

TV FICTION CLASSICS

MAGAZINE

"LADIES DAY"

A YOUNG REPORTER GETS INTO HIS
JOB AS A LADIES FASHION WRITER!



Volume 54

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**TV FICTION CLASSICS
MAGAZINE**

Volume 54

“LADIES DAY”

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Ladies Day

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LADIES DAY

By Heidi Johansen,
Dawn Bell and Sandy Thomas

My beet red, flushed face was giving me away. The “Home and Style” senior editor, Linda, had simply asked me to remove my sunglasses in the office. I guess she thought it was rude to wear them inside. She couldn’t see my eyes as we spoke.

And why was I even wearing sunglasses? It was late April and the sun was not that bright---even outside! I tried to convince her that the fluorescent light glare hurt my eyes but she insisted that the light in her office was not so overbearing.

When I removed my sunglasses she quickly noticed. . .what my wife, Karen, had done to my eyebrows last night.

She pointed towards my brow and smiled, “That’s an improvement! Your eyebrows were too bushy!”

“That’s what Karen said.”

“It really accents your eyes.”

“It wasn’t my idea,” I defended. I went on to explain, “I was making fun of my wife last night as she was tweezing her eyebrows. Before I knew what was happening, I was sitting at her vanity with Karen tweezing my eyebrows. She insisted that a cleaned up brow can make a tremendous difference in a person’s appearance.”

“It certainly did do that!”

“I feel stupid,” I said. My highly arched brows embarrassed me. Linda kept staring at them.

My position for the past six months on the newspaper had been writing articles on homes and gardens to supplement Linda’s, articles on beauty and fashion.

“Hey!” she announced, “I want you to write about this eyebrow experience from a man’s point of view and give it to me to review.”

I thought, "Oh great, she wants me to further embarrass myself." As I was leaving her office she remarked, "I think women will find the article amusing."

That afternoon I sat down and wrote a few paragraphs about the incident and handed them to Linda. She gave me an impish grin and read it quickly. She laughed outloud several times---I hoped "with me" and not "at me." Matter-of-factly, she said, "I can use this in the Weekend Style section."

One thing you learn in the newspaper biz is to not expect anyone to get excited over your writing. Some of my best writing had been ignored and sometimes a "throw together" like this got kudos. You never knew. And while the newspaper business was conservative, creativity was expected.

Over the next few days I forget about my eyebrows, but on Monday morning I was reminded quickly of my embarrassment. It seems that there were several phone calls from women already asking what beauty and fashion experience would I endure next? "Please make this a 'series'," one woman said.

That evening I told my wife, Karen about the phone calls and a few letters that were faxed to the news room from professional women. Some of the comments said that men should know what it takes for professional women to obtain a polished business look.

Karen was a seasoned professional while I was just starting out in the business. Ours was a May/September relationship being the September. She was 12 years my senior.

Both Karen and I had degrees in Journalism from the same college, and in fact that was where we met on alumni career day. She had a position with a well-recognized woman's magazine, and was writing articles on health issues, social aspects of women in professional vocations, family, etc. When we first met at her magazine's booth, I knew that I liked her. She was so confident and to my surprise, very attentive to me. She asked if I wanted to walk around the campus. "I know a lot of people in the business," she said. "Maybe I can

help you get a job.” Before I knew it, we had a date, I graduated, she got me a job, and we fell in love; and got married.

I never saw the age difference but many of my friends did. “No I didn’t marry my MOM!” I told one old girlfriend.

What Karen and did most was talk about our writing. While we were enjoying our desert, she complimented me on the empathetic style of my article, and praised my delightful sensitivity to what women endure for sake of beauty.

During dinner Karen told me that she was going to take the article I wrote to her editor.

The next evening I was told that her Editor raved about the article. “What a concept!” A woman’s existence written from a man’s insight and experience.” Karen even suggested continuing this further as a series.

My response was quickly a, “I think not!” She followed that with a hmmm and a shrug of her shoulders.

Shortly after arriving at the newspaper the next morning I was summoned to the office of my Editor. As I sat in front of her she explained that she had received a phone call a few minutes ago from my wife, and a fax from my wife’s Editor. She explained that my article had stirred up a lot of women’s interest in “LADIES DAY” (the subtitle to my editorial). She plopped a stack of letters in front of me letters from women of all ages and vocations.

