closed door, and provided it was not locked, walked in with nothing on, saying to Anita that it all was a great joke and she wanted to be Bob again. But she wasn't at all sure she wanted to be Bob again and in any case Anita had become a 'Ma'am' she was quite unable to defy. Not even her directions on smoking.

It was amazing to think about it, Betty felt as if she was programmed to follow her new path in life and all attempts to see it differently and more logically were rejected by her attitude so far.

After finishing her cigarette Betty took off her apron and morning dress and in her undies, washed (and shaved) for the second time that day. Then she put on her pretty afternoon uniform, added just a touch of powder and lipstick to her face, she still needed tuition and practice in make up, but already knew too little was much better than too much, and returned downstairs.

She had been entrusted with the job of preparing the meal for that evening, the main part of which was to be soup, cold meat and a salad she had been shown how to make. She was very slow in her preparations, lack of experience of course, but she managed to finish laying the table when Anita arrived back in the house.

Betty opened the door for her and gave her a curtsy as she had done the previous day, but this was different. It was not as theatrical, it conveyed simply but sincerely the maid's pride in her Mistress and pleasure on her return from work.

"Have you had a good day Ma'am?"

"Yes thank you," replied Anita adding, "with you here to keep the house tidy, prepare a meal for me and welcome me like this I am much more inclined to seriously concentrate on my work."

This appreciation completely overcame the disappointment left in Betty's mind by Anita's change of attitude last night and this morning.

Anita relaxed into a chair and kicked off her shoes while Betty fetched her soft slippers. Then prepared for her the martini she liked.

"This is very relaxing," Anita said with a sigh of pleasure, "but if you do this every night you better give me a smaller glass."

Betty handed the mail while Anita was having her drink and told her about the postman and his reaction of seeing the new maid; also of how she signed as 'E. Martin'. Anita knew of course it was Betty's mother's maiden name and said, "So you are now Elisabeth Martin, are you? Well, you will make a very good maid if you live up to it."

Betty felt satisfied at the implied compliment to her mother and hurried away to finish laying the table and serve the meal. Anita enjoyed it saying so, and asked about her prog-

ress with the other jobs. It occurred to her, considering Betty's inexperience she had done quite well.

Referring back to Betty's caution in avoiding conversation with the postman, Anita warned her that she must never turn her back on a stranger at an open door. She recognized the fact though that Betty's voice needed training and she hoped it would not take long for Betty to develop a much lighter tone as she would have to answer the telephone and the door on a regular basis from now on.

Soon Anita moved to the living room where Betty served her coffee. Anita lit a cigarette and the smell of fresh tobacco tormented Betty for a moment but she did not dare to make any comment.

Anita then said, "Have you had yours yet?" and Betty nodded, "Yes Ma'am, just the one allowed for the day." Anita seemed satisfied but not surprised.

At that moment the door bell rang. "That will be Miss Armstrong" Anita said and continued, "Please bring another coffee and then you can have your dinner."

Betty left the two ladies in the living room and had her dinner fairly quickly, she wanted to go back there, she felt that important things concerning her future were about to be discussed. So she went back to clear the coffee cups, remembering to knock at the door. Anita told her immediately not to bother with the coffee things and sent her to fetch her business case. Betty knew this case quite well; it looked like an attaché case but could be opened out and laid on a table as a portable bureau. It was always kept locked.

"Put it on the dining room table please and wait there for us" Anita said and dismissed her. Betty did that and she was waiting in the dining room standing of course, she wouldn't dare to sit down. She was soon joined by Anita and Jennifer who sat together in one side and motioned to Betty to sit opposite them. Anita unlocked the case and opened it and Jennifer passed to her some papers she had brought in with her, which were then sorted into the case.

Anita looked across the table to Betty and said, "When we commenced training you in your domestic duties it certainly started as a light hearted adventure, but it has very quickly become serious. On one hand you took to the work like a duck to water, showing amazing aptitude once you had overcome your shyness and without the slightest complain or objection you allowed us to put you into complete subjection as a humble and obedient maidservant. There can be no doubt that you are well suited to your new situation and that you enjoy it. On the other hand, Robert John Burns alleged to have gone abroad in search of a job and disappeared. He has forfeited his right to live as my husband and abandoned his responsibilities towards me and our home. Therefore I must take over complete financial control and make our new household arrangements official and permanent."

Betty once more was confused, she felt delighted with the praise accorded to her, but utterly dismayed by the hardness of Anita's feelings towards Bob. She was also frightened with the finality of the phrase 'official and permanent'; especially in recollection of Miss Jennifer's promise to Anita that she would contact her solicitor. She was staring open-mouthed at Anita. Suddenly Jennifer spoke sharply, "Well girl, what do you say to your Mistress about that? Do you agree to what she mentioned to you so far?"

Betty struggled to think of something to say, she simply wasn't able to think very clearly. But the familiar flickering in her stomach was present again. Her inner self was telling her simply not to argue and go ahead with whatever Anita was proposing.

The only words she finally said were, "Yes Ma'am I am willing to go ahead with what you have in mind."

Anita drew some papers from the case and said quietly to Betty, as if she was a bit hesitant too, "You will recognize this as Bob's cheque book, please sign one cheque, the top one only, with his usual signature 'R.J.Burns'. Betty did so and Jennifer's outstretched hand took the book from her and put it back in the case. Next it was a building society form to be signed and after that an insurance company policy. Betty realized that these papers would enable Anita to have access to Bob's accounts, but did not object.

Anita then explained that she would go to the bank with the cheque book and statements signed, and explain to the manager how Bob wanted her to take over their affairs under the present circumstances and transfer to her own account both the cash and bankers standing orders for paying various rates like water etc. and any other responsibilities which may cause debt to arise if not attended to. The only signed cheque would be made out for the balance transferable on closure of the account. The building society form would enable a similar transfer of savings to Anita's account. As for the insurance company policy, she explained that as Bob's policy had as yet very little surrender value, she would herself keep up the payments due on it, with whatever amount that became due on maturity assigned to herself. In other words all Bob's assets would be transferred to Anita!

Arrangements would soon be made for Betty to change her name by Deed Poll, but as these would take some time to put into effect and would also require notification to various authorities, she would be given a legal contract of employment as a maidservant of course, which would guarantee her employment as at present, for at least three years. In return Betty would undertake to serve her employer with all due diligence and obedience to lawful commands for as long as she remained under contract.

Anita then asked Betty if she would like Miss Armstrong to read out and explain all the legal clauses, but she declined that offer. So Jennifer then filled Betty's name 'Elisabeth Martin' as the employee and 'Mrs. Anita Burns' as the Employer, passed three copies of the contract over to them for signature and then signed herself as a witness to the signatures. At this particular moment Betty thought of something, but kept her mouth shut. She thought that there was a small discrepancy in the contract they just signed, because she signed as 'Elisabeth Martin', but legally she was still 'R.J.Burns'. This contract could be contested in the future, if needed. For the first time since her transformation started Betty kept an ace in her sleeve for future use.

In the meantime Jennifer put one copy aside for herself, handed one copy to Anita and then another copy to Betty. As she did so she said to her, "You should really have read the contract carefully before you signed it. However, it's done now and you will not be able to change it. But you ought to know more about what is in it. First your Mistress undertakes to pay wages to you, but of course the amounts will be significantly smaller after all the deductions to be accounted for, in particular the deduction for your board and lodging. Next, you have undertaken to serve no other employer in any capacity, except as directed

by your Mistress and any money paid for part time work outside the house will belong to the Mistress as she will be paying your legal wages.

After the first year, the Mistress will have the right to assign her interest in the contract to another employer, but if she did, the new employer would also have to guarantee the job for at least three years. Finally, except for some matters which are not important, your employer at the end of each period of guaranteed employment will have the option to re-new the contract unless she has already given you at least six months notice of termination."

Anita interrupted Jennifer at that point, "I think it is probably enough for tonight Jennifer, I am exhausted as it is and it would be cruel to Betty to make her listen to any more details now."

Then she turned to Betty, "Would you please go and make fresh coffee for the three of us and bring it here with some biscuits and then we will try and answer any questions you have so far."

Betty left for the kitchen even more confused with all this legal jargon and as she was preparing the coffee she tried to think what she was going to ask. Her impression so far was that the contract was totally one sided but she signed it and she was committed to it... She prepared a tray, adjusted her apron and cap and started, careful not to spill the coffee, towards the living room.

When Betty brought in the coffee and biscuits she noticed that Jennifer had lit up a cigarette, but Anita had not, so she surmised that she herself would not be allowed to smoke whilst drinking her coffee with them and she wasn't. But she did ask the big question in her mind, "Does all this mean Ma'am that to us Bob Burns is no more?"

"Yes, that is absolutely right," replied Anita and continued, "All his affairs will be transferred to my name and I will cancel his driving licence and credit cards and anything of that nature we find; and tomorrow the only job you will have to do, under Miss Armstrong's supervision, apart from the regular chores, will be to sort out all his personal items such as records, photographs, diaries and books and certificates of any qualification for any kind of employment. His Medical Card and National Health System number will be needed for notification of his change of name, but everything else must go, anything saleable to be sold and the rest to be destroyed."

Suddenly panic hit Betty. She was about to lose completely Bob's identity. She wouldn't be able to prove in the future who Bob was and what he accomplished so far. She addressed Anita in a voice sounded slightly hysterical and more feminine than ever, "But Ma'am, could you possibly keep Bob's records and certificates for possible future reference, what if you require to produce some legal documents on Bob's behalf. Should you consult with a lawyer before you destroy legal documents?"

Anita looked at Betty slightly perplexed. Betty had a point here, legally Anita was married to R.J.Burns and that couldn't change at once.

Legal steps were required. She had to act in a cautious way. She decided quickly on that matter. "Yes Betty, I agree with you, we will not destroy any legal documents concerning Bob's past, I will keep them somewhere safely. When you sort those documents out tomorrow, Miss Armstrong will keep them and pass them on to me."

By that stage Betty was desperately tired, but also trying to come to grips with the realisation that she has being methodically separated from everything that Bob possessed, first every stitch of clothing, then the personal belongings, then his money and bank accounts and to be completed tomorrow his other goods, books, qualifications etc and finally as all her abilities, as Betty, were concentrated on her situation as a maidservant, even his knowledge and interests. But she realised once more that it was herself who had asked for the surname to be replaced by her mother's maiden name and still wanted it to be legal as soon as possible.

However a new and dreadful fear came to her after Jennifer's explanation on the important clauses in the contract which she had accepted without any reservation. She turned appealingly to Anita and asked, "You wouldn't send me away to be a maidservant to a strange lady, would you Ma'am?"

"I don't think so," was Anita's reply. "As I have told you already, I am now making great progress in my business and if I continue in the way I am going it is quite likely that I will be expected to go abroad in about a year's time for at least a year or perhaps longer. I don't think I could take you with me. So I may have to find another Mistress for you."

She looked at Jennifer as she said that and Jennifer picked her train of thought because she said, "Don't worry Betty, you might find that you have been assigned to me. That would be a big wrench, would it?"

Betty didn't know how to answer that and was not comforted when Jennifer went on, "And remember that if you turn out to be the super excellent maid we expect you to be and go out for occasional work in other houses, there may well be some ladies who would like so much to have you that they would be prepared to buy the contract."

"Thank you Miss Jennifer," said Betty, "but I do hope I will not find myself assigned to a strange lady."

Jennifer ignored Betty's last remark as she turned to Anita, "I'll be coming tomorrow dear, as arranged, good night for now."

Betty collected all the coffee things and started washing up in order to leave the kitchen tidy for the morning. Anita came in and said in a rather sweet voice, "Good night Betty, get to bed and sleep well. You needn't worry about what is happening to you. We are only fixing you firmly in a situation you desire. Once you also realise you cannot have that and have Bob as well, you will become more content. You are happy already in the work given to you. And you have many delightful things to learn yet. For example we cannot let you go out maiding in other houses until you are able to look after babies, as far as may be expected of a general housemaid. To learn that you may have to attend classes for would be mothers!"

Betty was too exhausted to start a new conversation, but this proposal excited her again in that sinister way, the way that made her stomach flicker. Her excitement increased when Anita gave her a kiss in the mouth and then left as quickly as she appeared. All that she could say was, "Thank you Ma'am, good night Ma'am."