She said, “We’ve never had this kind of response from a short article. Many of them are challenging you to see what it entails for a woman to be fashionable and beautiful.”

I was told by my Editor, “A series could possibly increase circulation considerably!” (And implied my measly salary). Then she mentioned that the Editor of the magazine agreed to split the cost of any expenses to explore Ladies Day by a man from a first hand experience.

I told her, “I was not hired to write for the beauty and fashion portion of our Style section.”

She responded, "If you give it a try and it works_I will entertain giving you a substantial raise."

With that she said a number. A big number! "Okay," I asked, "What's this writing assignment going to entail."

She replied, "Oh, I don't know. I want you to write about the little things like nails, hair, shoes----stuff like that."

I shook my head with disgust at what that article had evolved into. . .with such great ramifications on me.

After work, as my wife and I walked together towards our apartment, she asked whether my Editor had spoken to me about the series idea. I rolled my eyes and nodded my head avoiding entering into a conversation at that moment.

When dinner was done, dishes washed, and the two of us were in comfy clothes we sat down on the couch to watch television. During a movie Karen ran her hand through my longish hair.

"I remember when you had that little ponytail when I met you in college. It was so cute---I miss it," she teased. I had cut it off when I was seriously ready to interview for employment. I felt that long hair would be a deterrent, so I had about three inches cut off the bottom.

"Would you consider growing it back?" Karen asked.

"I don't think it would be acceptable at work."

"Nonsense, I asked Linda about it the other day when she called. She said that a 'pony tail' wouldn't affect your work or image---so why not?"

I glanced over at her with and muttered a mocking, "Oh? So you and my boss are in charge of my hair now?"

The next few days nothing was said about my eyebrow incident or the story series that they were encouraging me to write. Then in May my next "fashion experience" came about quite unexpectedly. I received a call from Karen to meet her at a casual restaurant for dinner after work where we enjoyed a cozy little Italian dinner together.

During dinner she told me that she had a beauty



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*"I remember when you had that little ponytail
when I met you in college. It was so
cute---I miss it," she teased.*



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salon appointment in half-hour just down the street. As we were leaving, I commented that I would meet her at home after her appointment.

"No, no sweetheart. I want you to come along." She locked her elbow with mine and pulled me along. I gave her a puzzled look, but she explained, "I have a surprise for you."

She led me into the beauty parlor or "women's territory" as I called it.

"That's good!" she said. "Remember that for your article."

"What article." My heart was racing and I felt quite uncomfortable. She told the receptionist that WE were there for a summer hair treatment. I looked at her and pointed to my head saying, "I don't think I need a treatment."

"This treatment's not for the hair on your head," she replied with a grin. I was led back with my wife to a small room that had a curtain dividing the room between two vinyl, upholstered tables. The beautician saw my puzzlement. She pointed to a table and she explained that they were used for massage and waxing. Without ceremony, she handed me a sheet telling me to remove my clothes and lay down with the sheet over me. As I reached for the sheet, I was not sure how many shades of red I must have turned, but she smiled kindly.

"What's going on? Am I getting a massage?"

After the young beautician left I looked at Karen and said, "I can't just lie here naked. What if something rises." She laughed. "Not likely you are going to have that much fun! Get to it. . .soon you will know what women go through so men can say, 'Nice legs!' or 'Silky smooth!'"

Reluctantly I undressed. I left on my shorts and laid down on the table with the sheet over me. Before they returned, I pleaded with Karen to let me out of this fashion thing. "Shush! This should make a wonderful experience to write about for the newspaper."

Soon a beautician returned to begin the waxing. First, she spread the warm goo on one leg then the other. Quickly the warm wax cooled and hardened. I couldn't help but bellow "Ouch!" as she removed the

wax roughly. I couldn't yet feel the smoothness, but I felt the air tingling against my skin. The beautician poked her head around the curtain to ask my wife something about "bikini" and "arms."

I heard my wife in another room reply with "WHY NOT. I am." The girl then inched my shorts down a little as she applied same goo just above my privates. How I controlled myself as such a pretty young woman ran her fingers just above my groin I'll never know. She then moved to make the application to my arms, and lastly to the few scraggly little hairs I had on my chest. Maybe there were only five, but I always thought they were manly.

When she was all done removing the last of the wax, a cool soothing lotion was applied to one leg, then the other. As she was rubbing in the soothing lotion, she explained that it had aloe in it for moisturizers to eliminate any dry rough spots. After she was done, I received a pat on my head. She grinned and told me, "Now you're all ready for short shorts and the summer sun."

The attendant left the room after telling me to toss the sheets in a bin in the corner. While I was getting dressed I couldn't resist feeling one leg and then the other. I was amazed at how smooth they felt. It was suddenly a revelation that my smooth legs felt like Karen's or most women's' for that matter.

An unaccustomed excited tingling feeling cursed through my body. Quickly I pulled up my pants so as to be dressed before my wife. I reached for the door-knob, but then withdrew. I didn't want to re-enter woman's territory alone.

While we were standing at the counter about to pay for this new fashion experience, my wife explained that we had a new account here in the name of the newspaper. As if a light bulb lit up her brain, the beautician-owner grinned.

"You're the one! We all loved your newspaper column about the 'eyebrow plucking experience'. I can't wait for this one!"

She looked at my eyebrows that had been plucked a little over week ago. Gently she took hand and led me

to beauty chair followed by Karen. "Let me look at them. Do you mind?" she asked Karen.

"The shape of his eyes are different from yours. I'm just going to change it ever so slightly." Tweezers in hand, she plucked more hairs from the bottom of the brows. "There! Much better."

I kept squirming in the chair and mentioned several times that I would like to go. It seemed to me that every eye in the salon was upon me. "Shush Jamie", Karen said, watching carefully how it was done. Then she commented, "What a difference that made. It really opened up his eyes."

When we arrived back at our apartment I was too nervous and apprehensive about all that had just transpired to eat.

"Why don't we just take a nice brisk walk." Karen suggested. There was an exercise path that encircled our apartment complex and led out onto a city park. I looked out our balcony window at the sun setting and the serene colors in sky. I opened the balcony door and felt the seventy-degree, warm, spring breezes of May. "Sure, that sounds like a good idea."

"Great! Come with me." She grabbed my arm and practically bounced into our bedroom. She reached into her drawer for some shorts, and with a smile reached back into her drawer for a second pair. Then she tossed the second pair onto the bed near me.

"These are 'walking shorts' that are a little big on me but they should fit you just fine."

"I'm perfectly comfortable the way I'm dressed right now, thank you!" I said as I pushed them back towards her.

"C'mon, these are just the ticket for a nice walk. Besides, they are shorter than your knee-length shorts---they will let you get a better summer tan." As she expressed that thought, a Cheshire Cat grin followed along with a request that always melted my defenses, "For me?" Plus she triggered my male senses with an unspoken promise of "rewards" for later.

Not long thereafter we were walking down our hallway to elevator both of us wearing tan walking shorts,

oversize T-shirts, and our canvas boating shoes. I felt a little self-conscious in these shorts. The cut of the material on the legs of the shorts was so full that it looked more like a skirt than shorts. Our walk lasted much longer than I had anticipated.

We walked and talked about writing much as we did back when we first met during my college days. Our conversation sparked our similar interest in journalism. We spoke of editorials we both had read recently, authors new to the bookstores and their impact on our future writing.

We of course talked about this latest experience of waxing and the perspective my writing would take. I had nearly forgotten about the exhilarating experience an hour or so ago as the feeling of the spring breezes blew across my bare, nude legs.

We sat down on a park bench for a short break. While I sat there my wife nudged me. "Keep your knees together. These walking shorts are flared and much more open-legged than what your cut-off, ragged, jeans shorts. So unless you enjoy showing your underwear..."

I had to laugh. "Remember when we used to sit on a bench like this at my college and plan my future? Look at us now!"

Karen laughed. "I had no idea we'd end up like this!"

So with a little embarrassment, I brought my knees together along with crossing my ankles. After a fifteen-minute break or so we headed back to our apartment. Karen was in a jubilant mood and had a bounce in her step as we walked briskly down the path. Near the apartment we discussed dinner and agreed we'd just toss together a Caesar salad. Then her hand reached to my chin and we made eye contact. . .with a sparkle in her eyes, I was told, "And we'll have each other for dessert!"