### EPISODE 3

Tired as she was when she went upstairs, she cleansed her face with cold cream, took off her pretty maid's dress and hung it up carefully. Then after a quick rinse in the bathroom she finished undressing, slipped on her nightie, set the alarm and eased herself into bed. For a moment she wondered what Anita might be feeling now but did not dare to go to that door, now closed to her and was asleep before many minutes have passed.

Wednesday 14 Sep 1983

The second time the alarm called her at 6.30 in the morning it seemed more demanding than the previous morning, but she slid out of bed immediately, rousing herself as she began to move around, to such a good effect that she was nearly five minutes ahead of time when she took Anita's tea to her. When she was preparing the tea in the kitchen she realized that it was Wednesday, her second day of work as a full time maid and only four days from that Saturday morning that Anita and Jennifer started Bob's transformation!

As soon as she offered the tea to Anita she prepared the clothes the latter had chosen for the day. As she was carefully laying them ready Anita asked her to come and kneel beside the bed, close her eyes, put her hands behind her back and bend her head. She did as she was told and Anita then slipped something over her head. "There, you can look now," she said and Betty saw that it was a gold locket and chain. "As I told you last night," she went on, "everything belonging to Bob must go out of this house today, but I am going to keep that photo on the dressing table as a keepsake. That locket and chain I have just put on you contains a photo of him



which I put into it and you may wear as your keepsake of him."

Betty opened the locket, looked at the photo for a while, closed it again and fingered it at her chest. It seemed that she was more interested in the locket and chain than in the photo, but she had no idea then how many times in the future she would look at the photo again and wonder if Bob's life had really been as carefree as it seemed in retrospect.

"Thank you very much Ma'am," she said.

"Good," said Anita, and then rather sharply, as if to counter any suggestion of softness, "you can get off your knees now and get my bath running! I shall be taking a lot of time out of business today on my own affairs, so I must not be late, so hurry!"

Betty did hurry and besides seeing to Anita's needs in the bathroom she helped her dress this morning and still had her breakfast ready five minutes early.

Before she went out, Anita told Betty to get on with the items on the daily chores list as soon as she had her breakfast and washed up, because Miss Jennifer would be in to see to the removal of Bob's things.

So it was not long before Betty was busy again, cleaning down in the kitchen, tidying the living room etc., and then going upstairs to clear up the bathroom and tidy Anita's room.

She was nearly finished when Jennifer arrived, so as she let her in she asked if she could have another ten minutes to finish the daily chores list.

"Of course," replied Jennifer, "while you finish up there I will look at what you have done downstairs and then I will come to see the rest of your work."

She made a thorough inspection of the kitchen and other downstairs rooms and was surprised by the competence Betty had already developed. She was a natural on housework, someone who regardless of sex should have been a servant! She joined Betty in Anita's room and she was about to praise her about the work, when she noticed the locket and chain on Betty.

"Have you had permission to wear that?" she asked rather sharply.

"Yes Miss Jennifer," Betty answered meekly, "Mistress put it on me this morning" and went on to explain how and why Anita had given it to her.

She showed Jennifer the photo in the locket and pointed to the photo on the dressing table, Anita was keeping for herself.

Jennifer did not look pleased and said, "Well, no doubt she had a good reason." She looked around the room and asked Betty if she knew of anything else of Bob's in there.

Betty said she didn't know because she was not allowed in the room at all other than in the course of her maid's duties.

"All right, now show me your room then," she said, closing the door behind her as she followed Betty out.

"This only needs a quick dust over now" Betty said, "I make it tidy every morning as soon as I am dressed."

As Betty dusted, Jennifer looked into the cupboard and drawers and checked that all the cases were empty. She noticed how carefully Betty had smoothed out and hung her dresses and how few clothes she had been given so far.

Then she suddenly exclaimed, "Good Heavens! You can't keep these! Of all things!" Her eyes were on Bob's hairbrush, comb, toothbrush and shaving gear. Betty's eyes were wide too, but she didn't know what to say.

After a little pause Jennifer said, "I can find you a lady's razor. You will find it light after that old thing, but you will have to make the best of it. I can also find a toothbrush and comb, but unless the Mistress can turn out an old one for you, you will have to wait for a hairbrush."

She then looked around the room again and said to Betty, "Have you anything else of Bob's in here?"

Hesitantly Betty started to bend down, but stopped when Jennifer called out, "Not that way!" and went on, "If you want to pull something out from under the bed, lower your body as you would to curtsy and go on lowering, until you are sitting on your heels if necessary. Remember it is not ladylike to bend from your hips!"

Betty tried again got it right this time and shyly drew out from under the bed a small cardboard carton. "I have only a few old things in here," she said quietly. "Nothing of any value, but it would hurt me very much to have to part with them."

Jennifer looked at the contents. An old teddy bear, well cuddled it seemed and about a dozen photos.

"Who are the people in the photos?" she asked.

"Only family and children friends," Betty replied.

"Well, you know what Mistress said last night, don't you? Everything must go, anything saleable to be sold and the rest destroyed. However, if there is a photo of your mother in amongst them, Mistress might like to keep it."

"There are two photos of my mother there," Betty said, picking them out and showing them to Jennifer.

"Good!" said Jennifer, as she studied them. "I think the Mistress would like to keep this one and I would like to keep the other, but the rest must go!"

She then called for two cartons, one for the items to be sold and the other for the items to be destroyed. Bob's shaving gear etc went in with the items to be destroyed. Before leaving Betty's room, Jennifer looked around again and then said softly, "It's absolutely amazing! To see what you have done in here and to think how there must be so many housewives with years of experience, who could miss several of the things you have done this morning!" and then in a stricter tone, "Well, we must get on."

They went into the guest bedroom. Betty had tidied it and dusted it the day before and it was still tidy. Jennifer asked if the cupboards and drawers were empty and Betty told her that only the top drawer of the dressing table and the wardrobe hanging space were kept clear for visitors. Most of the remaining space was taken up with Bob's more valuable possessions, including some electronic gear, photographic equipment, a microscope, draw-

ing instruments, some drawings, technical reference books and data tables. Since Bob was made redundant he had kept himself up to date on all new information published about his work and had spent many hours in this room doing so. But Betty's delight in being accepted in a feminine role overcame any doubts she might have had about abandoning Bob's equipment. All of it was brought out and sorted into cartons. She took the cartons downstairs into the hall.

There Jennifer paused and said to Betty, "I have put a razor and some other things in your room for you whilst you were fetching the cartons.

Amongst them you will find some eyebrow tweezers. Before every shave look carefully to see if you can find any hair long enough to grip and when you do, pull them out. As you shave leave a little patch, so that a few days later you will find some to pull and then start another little patch alongside the first and so on. Also after every shave, look carefully at your eyebrows and pull out the three strongest over each eye. You will find that taking so few will not hurt and in a year or even sooner, you will have only a few to pluck each day to keep your eyebrows soft and tidy." She didn't bother to explain where the razor and other things had come from.

By now, Betty was in need of a break, so she was relieved when Jennifer said, "I would like a cup of tea now Betty and as I am working with you this morning I'll have it in the kitchen with you. Put the kettle on and fetch out some biscuits please. I hope it will give us enough energy to finish the clearing out."

Jennifer had a cigarette with her tea and biscuits, but did not offer one to Betty. This was just as well however, for had she done so, Betty would have had to refuse because to have accepted it would have been contrary to Anita's instructions.

They looked around the kitchen to see if there was anything there of Bob's and found some small tools, screwdrivers, pliers etc. Jennifer said she could use them herself and found a small box for them.

Next, they went out to the Garage. Betty was very nervous about that because she was abandoning the safety of the house dressed as a maid for the first time. But Jennifer made it clear that she shouldn't worry about that. They found in the garage some heavy tools, including spade and fork, shovel, crow-bar, bow saw and big hammer. They took these directly to Jennifer's car and loaded them into the boot. One of the neighbours watched them and then said, "Mr. Burns has gone away I believe. Could it be that those tools are not needed here any more?"

Betty, thankful that it was not her appearance which had prompted the enquiry, but still very anxious, went quietly back into the garage and on onto the house playing nervously with the edge of her apron.

Jennifer started talking with the neighbor. Not long after she came in as well, saying that the gentleman had come round, looked at the tools and made an offer for the lot, which she thought was too good to refuse. So they had been sold and taken away by the purchaser.

She put the money in her purse without saying how much. All they found in the dining room was an unframed photo of Bob and colleagues at his firm's last annual dinner, which went for destruction, of course.

Finally they came to the living room, where they knew Bob had kept all his private papers. They were in a built-in furniture unit comprising a bureau, a bookcase and several drawers. Jennifer put aside for Anita all the legal documents. She also put aside some personal letters in case Anita would like to see them. In the bookcase were many books relating to his work and some to his hobbies, a few of them very expensive. All of them were put with the items to be sold. On a last look around, in case anything had been missed, Jennifer found his umbrella in the hall. After a little thought, that too went with the items to be sold.

Then they packed all these things in Jennifer's car, as she had agreed to sell them for Anita. Back in the house after that they looked at the items for destruction. A few of them went into the dust bin. the rest were all combustible, so Jennifer said to Betty, "Stir up the fire in the boiler Betty, while I bring all these things into the kitchen, then, as I hand them to you, put them in the fire and see that they burn."

This took quite some time and at one stage Betty had to riddle the fire again. But eventually all had gone. Jennifer had watched Betty's face as she had handled the pieces to her and the only time she saw real distress on it was when the little teddy bear was burnt. She thought about that but said nothing at the time.

Jennifer drove off and Betty wandered around the house, rather confused, thinking how difficult it would be now to find anything to indicate that Bob had ever been there. She felt vulnerable and more than ever dependant on Anita. She realized, not without some bizarre satisfaction, that her life from now on was going to be the life of a female servant and that was becoming rapidly an irreversible fact! But soon she put those thoughts aside; she had to prepare herself for the evening. She made another pot of tea and had a very late tea and sandwiches lunch.

She went up to her tiny room for that longed for cigarette with a much needed rest. She took off her dress and prepared to shave. On finding the things Jennifer had put out for her she remembered her advice on the purpose of the tweezers. As she expected, she could not find one facial hair long enough to see, but left a little unshaven patch under her chin. The eyebrow hairs came out without hurt, but she thought that it would take a long time at that rate before she would have only soft hairs in her brows. The lady's razor was very light but quite easy to use.

As soon as she had changed into her pretty afternoon black frock and white frilly apron Betty hurried down, removed her white apron and put on her large red cooking apron and started to prepare the evening meal.

She knew Jennifer was coming in for dinner as well as Anita, so the amounts to be made ready were enough for three. Anita had planned that the meal should not take long to prepare, so she had chosen a packet soup, tinned ham with tinned potato, salad and beans, fresh lettuce and tomatoes and a fruit and cream sweet. So, although she started dinner much later she was ready in time and had only to set the table when Anita came in.

As she was settled comfortably in her chair, glass in hand, Betty gave her the morning mail, which this day consisted of just three letters addressed to Mr. R.J.Burns.

"Thank you Betty" said Anita as she took them. She opened them, read them over quickly and then put them aside saying, "I will deal with these later."

Betty had recognised one of the envelopes as a personal letter from Bob's closest friend and had wondered if Anita would discuss it with her, but by now, of course, Anita made all her decisions on Bob's affairs without thought even of telling Betty.

Anita had then wanted to know how Jennifer and Betty had done as regards disposal of Bob's things. "Are they all gone?" she asked.

"Yes Ma'am," answered Betty, "They all went, except two photos of my mother. Miss Jennifer thought you might like to keep one of them and she would like to keep the other herself."

Jennifer arrived back shortly after, gave Anita the photo which had been saved for her, showed her the other one and confirmed that she would like to keep it herself. She then gave Anita all the legal documents and the letters she had also held back, saying,, "I held these back in case there is anything in them you ought to see before throwing them away."

Putting these aside also, with a rubber band around them, Anita asked, "Have all of Bob's things gone, excluding of course the legal papers you just have given me."

"Yes", answered Jennifer, "everything to be sold has gone from here. In fact the tools in the garage have already been sold, a few items went to the dustbin and the rest were fed by Betty into the boiler in the kitchen and we watched them burned."

"Did this upset you?" Anita asked Betty.

"I wasn't very upset Ma'am," Betty replied. "I had already accepted that on becoming just a maidservant I would have to give up everything of Bob's. But I was very upset watching the little teddy bear burn."

Anita didn't comment on that but turned to Jennifer and said, "I have spent most of my day in personal affairs instead of on boutique business. I have been to the bank, to the building society, to the insurance office and kept the appointment made for me to see your solicitor friend's boss Mr. Arkwright, this afternoon. He is prepared to see Betty at the same time, 3.30 tomorrow."

She stopped briefly to have a sip of a drink and continued, "Can we find suitable clothing for her and could you be kind enough to escort her to the office?" she asked turning to Jennifer.

"Of course, I will be delighted," replied Jennifer. "She can wear the blue dress you gave her. She must convince Mr. Arkwright that the changeover is genuine of course, so she must look like a proper domestic, which she is now, not a lady of fashion. I'll see if I can find some plain shoes for her and a lightweight coat, not too fashionable, to wear over that dress."

Anita then turned to Betty and said, "You have already guessed of course, that this is to do with your desire to take the name 'Elisabeth Martin'. It's a much more involved procedure than I thought, but I think that after tomorrow you will have given up the name 'Robert John Burns'."

Then, maintaining a matter of fact tone, to steady Betty's nerves, she asked her to serve the dinner.

It took Betty only a few minutes to lay the table, then replacing her red cooking apron with her pretty white serving one; she waited on them whilst they ate. They had their coffee in the dining room, instead of the living room, so they could concentrate on their discussion of Anita's money matters, making use of Jennifer's accountancy experience.

When she had served their coffee, Betty went back to the kitchen, put her red apron on again, this time on top of her serving one, to have her dinner and wash up. That done, she knocked on the dining room door and asked Anita if there was anything else to do now.

"No, thank you Betty," said Anita, "but I suggest you go into the hall, pick up a Mills and Boon romance I have put on the shelf there for you, take it up to your room and try to relax with it."

And she continued in a matter of fact tone again, "Bob would have had no time at all for such fiction, he probably would have founded it silly also, but for Betty the maid should be prime reading!"

So Betty obediently took the book upstairs and started reading it. As she was reading the desire for a cigarette came over her so strongly that she toyed with the idea of going back down to Anita to ask if she could bring forward tomorrow's smoke. But she was certain that Anita would refuse, so she put it out of her mind. Suddenly she realized that it was nearly ten o'clock. She ran down the stairs, smoothing out her frock and tying back her white apron. She paused in front of the dining room door to regain her breath and knocked.

Anita called, "Come in Betty, you have chosen exactly the right time to come. We are just finishing. Bring in some more coffee for us, will you, and put out the biscuits please. You can take out these used cups as you go."

When she had served the coffee, Jennifer kicked off her shoes and said to her, "Try these for size, Betty."

"Here Miss?"

"Yes, now please!" Jennifer spoke rather sharply this time, so Betty took off her own shoes in front of them, bending down as modestly as she could to undo the straps, and slipped on Jennifer's.

"They seem a little long for me," she said, "But I could wear them."

"Good," replied Jennifer, and went on, "I have a coat and some shoes which have seen better days, but are quite respectable. I will bring them over for you to wear at your interview with the Solicitor tomorrow."

"I am scared," said Betty, "do I have to go?"

Anita spoke up then. "No, you certainly don't have to go! But Mr. Arkwright is willing to help you change your name if he is satisfied that you really want to do that. Do you?"

Betty paused a little and then said, "Yes Ma'am, I am not so much frightened of the Solicitor as of going to any appointment as a maid."

She then turned to Jennifer and with a sudden determination in her voice she said, "I am very grateful that you are so kind and willing to help me Miss Jennifer, and I will do my best tomorrow."

“Good girl!” Jennifer said and continued, “It’s settled then; I’ll take you and present you to Mr. Arkwright at 3.30p.m!”

She started preparing to go to the door, saying she would be in soon after lunch to help Betty get ready.

Anita went with her to the door while Betty cleared away the coffee things. She came to the kitchen the moment Betty was washing up the few remaining cups and saucers. She watched her for a moment and then said in a surprisingly soft tone, “You must wonder why I am so formal with you the last few days. I think I owe you an explanation. You decided on your own free will to abandon your male role and to become a female servant. You have accepted very eagerly that role, something that suits me also, because I have great prospects at my work and I love to have a maid waiting on me at all times! In fact I was very excited when I came in before watching you washing up with your black frock and the white apron so neatly tied with the straps crossing in the back, the picture of domesticity.”

She paused, and lighted a cigarette then she continued, “But I don’t want you to see it as a game, it is the real thing and you must learn to act and think exactly as any female servant. It seems that you have a knack for it and you catch very fast, but we decided with Jennifer to make things as real as possible for you. There is not going to be unnecessary cruelty but we both are going to be firm and strict and teach you everything that we consider as duties of a general housemaid.”

She paused again and looked at Betty whose face was getting red from embarrassment. “After a few weeks and when I am convinced that you really feel your new role to the bone, with no traces left of Bob, I might call you to my bed occasionally at night, but don’t ever dream that you can take any initiative of any kind!”

And she concluded in a firmer tone of voice, “You are the maid now and the maid you will be in the future and it is totally to my discretion to use you the way I see fit!”

Then she dismissed her in an indifferent tone of voice. “You can go to bed now, good night.”

Betty went upstairs with mixed feelings. But she felt that Anita was fair to her and the option of going back to her bed, even on Anita’s terms was very promising. As she entered her room another surprise awaited her. When she was undressed and took out her nightie, there, tucked in the folds of it was an old rag doll, about the same size as Bob’s teddy bear. She was wearing a sewn on dress or nightie, not new but, like the doll herself, clean and tidy. Attached to the garment was a little streamer of ribbon on which Betty could just read the name

‘Emily’.

“Oh, Emily!” she said. “I could love you though you are not my little Teddy.”

A few minutes later Betty went to sleep holding Emily gently. As she was drifting away she remembered that next Wednesday 21 of September, that is a week from today, she would celebrate her first birthday as Elisabeth Martin, she was going to be 39 years old! Would Anita remember it?

Thursday 15 September 2009

The following morning, when Betty made her bed, Emily was tucked in the folds of her nightie exactly as she had been the night before. Apart from that Betty's routine was as had been laid down by Anita and enabled her to be up and ready for business, breakfasted and out in good time, without any kind of hassle.

As before, Betty was very proud of her Mistress as she watched her drive off to business. As before, Betty had her own breakfast and carried out the work of the daily chores, but there was something 'different'. Her stomach 'fluttered' every time she thought about her appointment at the solicitor's office. It would be her first venture in public in her feminine role and her first appointment with anyone as 'Elisabeth Martin'.

Nevertheless, she had finished the daily chores, prepared some vegetables and had her own lunch by half past one. She went to her room, took off her light blue maid's frock, lit that cigarette, her stock of them now going down, and while she smoked she wondered how she would manage without them when they were all gone. But if she had none and could not get any she would have no choice but to go without, she thought philosophically.

Then she started getting ready and was in the bathroom when the door bell rang. Probably it was Miss Jennifer, but she couldn't answer the door in her undies anyway, so she dashed back in her room, slipped on her blue frock again and ran downstairs doing up her buttons as she went.

It was Jennifer, who said very sharply, "What's the matter with you girl? You are not tidy. Why don't you have your apron on?"

Betty explained and Jennifer made a mental note that a house gown of some sort would have to be provided for her.

She then said to Betty, "I have come in good time to see that you are sensibly dressed and all prepared for your interview with Mr. Arkwright."

She followed Betty back upstairs to the bathroom, saying, "First let me look at your hands" and examined them carefully, then she added, "Not bad, in fact considering that you are a domestic servant, not bad at all! But you have some hair on your wrists which you will have to take off with the razor now, but in future you must keep them clear with pumice stone."

After that she showed Betty how to file her nails in a neat curve, quite short and told her she would have to do without nail varnish today, but in time she would be allowed to use clear varnish. "No talons and no bright colours!" she said.

Then she proceeded to do a little trimming on Betty's eyebrows and to put on her make up, explaining as she went what she was doing and why, emphasizing that for an office appointment in the afternoon, the make up must be applied extremely lightly, so as to be unnoticeable, just enough to cover skin blemishes and make her face look soft and feminine; a bright lipstick could be used, but not applied thickly.

Betty had only a few items of make up, so far, which had been given to her by Anita, but she hoped she would eventually have some of her own.

Jennifer helped Betty get into the blue dress and since it had a neckline high at the front, brought out the gold locket to lay on it, where it looked very natural.

"Now, stand back and let me look at you" she said.

"Turn round, slowly..... Yes, you'll do."

Before they went downstairs, however, Betty touched Jennifer's arm and said, "Oh! Miss Jennifer! It was you who put little Emily in my bed last night, wasn't it? It had hurt me a lot to watch little teddy bear burn and I still feel sad, but Emily made me realise that he had belonged to Bob, not to me, and I felt you had told her to come over and comfort me.

Emily is tucked up in my nightie again now, waiting for me just as she waited last night."

She paused for a moment to catch her breath and continued, "I do hope you will let her stay with me for a while."

Jennifer answered gently "Yes, it was me, and yes she can stay with you for a while," and went on in a sharper tone, "I was sorry for you, but no more than I would have been for any other maid required to do as she was told, even if she didn't like it and don't ever assume that you are any more deserving than any other maid!"

Downstairs, Betty put on the light coat and shoes Jennifer had brought for her to wear. Then Jennifer produced a headscarf she had also brought and showed her how to tie it on. Then she looked Betty over again and said, "Now you look ordinary enough for people to take no notice of you.

But there is another thing you must have. Do you know what that is?"

Betty didn't know, so Jennifer went on, "Well, I know you don't have to worry about what to carry your money in, because you haven't got any, but what about your little personal things like powder and lipstick and hankie and don't forget it, your house door key?"

Betty realised she needed a handbag, but could not think of anything which might do, but Jennifer laughed and said, "Never mind, I have a small handbag I can lend you. Bring your things out with you in a paper bag and I will stop at my house and bring it out for you."

Betty's stomach fluttered again as she realised it was time to go. But Jennifer had some more instructions for her. She said, "Before you ride in a car in skirts you must learn how to get into it and how to get out of it again with modesty. The rule is that your legs must stay firmly together as you put them in and as you bring them out. Remember that!"

And she continued more excited, "The drill is as follows, first open the door wide, do not try to creep through a small gap. Back yourself into the seat before you lift a foot off the ground, hold your skirt, if necessary, to prevent the wrinkling, then swing around with your legs together, lifting your feet enough to clear the door sill. Then close the door. To get out, go through the same drill in reverse."

She finished the sentence and started walking towards the car, motioning to Betty to follow her.

"We will go to the car now and I will unlock the passenger door for you.

I want you to get in and out twice before you get in and close the door.

Remember I shall be watching you carefully. It does not matter if anyone sees you. You might be looking for something accidentally dropped.

Ready?"

With her stomach fluttering again, Betty replied, "Yes, thank you Miss Jennifer" and they went to the car, closing the house door behind them.

Jennifer watched Betty go through the drill laid down for her quite successfully and when she had got in herself commended her for her ladylike performance.

She drove to her own house first and collected the handbag she had promised to lend to Betty. Then, as she drove towards the town centre, she noticed Betty's tension rising as she was being carried to her destination. So she talked to her about facing people in the street.

"First," she said, "you must remember you are going somewhere on some purpose of your own. Then remember that they, also are going somewhere on purpose of their own. They are not particularly interested in you. So don't call attention to yourself by acting strangely or showing concern that they might be taking notice of you. If a woman suddenly glares at you, don't jump to the conclusion that something about yourself has caused it, she is probably suddenly cross with herself about something. There is no harm in wondering yourself what that might have been! Or why that smart, military looking man over the road is limping, or why that lady walking towards you is wearing such a monstrosity of a hat!"

With that she turned into the parking space outside the Solicitor's office. Betty's stomach fluttered again and her heart beat faster!

Jennifer was out of the car and locking her door before Betty was ready, of course, then she took Betty's elbow lightly to lead her into the office.

"Hello Jean," she said to the girl at the reception desk. "Is Mrs. Howells, the Assistant Solicitor, about please?"

"Yes, Miss Armstrong," the girl replied lifting her telephone. "I'll give her a ring for you."

In a few moments a pleasant round faced woman of about Jennifer's age appeared, saying, "Hello Jennifer, have you brought the new maid in to see Mr. Arkwright, the senior Solicitor and Commissioner for Oaths?"

"Yes Madge," replied Jennifer, "this is Betty."

Then, turning to Betty, said, "Say hello to Mrs. Howells, Betty."

Betty, felt like a child introduced to her teacher, but dutifully turned to Mrs. Howells and said in her soft, as feminine as possible voice,

"Good afternoon, Ma'am."