A few hours later as we lay intertwined sharing an afterglow. Karen slid her foot up my leg. "Ummm. I enjoy the feeling of my new, smooth mate."

Walking into the Newspaper building the next day, I was still trying to find ways to articulate the good and bad sensations of the waxing. I recalled the first breeze

that I felt on my smooth, bare legs. Somehow my stripped skin felt more alive. What words could I share to express that silkiness that I now experienced? I sat at my computer searching my mind for the words that I thought women could relate to. On two separate occasions, I caught my hand stroking my bare leg under my trousers. Then all at once, words flowed . . .

Before long the article sat atop Linda's desk. When she returned to her desk I was busy writing a article on trees and their importance in heating and cooling a home; both artistically and practically.

After reading my article, Linda called me and said, "Another nice piece, it'll be a welcome addition to the section."

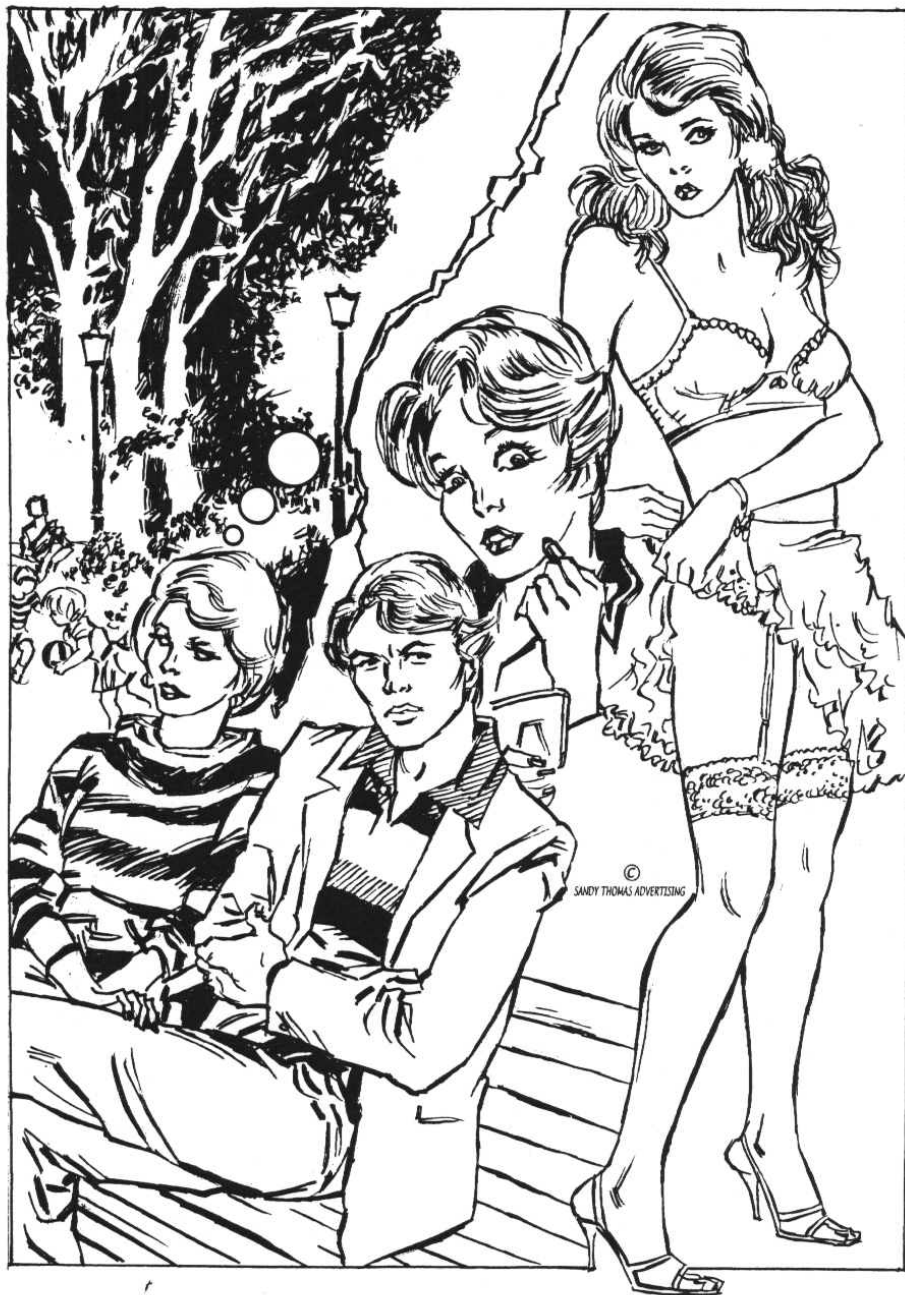
That evening as we were closing up for the evening, Linda suggested, "Hey! Wear shorts to work tomorrow. I want you to show off those smooth new legs. After all the newspaper paid for them!"