"Hello, Betty! You needn't be shy with me," replied Mrs Howells, "I hear you are making an excellent maid!"

Then she went on, "I think Mr. Arkwright will be ready to see you now, so I'll take you in," and as she led Betty away, turned and said, "I'll be back in a moment Jennifer."

Betty found herself in a large room, well furnished, with a large desk, a tremendous bookcase full of books, and leather chairs. On being motioned to do so, she sat down gingerly in a chair facing the desk. As she did so, Mrs. Howells said, "This is Betty, as she is now called, Mr. Arkwright," and turned to Betty and said, "This is Mr. Arkwright." And with those words she went out of the room, closing the door softly behind her.

Betty sat nervously at the edge of the chair, wondering what would happen next. Then Mr. Arkwright looked up and said casually, "I saw your wife yesterday Mr. Burns!"

Betty was taken aback, speechless for a while, then replied, "I'm sorry Sir, I no longer think of myself as 'Mr. Burns', I am only Betty a maidservant and Mrs Burns is my Mistress!"

"Be that as it may" went on Mr. Arkwright, in law you are Robert John Burns, husband of Mrs. Anita Burns, and you can't walk away from that!"

"I cannot walk away from anything Sir. For reasons of my own, I have committed myself to the position of living in maidservant to Mrs. Burns and have to obey the orders she gives me. When I made that decision of giving up the rights and privileges of Bob and had to answer to the name of Betty, I asked if I could be given my mother's maiden name of Martin as a surname, and Mrs. Burns seemed pleased. Last night, when I was told this appointment had been made for me I was frightened and asked if I had to come. Mrs. Burns replied that I was certainly not required to come, but would have to do so, if I wanted your legal help for a change of name. Can you help me, Sir?"

Mr. Arkwright was silent for what seemed to Betty quite a long time.

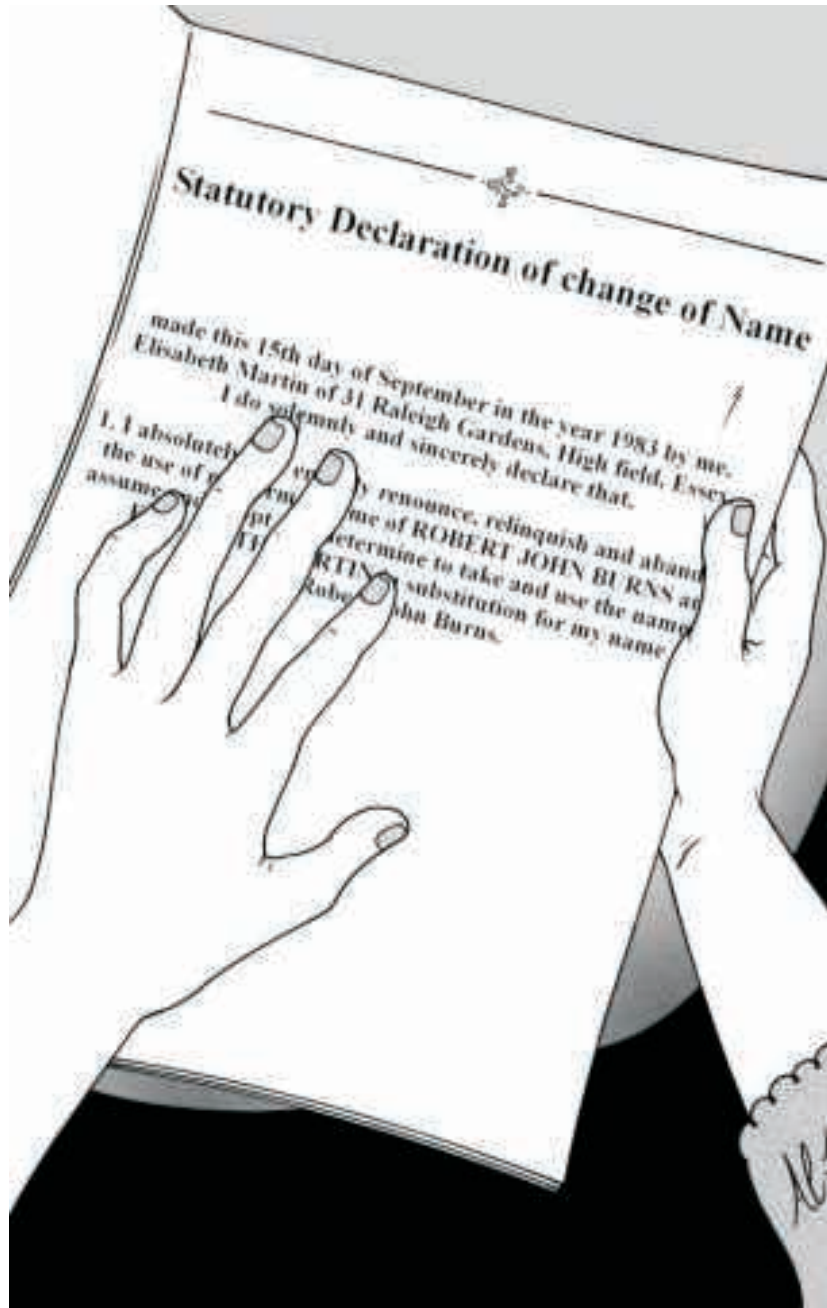
Then he said, "In your present circumstances the change of name you want cannot be made by Deed Poll. Such a Deed would not be acceptable for enrolment to Courts. But, if you intend to use only the name of Elisabeth Martin permanently, you can make what is called a Statutory Declaration to that effect, if you want to do so. Are you quite sure that you do?"

Without any hesitation Betty answered, "Yes Sir, I am."

Mr. Arkwright then continued, "Before I could apply my services to your request, I had to be absolutely certain that it was made entirely of your own volition without any coercion and also that it was made with the consent of Mrs. Burns. Mrs. Burns not only gave me her consent yesterday, but also signed an affidavit to that effect. Furthermore she asked for this interview to be given to you, with my fees and any expenses to be charged to her account. As I am now satisfied on both those points, will proceed with the Statutory Declaration."

He lifted his telephone and said, "Bring in the form of Statutory Declaration you have been preparing for Mrs. Burns file please."

A few moments later he had the papers on the desk in front of him. He then said to Betty, "This is what you can sign, first, in the name you intend to use from now on, 'Elisabeth Martin' and then in what now becomes your former name 'Robert John Burns'."



Betty started reading, 'Statutory Declaration of change of Name made this 15th day of September in the year 1983 by me, Elisabeth Martin of 31 Raleigh Gardens, High field, Essex. I do solemnly and sincerely declare that,

1. I absolutely and entirely renounce, relinquish and abandon the use of my former name of ROBERT JOHN BURNS and assume and adopt and determine to take and use the name of ELISABETH MARTIN in substitution for my name of Robert John Burns.

2. I shall at all times hereafter.....(there followed several lines of legal phrases, ending with).... be called, known or distinguished not by the former name of Robert John Burns, but by the name of Elisabeth Martin only.

3. I authorize..... (Legal terms)... and address me by the adopted name of Elisabeth Martin and I make this solemn declaration..... (Legal terms)... the provisions of the Statutory Declarations act,

1835.

When Mr. Arkwright was satisfied that Betty fully understood the commitment she was making to herself, he let her sign it, first in the new name and then in the former name, and then signed it himself as a witness.

After that, Mr. Arkwright relaxed his official manner and said, "Well Miss Martin, that's done then, are you happy now?"

"Yes Sir, I am happy about it and I am grateful to you, Sir!"

"But I must emphasise something to you Miss Martin" the Solicitor continued, "though you adopted a female name, in the eyes of Law you are still a male and also you are still

married to Mrs. Burns. That we cannot change, but in the other hand nobody can stop you use legally the name you chose even if it is a feminine one."

Betty thought for a moment and then said, "I don't mind that Sir, for as long as Mrs. Burns is aware of that. And I would like to add that I am grateful for something else Sir. When you were questioning me you made me think again about what happened in my changeover, and I now believe it was not simply a weakness of character that caused my submission to this life of a maid, but a subconscious decision to exchange my freedom in return for my acceptance into a feminine role. This new understanding makes me feel better, because it encourages me to believe that at some time in the future perhaps I will achieve something worth while."

Mr. Arkwright looked at Betty for the first time with a more genuine interest and said, "I must admit that your case is quite an experience for me and proves once more what I strongly believe, which is that human character has an immense depth and so many complexities that humans themselves are sometimes unable to understand and analyse."

Then becoming again formal, he rose from his chair, showing that the interview was over and said, "Well, I wish you the best of luck with your new life Miss Martin. Good afternoon!"

"Good afternoon, Sir" replied Betty, then got up and walked to the door. As she was opening it, Mrs. Howells came in.

"Oh! So you have finished then?" she asked.

"Yes, thank you Ma'am" Betty replied politely, continuing her way out.

But before she was out of earshot she overheard '...keep the original in the file... tell Mrs. Burns that Miss Martin has now legally renounced the name of Robert John Burns...'

Then she met Jennifer awaiting her. She instantly asked, "Have you finished here now?"

"Yes, thank you Miss Jennifer, And I am so glad that's over!" Betty replied.

"Good. Tell me all about it on the way home. We had better hurry now or Mistress will be in before the vegetables are cooked!" said Jennifer.

She called out, "Goodbye Jean," to the girl at the desk as they walked back to the car. Jennifer unlocked it, saw that Betty remembered the advice she had been given, about getting in modestly, then drove away.

The evening rush hour had started by now, so the journey home was slower than the journey into town. On the way Jennifer asked Betty about her interview with the Solicitor. Betty told her how Mr. Arkwright had questioned herself, had said that a Deed Poll would not be acceptable in the present circumstances, but had allowed her to sign a Statutory Declaration in which, in legal terms, she renounced the name of R.J.Burns and taken in its place permanently, the name of Elisabeth Martin and asked to be addressed always by that name.

"And where is that Declaration now. Have you got it? Asked Jennifer.

"Oh, no Miss! The Solicitor will hold it in his 'Mrs. Burns' file" replied Betty.

Jennifer thought for a while and then said quietly, as if to herself, "So, Elisabeth Martin, that's who you are now and that's how you will stay, like it or not!"

With that, Jennifer pulled into the house drive and they were home again. As she drove in, Jennifer noticed the next door neighbor, the one who bought the tools, talking with a lady in her front garden. She said to Betty, "Give me your front door key and don't get out of the car, until I am at the front door. If they look straight at you as you get out, give them a little smile, but don't speak if you can help it."

Then Jennifer got out, exchanged greetings with them, commenting on how the roads were getting busy and walked to the door. Betty got out of the car gracefully, giving the neighbours half a smile and followed Jennifer in through the door.

As soon as she was indoors Betty gave a big sigh of relief, took off her borrowed coat and headscarf, put on her large red apron and attended to the vegetables. The dinner menu, like that of the day before, had to be based on cold meat, because of the shortage of time for preparation.

Nevertheless, with Jennifer's advice and some help, Betty was ready to lay the table and dish up by the time Anita arrived.

Anita looked at her; saw she was wearing the blue dress under her apron and asked, "Did you keep the appointment then?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Betty answered.

"How did it go?"

"All right, thank you Ma'am."

"Hmm... that doesn't tell me much!" said Anita and then went on, "What's your name now?"

"Elisabeth Martin, Ma'am," answered Betty.

"And what happened to the name of Robert John Burns?" Anita asked.

"Renounced, relinquished and abandoned, Ma'am," answered Betty with a mischievous smile.

"Well, you must fully appreciate that you are only my maid now, and understand that from now on I shall treat you as simply that and nothing more!" Anita said very firmly and then added, "Just remember that my only obligations to you now, are those I have accepted in the contract of employment I gave you."

Betty, who had thought until then that she was the one who was giving out news that day, realised that Anita had totally demolished any ideas of self importance she might have had and had issued her final ruling on the conditions under which she, Betty, would have to work permanently.

She managed to whisper, "Yes, Ma'am," as Anita was heading for the living room.

Jennifer silent and even a bit stunned from Anita's demonstration of absolute authority towards Betty followed her and shut the door.

Betty stood for a while, holding her hands together to stop their trembling, and then managed in a great effort to pull herself together.

It took her another minute or two to remember what she had to do next, then prepared the drinks, usually taken at this time, by Anita and Jennifer and put them on a tray. Then she collected the day's mail and added that to the tray and took it to the living room door. It may have been only a fraction of a minute, but it seemed a long time between her knock and Jennifer's answering call to come in. As she did so she noticed that Anita had already kicked off her day shoes and slipped on the soft shoes which she, Betty, had remembered to put beside her chair, before going out that afternoon. She handed Anita's drink to her and also her mail and then handed Jennifer's drink to her. From each of them she received a polite 'thank you Betty' but no further comment. So she went back to the kitchen and the dining room, laid the table and knocked again to tell them dinner was ready.

As she was wearing the blue dress that Anita had given her, which she now regarded as her 'best', she kept her red apron on whilst serving them. She was very relieved when Anita spoke in a kindly fashion, saying, "You look nice in that dress Betty, so you may keep it for the rest of this evening, but you had better keep the apron on as well, until you go to bed."

They had their coffee in the living room and when Betty served it, Anita told her that now she is settling down to a real working maid's life, she must be fitted out with real working maid's clothes, instead of the theatrical maid's uniforms, which seemed marvelous when the changeover was only a matter of fun. The frilly afternoon uniform must be carefully washed and pressed and put away wrapped in tissue, in the hope that one day she might wear it serving guests at some special party. The two morning frocks, the pink and the light blue might be used for ordinary evening wear, say from the time dinner was ready for serving onwards, provided they could be lengthened by at least five inches with false hems or waist insets. She would look into that herself and cut the material for them and have Betty sew them up as part of sewing dressmaking lessons she was to have. In the meantime some simple but hardwearing working dresses with calf length skirts would be bought, together with proper overalls and matching aprons. She broke off then to let Betty go and have her own dinner and wash up, then come back for further talk.

When Betty came back she saw that Jennifer had a long list of items on a piece of paper in front of her and was told it was an attempt to provide her with everything she would need through the coming winter. Buying so much at once would be very costly of course, so everything would have to be the cheapest in style which be expected to wear well, although consideration of winter warmth would have to come first. Most of the items would be chosen on the decision of the Mistress as to what she considered would be suitable, but Betty would be allowed some choice within limits.

"For example," said Jennifer with a laugh, "I have an item here, 'warm knickers or long johns or directoire'. Which would you like?"

"Directoire, please," said Betty, "I remember my mother used to wear some very pretty ones."

Jennifer laughed again and said, "Well, yours won't be very pretty, but they'll keep you warm, when you have to hang out the washing!"

She then read various other items on the list, allowing Betty to express her preferences for basic colours as available, and noting any other preferences which might possibly be met.

When they had talked over most of the items listed, Anita said to Betty, "I am asking Miss Armstrong to shop tomorrow and Saturday for the clothes and shoes. If the shoes don't fit we will have to change them later, taking you if necessary to try them on. But I cannot let you take part in the shopping for clothes. For one thing it would take up too much of Miss Armstrong's time and for another thing there is too much work here you must do, to allow you to be out so long. The other things like the handbag, hairbrush and so on, I will get for you. You will be able to sort them all out on Sunday and on Monday you will be dressed in proper working clothes and work in the manner we now know you can do, without expecting any special praise."

She paused for a moment lit a cigarette and continued, "Also, as of now, I want you to address Miss Armstrong as 'Miss Armstrong' and not as 'Miss Jennifer'. Somehow or other you have managed to make that sound familiar, so I must stop it. Also, whilst at first I liked the special goodbye you have been giving me and the special welcome curtsy as I return in the evenings, they now seem too effusive for an ordinary Mistress and maid relationship."

Then she thought a bit and added, "But, I want you to learn to show your respect to me and/or any other guests in the house by performing a slight curtsy, almost unnoticeable, whenever you want to ask for something. I don't think you need any more tuition to perform your daily housemaid's duties. You quickly showed an extraordinary aptitude or subconsciously acquired prior knowledge of that. If you come across a job you don't know how to deal with, ask me about it and I will give you advice. Apart from dealing with any special problems, I will expect you to get on with your work without supervision, but I demand efficiency and I will not tolerate any sloppy attitude. You do need tuition however in two areas of normal women's activities. Miss Armstrong and I will help you with these, in our spare time in the evenings. I will teach you sewing and simple dressmaking and Miss Armstrong will teach you knitting, darning, crocheting etc."

She stopped for a moment and added, "That became a long speech I am afraid. Thank you for listening so quietly. Is there anything I have said which you don't understand?"

Betty, as usually, was trying hard to get all this to her head and she simply said, "No, thank you Ma'am," remembering to curtsy slightly, as she was asked to do. And as Anita and Jennifer were exchanging looks of satisfaction, she continued, "You have explained everything very clearly and simply and I will do my best to serve you as your maid and try to please you as I should. If I have shown any familiarity towards Miss Armstrong, I apologise, to her and to you, and promise to be careful about that in the future. I do want Miss Armstrong to know how much I have appreciated some real kindness she has shown to me."

By now it was obviously time for the late coffee and biscuits, so Betty went to the kitchen and prepared it without waiting to be told to do so.

She served Jennifer and Anita and returned to the kitchen for her own. It was not long before Jennifer was saying 'good night' to Anita in the hall and Betty washed up to have the kitchen clear in the morning.

Anita had gone back to the living room for something and Betty wondered if she should go to her to say 'goodnight' or not. But Anita met her coming into the hall and Betty asked her, "Anything more Ma'am?" to which Anita replied, "No, thank you. Good-night!"

So, with a 'Goodnight Ma'am' and a very slight curtsey Betty departed for her room after her usual inspection of the house. She went to bed holding Emily tightly. She did not go quickly to sleep this night though. She realized that the discipline now being imposed by Anita would make her feel the inferiority of her social status and leave her with no one she could talk with freely. It would be lonely. She got panicked all of a sudden. She was completely under Anita's absolute authority, she renounced Bob's privileges and she was tied to a working contract that was more like paid slavery. And she accepted that fate without the slightest objection. In fact she fully cooperated with Anita and Jennifer for her transformation. And yet again, she loved what was happening to her, she loved getting up every morning, putting her maid's clothes on and working in the house. That was offering her a peace of mind she never had as Bob.

And then she thought of Anita. It was amazing how she adapted herself to her new role of Mistress to her. Her authoritarian manner was exceeding all expectations. Even Jennifer who was the one who initiated everything was obviously surprised with Anita's behaviour towards her ex husband turned maid! Apparently in both Anita and Betty, hidden parts of their characters have been triggered by Jennifer's initiative and an innocent experiment was turning to a serious affair, altering dramatically their lives for ever!

Well, so be it! She is Elisabeth Martin now, a live in maidservant. Then she remembered telling the Solicitor of her hope that some day she might achieve something worth while. As a first step, perhaps, she might rise out of the humiliation of always having to do as she was told, by anticipating everything that was to be done and doing it before having to be told. Was that possible? She was going to try.

As she was falling asleep, she remembered again her coming birthday.

Would anyone else remember the birthday of a lowly servant?

## Episode 4

Friday 16 Sep 1983

It was 6.30am on Friday morning. Betty switched off her alarm and got out of bed immediately, as she had done on the previous mornings it had called her. But this morning she felt somehow different. Something was missing and she felt very strange. Nevertheless she enjoyed preparing herself for work, taking morning tea to her Mistress and serving her as personal maid until she was ready to go to work.

Before she went out Anita told Betty that there would be some fish for her to cook in the evening, under supervision, as part of a programme of training. In that way Betty would soon learn to cook their meals as a matter of routine. There would be occasions of course, when special preparations would be required, but instructions for those would be given as necessary.

Anita's departure without ceremony implied that she expected Betty to get on with her work without any further instruction and Betty did so, first the daily chores and then the rest of the week's chores. Whilst working Betty mused on the strange feeling she had. She remembered the thrill of her trip with Jennifer the day before, her first time out as Betty, her introduction to Jennifer's friend Mrs. Howells and her interview with the Solicitor, Mr. Arkwright. She remembered how eager she had been to take her mother's name, so eager that she had not thought much about her abandonment of Bob's name. Now, the significance of that was coming home to her with the realisation that whatever might happen she would have to face it as Elisabeth Martin and as Elisabeth Martin only. It was really frightening. But, as Elisabeth Martin she had her mother's name and if she was able to face any situation with determination to think and act as her mother would have done, she would not go far wrong.

Anita let herself in when she returned that evening. Her soft house shoes were already awaiting her in the living room, as they had been the previous day and Betty brought in her usual drink and set it on the small table beside her with a quiet 'Good Evening, Ma'am' to which she responded 'Thank you, Betty'.

Jennifer came shortly afterwards and Betty similarly served her with a drink, for which she received similar response and no further conversation. As she moved back to the kitchen, she couldn't stop herself thinking that being a servant means that she was mostly treated as if she was a house object. It was something still producing mixed feelings to her. On one hand she was getting a sinister pleasure from being a female servant, on the other though she was hurt from the attitude of Anita and Jennifer. But it was only the beginning, it was only a matter of time now to get used to her lowly status, she was firmly trapped in!

Anita interrupted her thoughts as she joined her in the kitchen and directed the cooking, but left her to dish up and serve the meal. As soon as Betty had served them with their coffee in the living room, Jennifer brought in from her car a number of parcels and showed Anita her purchases. Later, when Jennifer had gone, Anita told Betty she could take the parcels to her room. She said there were a few more items to come including shoes, which Miss Armstrong would bring in tomorrow and then Betty would have a complete wardrobe of clothes and accessories of her own.

But when she tried to thank her for them, Anita stopped her, saying, "They are your own clothes, due to you as of right. When you were a man you had a man's wardrobe, suitable for a man of Bob's standing. It was taken away with the rest of his possessions when you stopped being a man and now you are completely changing over to the position of my maidservant, his things have been sold and replaced by outfits suitable for you in your present situation. You will have some free time on Sunday and then you will be able to sort out all the items and try them on, in readiness for work from Monday onwards. When you have dressed yourself as you will be dressed on Monday morning, come down and let me see how you look."

Changing the subject, she then said to Betty, "Thanks to the great help Miss Armstrong has given to me this week and to the extraordinary aptitude you have shown for your maid's duties, I can go to work tomorrow, instead of having to stay here trying to catch up with the housework, so I shall want my tea at 7.30 again in the morning. Also, I expect to be able to go to work every Saturday in future. That, together with my arrival fresh and sharp to time every morning, will give a considerable boost to my importance and to my earnings in the Company."

Betty was quite surprised and very pleased with this last comment, because it softened the rather harsh way she had been excluded from any discussion relating to Anita's business, or Bob's affairs, since she had become just a servant.

Saturday 17 Sep 1983

Saturday was very much like the day before, except that Jennifer came in during the morning with some shoes for Betty to try them on. Thanks to the similarities in size and shape of their feet and Jennifer's good judgement, they fitted well and were then put aside to await Anita's approval.

For the evening meal that day, Anita had told Betty what she wanted as regards of vegetables and slow cooked pudding for the sweet, but that was all. Perhaps she had intended to bring in something from the delicatessen. Jennifer had some idea of her own, however. She checked that Betty already had the pudding slow cooking, told her to carry on preparing the vegetables as directed and went out saying she would soon be back with 'something special'. And she was, with a duck and some oranges for making sauce. Then, during the cooking, she showed Betty how to make notes of what she had done, so she could refer to them in future; she recommended the making of notes about all the cooking Betty did under supervision.

Anita came in a little later than usual, obviously tired but also obviously thankful that she could sit down and be waited on and when sufficiently relaxed, be served with a pleasant meal by her own maidservant. Betty's reward was in knowing that she had already made herself extremely useful and in being complimented for her part in the preparation of the meal.

When, after the meal and the coffee which followed, Betty returned to the living room to collect the coffee things, Anita told her that as tomorrow would be Sunday she would not require her morning tea until 8.30 instead of 7.30 and then added, "But since you now have to get up early every morning throughout the week, it is only fair that, except for any special occasion which might arise, your daily duties will end with clearing away these coffee things and you will be off duty until you start again the following morning. I will not order you to go to bed at any particular time, unless some special reason should arise, but I do think you should generally go to bed not later than 11 o'clock on Saturdays and not later than 10 o'clock other nights, so please let me know whenever you wish to stay up later."

"Yes' Ma'am, thank you Ma'am," Betty replied. She looked somewhat glum however, until Anita went on, "Probably you are wondering about spending your evenings in your room with nothing to do, but you will have plenty to do. Except on the occasions when we

are otherwise busy, Miss Armstrong will give you a couple of hours tuition on knitting on Mondays and I will give you a couple of hours tuition in dressmaking on Thursdays and you will need the other evenings for your 'homework'. We shall keep you busy!"