I drove home that night thinking how I wasn't about to be set up for ridicule and embarrassment by showing up to work with hairless legs exposed. I had to admit that, as a man, I enjoyed seeing women at work in shorts, skirts, jumpers---anything that showed a bit of leg.

At a stop light I was busy pondering the thought of how often women must shave or wax to keep smooth, silky, shiny legs so that they can wear skirts, shorts, or dresses to work. Another article was being written in my head.

Over the last week it had become a habit for my wife and I to take walks through the park together after dinner. I also became accustomed to wearing Karen's "walking shorts," as she called them. On this particular evening I recalled the comment from Linda about wearing shorts to work and mentioned it to my Karen. She looked back at me with that sly smile and just said, "Hmmm...."

A couple days later while at dinner Karen picked up her purse and started to head out of the door. "I'm going out to the mall. I've got to pick up some sandals. This



I had to laugh. "Remember when we used to sit on a bench like this at my college and plan my future? Look at us now!"

Karen laughed. "I had no idea we'd end up like this!"

weather is really turning summery.”

“Yeah, you can say that again. It’s getting hot.”

“Why don’t you come along with me? You could use a pair of sandals yourself.”

Before I knew it, we were out the door. We drove to the mall and Karen was dragging me into a shoe store.

“Dear, this is a women’s only shoe store. They won’t have any here for me,” I pointed out.

“We can go somewhere else or we can just add one size to your men’s size and try some unisex styles here.”

My eyes expressed my thoughts---she was pushing it. She grasped my hand. “Cool it and relax.”

Less than a half-hour later we both walked out of the store with two pairs of new sandals, one in tan and the other in black. I had been given another lesson in fashion sense. I was told black goes with everything! So for some unknown reason I tucked this bit of info into my personal computer for future reference. I was getting all kinds of new knowledge to use in LADIES DAY where I was expected to share my “guy’s” perspective.

Karen assured me that the sandals I had bought for myself were unisex, but to me they didn’t look like it. The sandals had a built up sole with a one-inch cork heel. And I had never seen a man’s sandal that had thin straps around the ankle!

The next morning as I was getting dressed for work Karen suggested that I wear my tan sandals to work in order to break them in for our walks.

“No! I don’t think so.”

“Why not? Most of the time you have your feet tucked in under a desk anyway. The only person who might notice is Linda. Big deal!”

I mulled over her point and replied, “Well...okay.”

My wife was correct that no one even commented on my new sandals, However, I was well aware of how comfortable they were on my feet. There was that cool, airy feeling that accompanied the comfort. So, I wore them to work the next few days. On Friday, Karen asked if I would like to break in the black sandals.

“Yeah, sure why not. Might as well.”

“Great! You know, I have a pair of black cotton walking shorts that would go well with the sandals. They said on the radio that today was going to be another hot one.”

Now I'd been wearing her shorts out on our walks, but wearing them to work---that was a whole new ball of wax.

After fifteen minutes, Karen came out of our bedroom dressed for work in her sandals, blouse, and skirt to rejoin me in kitchen.

“I left the black shorts out on the bed.” With a pixie grin she reassured me, “You'll be much more comfortable. C'mon, give it a try.” She took my hand and led me into our bedroom.

Reluctantly, I walked out of our apartment in the walking shorts, a baggy T-shirt, and my new black sandals. I felt very self-conscious. The black shorts came right down to the top of my knees. They hugged my hips but below the hips they flared out drastically and each pant leg opened out to a generous full uncuffed hemline. In the bright light, they looked okay but when I looked at myself in the entry mirror, the darkness made them look different. No matter which way I turned, the voluminous pant-legged shorts blended together and appeared more like a knee-length woman's skirt! My satiny smooth legs perched atop rather dainty black sandals with ankle straps didn't help make it any more uni-sex. The look was quite attractive. . .for a woman that is.