"Thank you Ma'am, thank you Miss Armstrong," said Betty as she picked up her tray and returned to the kitchen. She finished her washing up, checked that everything was tidy and went up to her room.

Sunday 18 Sep 1983

Her work was easier on Sunday. Although Anita expected her maid to be properly dressed when serving her morning tea, she did not require much assistance with bathing and dressing herself. The daily chores list, as such, was suspended and items such as clearing up the bathroom had to be dealt with later on week days.

So Betty was able to enjoy a leisurely breakfast of cereal, toast and a boiled egg, similar to that she prepared for her Mistress, and after that to deal with such clearing up as was necessary. Before the end of the morning, therefore, she was able to return to her room and very eagerly she started unpacking her parcels.

The first item to come out was her overcoat, which she liked so much that she hoped the weather would soon go cold enough to justify wearing it.

Next she unpacked her raincoat, which was very practical in appearance, fitting closely on her shoulders and flaring gently over the whole length, giving her a very feminine silhouette. Then she sorted out her dresses. They also were of better quality than she had expected, but she could see that they were not comparable with the dresses worn by Anita or Jennifer. Even her inexperienced eye could tell that the materials and finish were inferior.

After her dresses she found her overalls and aprons. First three pastel coloured wrap-around overalls of blue, green and yellow with three quarter sleeves and white piping around the sleeves and collar, very serviceable.

She found also coordinating aprons and cups. She liked the aprons very much. They were large with a bib and straps crossing in the back and two large front pockets, very practical indeed. The same white piping was bordering the bib and pockets of the aprons. She also found two smaller white aprons without a bib, obviously serving aprons and two pretty flower patterned pinafores with halter neck bibs.

Next she came to her nighties. They were full length, warm to the touch, frilly at bodice and wrists and she thought they looked both comfortable and pretty. Then the underwear. The petticoats and knickers were of heavier material than she had expected. The petticoats were quite pretty and the knickers were of the directoire style she had asked for, but as Jennifer had told her, not as pretty as those she had remembered her mother wearing. The brassieres were much more substantial than she had worn so far, with moulded cups which she realized would, with a little discreet padding, enhance her figure. Then she had a big surprise.

Instead of a supply of panty hose, she found corsets and stockings. The corsets were light but strong and drew in her waist, but not restrictively and the stockings were thicker than the tights she had worn.

She took off the clothes she was wearing and dressed again very carefully in her new clothes. She judged the feel of each new garment, as she put it on and was pleased with every one. Then, when she fastened her dress and had her shoes on, she wriggled her body around a little and smoothed the clothes down with her hands. She had never felt anything like this before! It was as though everything had been specially made for her and for her alone. She looked at her reflection in the mirror and was so pleased that she retouched her hair and the very light make up she used indoors.

She still had a few parcels unopened, so she opened them and found they were mostly very welcome accessories. She also found some housemaids' caps matching her overalls and aprons and put one on. Then she selected the appropriate overall and put it on as well. Finally she put on the last item of clothing that was missing, the item that started it all, the apron. As soon as she did the straps an extraordinary feeling of shyness had come over her. She dreaded presenting herself for inspection, but knew that she had to do so and therefore almost crept down the stairs.

She found Anita drinking coffee in the dining room with Jennifer and knocked timidly in the door. "Come in, Betty," called Anita, "and let us see what you look in your own clothes."

She went in and stopped as soon as she was in full view. They looked at her, then at each other and then at her again.

Anita spoke first. "You look like a real working girl now! Do you feel like one, too?"

"Yes, thank you Ma'am," replied Betty blushing all over.

Anita then adjusted Betty's cap slightly, saying, "That, I think, looks better, but of course you may please yourself how you wear it, provided it covers your hair to keep out dust and cooking smells while you work."

Then Jennifer spoke, "Take your apron off and open your overall Betty and show us how your dress looks on you."

Betty did as she was told and Anita commented, "It is exactly right for you, modest but trim and tidy."

Betty started to close her overall again, but Jennifer stopped her saying, "I spent a lot of time getting your underclothes for you, so let me see that you are wearing them!"

The shyness which had come over Betty, as she came down the stairs, came all over her again, but she lifted the hem of her dress to reveal the petticoat beneath. When Jennifer went on, "Yes, that's all right, now the knickers and stocking tops please!" she uncovered only one leg nearer to Jennifer and looked at Anita as if asking her to say, she had seen enough.

But Anita only said, "Show both legs please, while I remind you that any orders given to you under my authority must be obeyed immediately and without question, otherwise you will be punished." There was no anger in her voice, only calmed authority, as she waited for Betty's answer which was a simple "Yes Ma'am."

Then she continued, "All right, you may straighten your clothes now and put back your apron on. We are, however, surprised by your sudden shyness. Can you explain it?"

"I am not sure if I can Ma'am," answered Betty "except that since I have realized how much my change of name and especially my renunciation of Bob's name, has undermined my self confidence, I feel I have only my mother's example to follow and I have become very sensitive to anything which might be thought to be poking fun at her, such as laughing at me wearing directoire knickers."

At this, Jennifer was quick to say, "I was not laughing at you wearing those knickers, in fact they are absolutely right for you and look nice on you. Nor would I dream of poking fun at your mother, but in her day they used to make some very nice ones, with pretty embroidery on them, which you cannot get now."

During this exchange Anita had been looking Betty up and down in a professional way and then said, "Your corset and other underwear have much improved the set of your dress, but perhaps you should have a little more fullness over your hips. We could get that by padding the corset, but probably you would be more comfortable and look more natural with an under petticoat of underskirt bouffant with flounces. We can make that your first dressmaking job, with plenty of sewing practice for you!"

This helped to clear the troubled look on Betty's face and Anita continued in her business style manner, "Coming back to the issue of your new outfits and the way you should wear them, I must tell you that in warmer days you can put on your overall and apron without the dress, provided that you maintain your feminine appearance. You must have noticed also that among your new clothes there are two smaller white aprons. You will wear one of those only when you serve us dinner or coffee, but you will change back to your standard apron as soon as you go back to the kitchen. I will be very crossed if I ever catch you washing up or doing other messy jobs, wearing the white apron!"

And she concluded in a less formal manner, "You better go and make yourself some tea and have some cake, then come back here, I have some news for you which should please you."

When Betty returned, Anita had her business case open on the table and her copy of Betty's Contract of employment in front of her. She said, "This is official, so I better address you by your proper name, Miss Martin - Elisabeth Martin. Please, go and fetch your copy of the Contract and also bring your purse."

Betty wondered why Anita had told her to bring her purse, for there was nothing in it.

But Anita explained, "You have had just one week's training, but you have done so well that you deserve a reward, so I am making a bonus payment of 30 Pounds to you."

And with those words she passed an envelope over to her, saying, "Please, open it and count it in front of me, and put it in your purse."

Betty hesitated and Anita added firmly, "Do as you are told!"

So the maid opened the envelope and counted out 30 Pounds in mixed notes and coins and put it into her purse.

Anita then went on, "In fact, you have done so well, that I have decided to start you on paid employment under the terms of the Contract as from tomorrow Monday, 19th of September 1983. You will be my living in maidservant, with free board and lodging and a weekly cash allowance which will be paid to you each Friday evening. To start with, the

cash allowance will be provisionally 30 Pounds a week, to be adjusted as necessary when we have obtained all information about deductions, National Insurance etc. In addition to that I will replace worn out overalls, aprons and working clothes in general, but you will have to buy personal clothing and other items. You can be sure that I will carry out my commitments under the Contract, whatever happens and of course I expect that you will carry out yours."

Anita paused to have a sip from her drink and continued in a business like manner, "Now, I am putting a note on my copy of the Contract, "Elisabeth Martin commenced paid employment under this Contract on 19.09.83, and I suggest you write on your copy 'My paid employment under the terms of this Contract commenced on 19.09.83'.

Your employment as a maidservant and your entitlement to free board and lodging is guaranteed therefore, for a minimum period of three years from that date. You will be earning your own living, doing the kind of work you love and are ideally suited for, and I am certain you will be happy in your new life. By now of course, you must have had time to study the contract in detail. It is not possible for you to object to any of its terms, but if there is anything in it which you do not understand I will explain it to you."

"I don't want to object to any of the terms of the Contract," replied Betty, but there are two things I don't understand. At the end of the Contract there is a clause which says that in return for the guarantee of board and lodging included in it, I waive any right I might otherwise have to make any claim whatsoever against you, Mrs. Anita Burns, in the name of, or for the benefit of Robert John Burns. What does that mean, Ma'am?"

"You will remember," replied Anita, "that when you changed over from Robert John Burns to Elisabeth Martin, you gave up any rights or privileges you had as my husband. Now, under the Contract, you have a guarantee of free board and lodging for at least three years and in return give up any right whatsoever you may had have to make any claim of any sort against me in Bob's name. It might become important to me if I should decide to divorce him."

"I understand Ma'am," said Betty in a cautious way.

She could not visualize herself as ever wanting to make any claim against her Mistress on Bob's behalf, so thought no more about it.

"What was the other thing you could not understand Betty?" Anita then asked.

"I could not find anything to tell me how to hand in my notice, if I should want to," replied Betty.

"I am afraid there is no provision for you to discharge yourself from this Contract," said Anita. "You have contracted to serve your employer with diligence and obedience to lawful commands for as long as you remain under Contract, whilst I have contracted to guarantee that you will be so employed for a minimum period of three years."

Betty knew that she would never want to discharge herself from service with Anita, but was afraid that she might be very unhappy if she should find herself under the same Contract with someone else. But the Contract gave her no option in that respect.

The telephone rang. Anita looked at Betty and said, "Let me hear you answer it, please."

So Betty picked up the receiver and in the lightest tone of voice she could manage said, "Highfield 4228, this is Mrs. Burns residence." .....

"Yes Ma'am." .....

"Yes, thank you Ma'am," and turned to Jennifer and said, "Mrs. Howells is asking to speak to you, please, Miss Armstrong."

Whilst Jennifer took the phone and talked with her friend from the Solicitor's office, Anita said to Betty, "I shall expect you to be dressed as you are now when you bring my tea tomorrow morning, but now run upstairs, take off the cap, overall and matching apron and put on one of those pretty flowered pinafores for me to see.

Betty was back very quickly obviously pleased and Anita said, "Yes, you look really nice like that. You may keep that on until you go to bed tonight, in one of your own night-ies, of course."

Jennifer returned from the telephone and said to Anita, "Margaret thought Betty sounded quite well on the phone," upon which Anita said turning to the maid, "Right, from tomorrow onwards Betty, answering the telephone will be part of your job. But you must always be careful."

"Yes Ma'am," answered Betty, hoping that she would be able to repeat that light tone in all her speech.

Anita added, "It will be very useful for me to be able to call you and to have you take messages for me."

Then she picked up Betty's copy of the Contract and handed it to her saying, "Keep it somewhere safe. You may need to refer to it sometimes.

In any case your life will be in accordance with its terms for at least three years and probably much longer!"

Then, in a surprised tone, Oh! Look! Your purse! It won't be long before you will need to spend some of your money!"

Taking the articles gracefully, Betty said, "Thank you very much Ma'am, perhaps I had better go on sorting out the rest of my things Ma'am?"

"Yes," "replied Anita, "but remember that you must look after them and see that you are tidy and properly dressed at all times. You will have to be a credit to me when I bring important business guests, sometimes without warning, as I am likely to be expected to do."

When Betty returned to her room, Jennifer told Anita that Margaret had asked if she could have Betty for a couple of hours on Wednesday afternoon, to clean up the attic which David, her husband, had converted into a playroom for the children. It would be a brushing down, washing down and scrubbing job. If Betty was willing to do it, they would be very thankful. Also, they would be interested to see if the children should get to liking her. Anita knew Margaret and readily agreed to send Betty out to her. The experience of working to the orders of another Mistress for a couple of hours would be good for her.

Then she said, "Did you ask Margaret if she had any news about the house in Maple Road we have been hoping to rent?"

"Yes," replied Jennifer "but she thinks, that the old lady who owns it is considering selling it instead of re-letting it. If she does re-let it, we will be Margaret's most highly recommended applicants, but she suggests that we look at the prospects of raising a mortgage to buy it."

And she continued in a rather excited manner, "See if you can work out how much cash you could raise towards a deposit and I will find out how the different Building Societies are granting loans."

When Betty went to bed that night just before ten o'clock, in one of her own nighties, she picked up and hugged little Emily with a smile and was soon fast asleep. She had not heard Jennifer leave the house, nor she had heard Anita come upstairs, but she realized that she was expected to be in bed before they moved.

Monday 19 Sep 1983

She was up in good time next morning, put her working uniform on and rushed down to the kitchen to start breakfast. She brought tea to her Mistress with a gentle "Good morning Ma'am" and began laying out the outfit she knew Anita would wear that day.

She was about to go and run the bath when Anita caught her attention and said, "I only want to tell you how pleased I am to welcome you on this first day of service with me, as an employee maidservant, with excellent understanding of what I require of you and complete obedience to my orders. This is a special day, of course, but I am certain only one of many to come. And before I forget, have you a cigarette?"

Surprised, Betty answered readily, "Yes, Ma'am!" and ran to her room to fetch the packet. It contained the last one of the seven.

Anita had given her instructions to smoke one per day, before giving up altogether.

"No!" said Anita, "I wasn't asking for it, but now I know that you have been smoking one per day, as instructed, and today is a special day in that respect also, being the last day you are allowed to smoke at all! It must have been a difficult test of obedience and I congratulate you."

"Thank you Ma'am" replied Betty, "I was strongly tempted several times but I knew that if I took as much as one puff, I wouldn't be able to face you without shame."

"Good! That is as it should be! But hurry with my bath now," said Anita reverting to her normal businesslike manner.

Betty wasted no time in getting the bath ready and soon Anita was ready for work, feeling very pleased indeed, with her household arrangements.

After her departure, Betty had her breakfast and went about her work, feeling that it was indeed a special day! She revelled in the feeling of her working clothes and in the glimpses she caught of her reflections in mirrors as she passed them.

It was her first day as a real maidservant and she was certain that there would be many, many more. It was also the first day she was shown how to knit, for Jennifer came in the evening with wool and needles and started her on knitting a scarf. Betty's enjoyment of this was twofold, first the pleasure in the learning and secondly the pleasure in being al-

lowed to sit in the living room once more in the course of the lesson, even though she was not included in any general conversation and no longer felt 'at home' in the room.

She remembered that it was in this room that her fantasy of becoming a maid had turned into reality, in a matter of only 10 days! What had started with an apron, apparently in fun, had developed into a whole new way of life, because of Jennifer's perception for Bob's inclinations, but also because of Anita's extraordinary adaptation in this new style of relation with her husband turned maid!

At one point Jennifer said to her, "If I am available to give you another lesson next Monday and if you have used your spare time to complete the straightforward knitting I will show you how to finish of."

Betty thanked Jennifer with a very warm "Thank you Miss Armstrong for your time," then Anita who was sitting in her usual armchair reading said to her, "Now that you have finished your knitting lesson I must tell you something. There will be a job for you to do at Mrs. Howell's house on Wednesday afternoon. Your general chores list may have to be re-arranged to fit it in. It will be a rough job, not very pleasant, but within your duties as a maid and good practice for some of the jobs you will have to do when we move house. You are to be there at two o'clock and as you will have to walk, you had better leave here at 1.30. Go to her side door, not her front door and then take your instructions from her."

She paused for a moment, as she often did when she was lecturing Betty, and then continued, "Remember, you are not allowed to take any payment or gift from her. Now to change the subject, I will add more duties to your chores list. I don't think a Mistress who is paying a maid to work for her should have to carry domestic shopping, so I am going to reorganize that. On Friday evening, when I will be paying your wages, I want you to have ready a list of all the household items used during the week, plus items of food consumed. That will help me to compile shopping lists for you. You will be able to shop for most of the items in the supermarket shop, but until we move house your shopping excursions will have to be limited to the late evening shopping hours, during which daylight will have given way to dusk or darkness."

Betty had not been out of the house since the changeover, except for the afternoon when Jennifer had driven her to the Solicitor's office, so the prospect of being sent out on her own was both exciting and scarifying!

Wednesday 21 Sep 1983

When the alarm went off this Wednesday morning Betty instantly remembered it was her birthday. She was 39 today! But it was her first birthday in her new station in life.

She was wondering if her Mistress was going to mention something. She took her tea upstairs on time. She knocked at the door and heard Anita's voice, "Come in birthday girl!"

She blushed all over as she entered her Mistress' bedroom. Anita was sitting on her bed with a big smile in her face. She had a sip from her tea to clear her throat and said to Betty, "You thought I was going to forget, because you are a maid now, don't you Betty," she said in a nearly accusing tone.

Betty managed to say in her soft voice which she managed quite well by now, "I don't know Ma'am, after all I am only your employee now and I don't know if it is correct...."

Anita interrupted her with her hand, "Stop blathering girl, of course I am going to wish you 'happy birthday', you are thirty nine today, halfway through your life and look at you, at the beginning of a new life as well. So this is the first birthday of many more to come hopefully of my maid Elisabeth Martin!" She stopped to have another sip of her tea and then picked a small parcel from her night table, "and this is your present Betty."

Betty was very touched; she approached the bed and picked her present with a small curtsy, "Thank you Ma'am, I am honoured Ma'am" she managed to say.

Anita said impatiently, "Come on girl, open your present, we don't have all day, I have to go to work and you have your chores to do."

Betty said a quick, "yes, of course Ma'am", and started undoing the small box. She opened it and found inside a silver bracelet, she looked at it more carefully and realized that something was written inside, she managed to read the small letters, 'Betty, 21.09.83'. She instantly tried it in her write hand, it fitted perfectly. Nothing fancy about it, but quite elegant looking in her wrist. She said in a too eager tone of voice, "It is lovely Ma'am, thank you so much, I will certainly cherish this present Ma'am."

"I am glad you like it girl it is such an important date for both of us and a starting point for you. Now run along to start my bath it is getting late." She started getting up from bed and then she remembered something because she said, "Come here please."



Betty approached a bit hesitantly, Anita was standing now and suddenly grabbed Betty and gave her a kiss in the mouth, a kiss that Betty remembered very well from her past as John, full of passion and promises.

She reacted like an inexperienced schoolgirl and let Anita do the kissing. She was tremendously excited and the only thing she could think of was what a third person could think seeing that scene, a lady in her night gown, kissing passionately her maid in her working uniform!

Anita released her as abruptly as she started it and said, "Don't have any naughty thoughts Betty; it is still early to invite my maid to bed, now run my bath please."

That brought Betty back to reality and she started acting as an efficient maid again. Soon Anita was out of the house, reminding Betty that she had to go to Mrs. Howell's house in the afternoon, something that of course Betty remembered with anxious anticipation.

When she set out on her walk to Mrs. Howell's house it was raining, so with raincoat and umbrella, she felt reasonably confident. When, after her rather timid knock on the side door as directed, it was answered by a large man who said, "Hello, and who are you and what do you want?" She was taken aback. But she managed to answer, using her soft voice.

"I'm Betty Martin, Mrs. Burns' maid Sir and I have been sent here to do some cleaning for Mrs. Howells."

"Fine! Come in," he said. "We will make good use of you!"

Mrs Howells then appeared, accompanied by a girl aged about five and a boy aged about three. As she greeted Betty they were asking "Who is this person, Mum?" "This person is Betty Martin" she replied "and Mrs. Burns has sent her over to clean up your new Play Room."

"That's the room Daddy has been altering for us!" they told Betty excitedly, and she learned that the girl was 'Patsy' - short for Patricia - and the boy was 'Rodge' - short for Roger. Then they began to pester their mother with questions of the type, "Where did she live? Had she walked far in the rain? Why did Mrs. Burns sent her?"

Finally Mrs Howells calmed them down saying, "Now children, you must let Betty get on with her work" and showed Betty where to hang her raincoat and stand her umbrella. She waited whilst Betty opened her holdall, took out her overall, apron and cap and put them on, then took her upstairs to the room she had come to clean. It was an additional room made in the attic space with partitioning, with a new window at the end wall. It required much brushing, washing down and even scrubbing in parts.

Betty's heart sank! She had never had to face a job like this before. But Mrs Howells gave her clear instructions regarding what she wanted done and by her diligence Betty succeeded in getting it done well. While she cleaned up the bucket and utensils Mrs. Howells took her husband and children up to the room to see it. They were delighted and chattered about the games they would have in it.

Mrs. Howells insisted on Betty having a cup of tea before she went and with the children calling out their goodbyes, she set out on her return walk.

There were more people about in the streets at this time, but she was as careful as before to appear to be going normally about her business and nobody showed any interest in her, until an elderly lady suddenly crossed the road straight towards her.

"Excuse me dear, but do you have any 10p pieces?" I must phone my daughter but I have only a 50p piece."

Betty smiled at her with relief and took out her purse and offered four 10p pieces and some coppers in exchange. She gave silent but heartfelt thanks to her Mistress for her forethought in providing her with change.

The lady thanked her and then added, "I have been waiting by the phone box for some time, hoping that someone would come along whom I could ask for help and I knew the moment I saw you that you would help if you could. I do have intuitions about people you know!"

Betty smiled at her again and murmured, "I am very pleased," and as the lady went back to the phone box, she walked on, wondering if her situation in life was reflected in her demeanour.

Later that evening Anita told her that Mrs Howells had telephoned and was so pleased with her that she would like to have her every Wednesday afternoon, to help her in many different ways. Betty didn't make any comment, but she was secretly pleased that she could manage working as a maid, outside her environment.

Thursday 22 Sep 1983

The following day she was alone in the house about mid morning when the telephone rang. She picked up the receiver to answer it, but before she could speak, the voice of George Holt, one of Bob's old colleagues, came booming over the line saying, "It's your lucky day today Bob! Astra Control Systems want an electronics engineer and the job is right up your street and certain to lead to higher things! Well, what do you say about that, old boy?"

## EPISODE 5 (FINAL)

Betty got startled and slightly panicked, but her mind was very alert and she decided to play her new role to the end. She resumed again the lightest possible tone of voice, as the other day with Mrs.Howells and answered very politely, "I'm sorry Sir but Mr. Burns is out of the country and Mrs. Burns will not be back till after six. Can I take a message?"

She felt an awkward silence at the other end of the line. Finally George Holt spoke again, this time in a less booming voice, "Oh, I had no idea that Bob has gone abroad. Probably a new job came up. Anyway, who is speaking please?"

Betty felt more reassured and answered in her meek polite voice, "I am Betty Sir, Mrs. Burns's new maid. I am sorry but I can't really inform you about Mr. Burns' whereabouts, probably if you ring back this evening Mrs. Burns will be able to tell you more about it."

"Well, in that case I'll try to ring back later. Thank you very much, good bye". This time his voice was quite indifferent, he was talking to a servant after all!

Betty got a deep breath as she put the receiver down. Her knees were slightly trembling so she had to sit down to the chair by the telephone table. She saw her reflection in the mirror across the hallway, the hem of her modest dress showing slightly, the rest of the dress covered firmly by her wraparound overall, the matching housemaids' cap protecting her hair and the duster that she was still holding in her left hand, the perfect maid! She realized that the idea of going back to work as Bob left her completely indifferent, she felt that a big burden was taken away from her, she was now Elisabeth Martin an ordinary housemaid and that made her happier than any prospects of going back to the Electronics Industry. She looked at the big clock above the mirror, it was getting late and she had to rush back to the kitchen to start dinner.

It was nearly seven o'clock when Anita came back together with Jennifer. Betty just managed to have everything ready. She was wearing her clean dress and the flower patterned pinafore over it. Both ladies went directly to the living room, stretched themselves in the sofas and kicked their shoes away. Betty served drinks and stood by them waiting further instructions. She knew by now that she could speak only when she was spoken.

Anita had some small talk with Jennifer and finally addressed Betty, "Well, how was your day Betty? Did you manage to finish all your chores? Any messages for me?"

Betty gave her a full account of her day and of course told her about George Holt's phone call and how she managed to fool him.

Both ladies were very satisfied and especially Anita who said to her, "I think you did very well today. The fact that you can be so convincing on the phone is very encouraging. If Mr. Holt rings back I'll handle the matter, though I have a suspicion that he won't be bothered."

Betty understood the hint. She knew very well that George wasn't particularly fond of Anita.

"Now then," Anita continued, "You can serve dinner in twenty minutes, we are both starving and let's hope that your cooking is satisfactory enough... After dinner and washing up you will have your first dressmaking lesson. Remember, it is Thursday today and I promised to spend a couple of hours with you in the sewing machine. In fact I got some material so we can lengthen those two frocks that Miss Armstrong bought for you; I know you are keen on having them on in the evening." And then resuming her stricter tone of voice she said: "That will be all for now, you can go back to your kitchen!"