By the time I arrived at the newspaper's parking lot I had second thoughts about getting out of the car. I thought about how long it would take to drive home and change versus the thought of being seen like this. I opened the car door placing my black sandal, followed by my silky smooth leg, onto the parking lot asphalt. Reaching for my briefcase, I stepped out and walked towards the Newspaper building.

My ascent up the elevator was uneventful, as there were only two others in elevator, both young women who were very involved in their own conversation. I went unnoticed!

However, my walk to my desk did bring notice from Linda as I passed.

"Hey! Great legs! It really shows off your wax job. Have you been using lotion on your legs?"

"Yes, after every shower. Karen said I might get in-grown hairs."

"Really? They look really sexy in those shorts," she muttered as she returned to her work on an article.

The rest of May went on in much the same way. The shorts were comfortable so I continued to wear my wife's walking shorts on our casual walks through the park. On occasion I would even wear a pair of shorts to work if it was a warm humid day.

I still was self-conscious of showing off my clean-smooth legs. After weeks, there wasn't the slightest sign of hair, so I mostly wore slacks to work.

"So, how long before the hair on my legs grows back?" I asked Karen one night as we strolled.

"Oh, don't worry, we still have a few weeks before we need to have our legs waxed again."

I was startled and my eyes rose. She locked her elbow in mine and said sweetly, "I like your legs smooth and soft. Do you think I'm weird?"

"No."

It was like we shared a special closeness. She asked, "Why don't you keep them smooth for the summer?"

I nodded.

It had also been nearly three months since I had any kind of haircut. I brought the subject up one morning at breakfast. "Dear, I think that I'll make myself an

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appointment to get my hair trimmed this Saturday. It's really getting too long."

"Please don't." Karen quickly replied. "Remember how I said I loved that ponytail you used to have in college? Don't be an old fart. . .let it grow a bit more."

I decided to forget about that haircut for awhile.

One evening Karen came home and said that she had to attend a "Color Analysis" lecture for her magazine. As she was getting dressed to go, she asked, "Maybe it would be good for you to go along. Do you know what colors look good on you?" she asked. She finished with how much she would enjoy having me by her side.

"Okay, okay! I hear you." I caved in and quickly put on casual shirt, tie, and slacks and off we went. When Karen had told me that even Presidents have had a color analysis done, I had assumed that it was a mixed gender affair but when we walked into the conference room of the hotel, I was the only male!

Karen found us seats quickly up front though I wanted to be near the back. The presentation began by a noted fashion designer, and she introduced the session as being COLOR IN THE FASHION WORLD. A few models were used as examples to display what colors looked best on them. They would model a dress in yellow with some accessories, and then changed to a teal green or pink.

Much attention was made to the fact of how one color brought out their natural tones while the other muted their look. Some scarves were used to hold next to their faces, which we were told, could help us decide which colors suited them.

The consultant asked if there were any volunteers from the audience that would like to have their colors analyzed. I thought that I had inconspicuously blended into the crowd. However, one of the women pointed to me with mention that I was a newspaper writer who has been writing articles in LADIES DAY for women from a male perspective. I looked over to see whom the culprit was, only to see my co-worker Linda's smiling face. With my eyes glaring towards her I silently mouthed the words 'Gee, THANKS!'.

"Wonderful, I've read the articles. It's an honor to

have you here tonight,” exclaimed the seminar leader. I heard some confirmations from the audience that they had been following my articles and enjoying them.

So there I sat, with the eyes of many women on me, waiting for my next move. Karen nudged me to get up. Slowly I started to get up followed by very slow hesitant steps towards the raised platform in front. The consultant stepped down to walk towards me where we met half way. She put her hand on my elbow to escort me to the platform while she tried to comfort me.

“Gee, don’t look so scared. I won’t bite. Besides, everyone should know the colors that transform them to look their best, dear.”

Soon I was standing up on the platform, in front of bunch of women, all eager to ‘learn my colors’. As different color scarves were held next to my face much dialogue was exchanged between consultant and women in the audience asking questions. It was determined that I was a ‘Summer’ and I was told that the colors along with the neutrals which best suited my fair complexion and sandy blonde hair---were pinks and peaches. I rolled my eyes in dismay as I thought to myself ‘definitely not’.