Betty thanked both ladies and rushed back to the kitchen for the final preparations of the dinner. She was quite pleased that her Mistress remembered her promise about the sewing lesson.

After Betty has gone, Jennifer said to Anita that the old lady decided to re-let the house in Maple road and by tomorrow evening Margaret would have the final answer from her.

And she continued in her pleasant well modulated voice: "It seems that the old lady is impressed that we are going to employ a live-in maid, so Margaret thinks that we are top in the list and we will most probably get a three years contract."

Anita was very pleased with the news and she said that probably this is a better solution instead of raising money to buy it. Renting a place wouldn't create any long term commitments for either of them, and would give them time for some major decisions concerning them and of course Betty.

Dinner was quite nice and they both praised Betty who could hardly hide her satisfaction. Afterwards she cleared the table, served their coffee and went back to the kitchen where she had her own dinner and did the washing up. She went back to the living room, as she was told to do when she was ready. Anita told her to go upstairs and change her wet piny with the white cotton bib apron that Miss Armstrong bought for her and also to bring down the two frocks that had to be lengthened.

Betty did as she was told and soon she found herself sitting in front of the old fashioned Singer sewing machine for her first lesson in dressmaking. Anita managed to find practically the same material so she decided to make a five inches false hem for each dress. She showed Betty how to cut it and then how to use the machine and Betty with her usual aptitude she was learning fast. In about two hours both dresses were ready and Betty had to try them on. She enjoyed immensely her sewing lesson; it gave her a nearly erotic feeling, as she was pressing the foot pedal with both her nylon clad feet touching each other.

Both ladies inspected her looks and Jennifer said, "Yes, I think that now both dresses have the right length that is appropriate for a housemaid. Now as your Mistress said before, you will wear either of those dresses in the evening after you are through with all your heavy chores. We leave up to you the decision of the apron, but I suggest that when you serve dinner you must wear your white apron, I think it is more correct, what do you think Anita?"

Anita agreed and added that the white apron would be also obligatory when they have guests, it is more appropriate for a live in domestic she said. After that in her abrupt but not rude way Anita sent Betty to her room.

Betty thanked the ladies and retired to her tiny room. As she was falling asleep holding Emily gently, she thought that tomorrow would be two weeks since that Friday when all started with an apron! Two weeks that seemed like a lifetime!

Was it really true what was happening to her or everything was a wild long-lasting dream? But then she felt the fabric of her soft nightie next to her smooth and hairless skin and that was ever so real! Bob Burns has gone for ever and Elisabeth Martin, Mrs. Burns's servant was born from his ashes!

Friday 23 to Sunday 25 Sep 1983

During the next three days everything on the surface appeared quite normal. Betty continued to work in the house in her usual very diligent manner, but something started changing in her attitude. Her style became gradually more feminine in a slightly exaggerated manner, she was moving around wiggling her back, taking shorter steps, moving her

wrists in a limping manner. Also she started being more playful as she was addressing her Mistress, using, as she thought, a more seductive voice.

Anita of course noticed that but she avoided saying anything initially. She noticed also that Betty was behaving in a much more serious way when Jennifer was around and she was becoming almost flirtatious when they were alone in the house. She thought it was going to be an interesting weekend since Jennifer was going away to visit her parents in another town.

It was late Friday evening; Jennifer has already gone for the weekend and Anita was alone in the living room reading some documents concerning her work. Betty came in bringing some coffee, dressed in her pink uniform dress and white half apron, the picture of domesticity. She served Anita with a slight curtsy and a big smile saying in a near whisper, "your coffee Ma'am".

Anita looked at her slightly startled, "I didn't hear you knocking maid", she said in a mockingly severe tone.

Betty picked instantly Anita's relaxed manner and answered in the same playful tone, "But you are alone Ma'am and I don't interrupt any private conversation with Miss Armstrong." She stopped for a minute and then continued in a more daring tone, "And may I remark Ma'am that for the first time in two weeks, that is since that Friday everything started, we are alone in the house without the presence of Miss Armstrong!"

She saw Anita's annoyance and added hastily, "Don't think me wrong Ma'am, I like Miss Armstrong a lot and she was a tremendous help during that transition period and she brought all those clothes and she organised the solicitor etc, but I feel much closer to you Ma'am, you are my real employer and I feel that I belong more to you than to her Ma'am."

Betty stopped and looked anxiously at Anita wondering if she was too bold.

Anita looked at her skeptically for a few seconds and then she smiled and said warmly, "Come here maid, sit next to me in the sofa; probably we can have another chat."

Betty noticed that she was called 'maid' rather than Betty for the second time, she somehow liked it, she found it more intimate in a sort of 'putting her down' way. She went and sat next to Anita and an erotic feeling overtook her; she wanted to be hugged and kissed but she wouldn't dare to initiate anything. She simply sat awkwardly next to her Mistress at the edge of the sofa, in what she thought was a feminine posture, keeping her legs together and smoothing her apron on top of her dress.

Anita looked at her in an amused way and said, "You know I always tell you what I really think Betty and this time won't be an exception. You have been trying to catch my attention all day by being a bit provocative in a sluttish way with exaggerated feminine movements and gestures." She stopped and looked at her.

Betty feeling more confident answered back, "I simply try to be more feminine Ma'am and I also try to balance my inner feelings, I feel that I should be more pronounced as a female and stop being a male in drag."

"This is exactly your mistake Betty; you behave now like a male in drag by playing the female in an exaggerated manner. This is the classic mistake of all cross dressers."

Betty looked a bit puzzled not knowing how to answer that and gave Anita the chance to continue, "and of course no normal maid would behave like that. I know you try to be more convincing, but in time you will realise that true femininity, in particular in a servant, is synonymous to subtlety. You already know that a maidservant must go unnoticed, in particular in the presence of visitors or other guests."

Anita stopped to look at Betty who had a hurt look in her face. She looked so distressed that Anita pulled her towards her and hugged her.

"I know, I know" she said in a soothing voice, 'it must be hard for you, poor thing, to grasp everything so quickly, you need time to catch up and I am here to help you.'" She stopped hugging her as quickly as she started it, saying at the same time, "I have to remind myself all the time that you are my maid now, we both have to think in those terms and in particular when we are just the two of us in the house. Probably Jennifer's presence is beneficial in that sense for both of us."

Betty, felt even more confused now, Anita was changing her attitude all the time, it was the carrot and stick method implemented within minutes. She said in her low voice, "Thank you Ma'am for your guidance, I know Miss Jennifer is very good in practical matters, but you are the best in matters of correct psychology and behaviour, I feel safe with you!"

Anita was touched by Betty's answer, she mellowed once more and said in a half serious way, "Ok maid, you are dismissed now and I expect you to come to my bed tonight in your nightie and please keep your bra and knickers on!"

Betty couldn't believe what she just heard, she was all red when she stood up, straightened her dress and apron, gave a little curtsey and said in an excited voice, "Thank you Ma'am, I am looking forward to that Ma'am!"

The weekend was magic; this is all Betty could think. She understood that Anita's sexuality was completely freed, all the inhibitions she had before in her expected and traditional role were abolished completely. She loved to be the boss sexually and Betty of course was too eager to please. She was following with admiration and excitement her Mistress's initiatives. She felt freer also; she didn't have anymore the anxious responsibility of initiating anything, she simply played along trying to please her new found Mistress.

After two absolutely ravishing nights in Anita's bed she was back in her single bed on Sunday holding tightly Emily. Now she knew; she was Anita's complete and devoted servant in all aspects. She felt more strongly than ever that she belonged to her.

Monday 26 Sep 1983

Monday morning was 'business as usual'. Anita was formal again and Betty became the docile maid she was expected to be, though there was a feeling of satisfaction in the air, she felt completed, her eyes were glowing happily.

Anita's parting words sounded like a warning to her and brought her back to reality, "Don't act like a hussy girl; whatever happened during the weekend was simply an outburst of mine, obviously I needed it. Don't expect though a repetition soon. Now go back to work and act normally. I expect an impeccable house tonight and make sure that you

cook something nice; Miss Armstrong is back and is expected to dinner." Here was the stick again!

In the evening after coffee was served Anita asked Betty to join them in the living room, because she had something to announce. Betty, looking very neat in her pretty pink dress and flowered pinafore, as soon as she finished in the kitchen, joined them in an excited anticipation

Anita went straight to the point, "We are moving to a new house on Sunday the 29th of October, five weeks from today. With the assistance of Margaret Howells Miss Armstrong found an excellent house in the other side of town. I am going to share the house with Miss Armstrong and you will join us as our live in housemaid. It is an excellent chance for you to start your new life in a part of town where you will be known from the beginning as our live in housemaid. Of course you will have your own quarters there, a nice room by the kitchen with an en suite WC/shower facility, much more comfortable than here."

She paused to have a sip of her coffee and light a cigarette as Betty was thinking frantically. That was certainly news to her, Jennifer moving in with them in a new house? In another part of town? She was feeling worried and excited at the same time. That would be a complete cut from her previous life as Bob. And how her 'special relationship' with Anita would develop with Jennifer's permanent existence in the house?

Anita continued, "At the moment the house is maintained and redecorated, a team of painters is working; and tomorrow we are going there with Miss Armstrong to discuss colour schemes."

She paused again as Jennifer interferred, "Thanks for reminding me Anita, we have an appointment with the subcontractor at 2.00pm tomorrow afternoon, I'll pick you from work and we drive together."

Anita thanked her and turned to Betty again, "Of course you have lots of cleaning to do there as soon as the painters go; I expect you will need about a week to do the whole house and mind you it is going to be hard work."

Betty's heart sank again; she knew exactly what Anita meant, she did clean Mrs. Howells attic and nearly destroyed her hands. She was going to use thick rubber gloves for this cleaning.

Jennifer read her mind because she added in an amused way, "Don't you worry Betty, we'll provide you with all the necessary tools for this cleaning including heavy duty rubber gloves and a couple of hardwearing overalls. And speaking of overalls I talked to Margaret Howells again this morning and she would like to use you once a week, every Wednesday for 4 hours, 1.00pm to 5.00pm. Mrs Burns agreed wholeheartedly and Mrs Howells will provide working clothes for you, so you don't have to carry anything from this house."

Betty was silently amused this time; everybody was thinking how to provide sensible working clothes for her. How kind her employers were, she thought sarcastically! She was pleased that a certain sense of humour hasn't abandoned her.

She could tell the two ladies were about to dismiss her so she decided to bring out a topic that concerned her. She looked at both of them saying, "Excuse me Ma'am, Miss Armstrong could I say something?"

Anita waved at her to go on and she continued, "I am a bit worried about my lack of clothes Ma'am, I mean feminine street clothes; I have a full wardrobe of working clothes but I only have one dress. I probably would need some simple blouse and skirt outfits and a couple of more dresses probably?"

The ladies looked at each other and then at me. Jennifer spoke first, "You are right Betty, your street clothes are non existing and you will be going out more and more in the near future; soon you will start doing the shopping as well."

Anita looked at Jennifer and added, "I think she could go shopping wearing her maid's dress without the cap and apron, after all she is a servant and she doesn't have to hide it."

Jennifer hastily added, "I agree with you Anita, she can go shopping wearing her maid's dress but she still needs a few feminine items. We are about the same size with Betty, I'll fish out some of my old clothes and shoes, and I'll bring them tomorrow."

Anita added there, "That's very kind of you Jennifer, I am sure Betty will appreciate that." Then she turned to Betty and added, "But of course you are earning your own money now, you will be able to buy a few items of clothing soon."

Betty thanked Miss Armstrong and then looked at Anita in an inquiring way.

"Yes girl, you are dismissed, you can go to your room if you finished in the kitchen, goodnight."

Betty departed full of emotions and thoughts. Another major step was announced today. In a month's time Betty would lose the last connection with her previous life as Bob, the house and the neighborhood. After October 29th nothing will be there to remind to her of Bob's life except the locket around her neck probably.

As she was about to fall asleep half an hour later clutching Emily in her chest she thought for the first time if she could face the possibility of starting an hormone program and in due course even consider to follow the transsexual path? But who would pay for it? She didn't have the money. Would her Mistress cover the cost? She dismissed the thought immediately but the seeds were planted in her brain. She was Elisabeth Martin now and she could go only forwards from now on, never backwards!

THE END