“Is there a dress in back that would show us how the colors would look on him?” One inquiring woman asked with a giggle. The consultant was caught off guard by the request, but looked behind her towards the fashion consultant who was working with the models.

The consultant shrugged her shoulders to indicate she did not have a clue, but a short while later the designer walked out with two dressy ones, one very pink while the other was a peachy pink. They were handed to her. As I stood there she held one dress up in front of me, and then the other.

My face turned almost the shade of the second dress. I saw my wife smiling from the audience.

Another request from the audience asked if I could try on the peachy one, but I shook my head “No” very emphatically.

“Regretfully, not today ladies.” This brought out a round of laughs and giggles. So the designer returned out on platform to retrieve the dresses.

I was heading towards the steps to return to my seat

from this highly embarrassing situation when another question came from the audience asking whether certain foundations, blushes, eye shadow would make any substantial complimentary impacts. The consultant reached out for my arm as she replied,

“Most definitely. Our makeup artist can show you.” Then to me, “You don’t mind helping us a little bit more do you?” So she waved for the make-up artist to come out on the platform. Soon, the ladies were listening to her explain what would really highlight my face. She then looked at the consultant.

“It would be much easier to show them, you know.”

“Oh I’m sure our friend here wouldn’t mind if we used him as a model for a few more minutes. That way he can write about another adventure.”

This brought on a chorus of “yes’s” from the audience and I was once again pushed down into a seat on center stage. The makeup artist ran off the platform only to return a couple minutes later with a mini suitcase in her hand. She took my hand as she sat down on a stool facing me.

“Oh don’t worry, I’m not going to do anything that you can’t wash off at home tonight with a little makeup remover.” She then placed a pink plastic cape around and tied it on behind my neck.

“This is just to protect your clothes.” She whispered to me.

Looking my face over carefully, she reached into her little suitcase for the foundation, which she told the women best suited my color. She did say that in the summer that color could change after exposure to the sun and some tanning gave me a darker tone. As she was using some kind of sponge to spread it on my face, my long, loose hair kept falling forward.

“I’ve got to take care of that problem,” she muttered as she reached into her case and produced a hairbrush and a couple of white barrettes. Before I could protest, the makeup artist brushed my hair back and slid the barrettes just above each ear at the sides of my head. I saw the women in the audience chuckling to themselves as I heard the click of each barrette being closed.

“There, much better!”

After that, she proceed to work on my face at amaz-

ing speed while she explained every step and every choice of color... eye-shadow, blush, lipstick. I felt so exposed as she made me close my eyes while she brushed on eyeshadow or pucker my lips as she stroked on lipstick with a fine brush. When all was done she stepped aside to let everyone have a full look and opened the floor for questions.

The next event that occurred would make a drastic change in my future with the newspaper. Linda approached the platform and with camera in hand took a few pictures from different angles. That prompted several other women to take the opportunity to catch my COLORS on film for their magazines.

"Would you like to see the finished product?" The make-up artist me. I had mixed feelings. Though I shook my head no, my curiosity was overwhelming and she must have sensed it. She handed me a large mirror and I held it out in front of myself. The image was totally unexpected, for I saw the reflection of a pretty young woman's face!

Several women from the audience asked if they could get a closer look at the effect. I felt cornered, so I stepped down off of the platform hoping that the make-up covered the blush underneath. After many ladies came up for a closer inspection I finally left to return to my seat. I found that Linda had moved over to sit next to Karen.

"Why the pictures Linda?" I asked.

"To accompany the article that you will write about this experience silly."

"Oh yeah? Now everyone will know the face of the fruitcake who's writing these articles," I replied with exaggerated indignation.

"I doubt if anyone who doesn't read the caption will even look twice," Linda said.

When I took my seat next to my wife she moved close to me and whispered, "I can't believe how pretty your face looks. "In fact, if we could frame it, it could be a 'million dollar face'."

After the consultant made her closing statements several women came over for a closer look at my face

and the colors that the artist had used to compliment my complexion. As I stood in the midst of several women listening to their remarks, a very stylish lady approached.

I could overhear her speaking to my wife about what a NATURAL BEAUTY I was blessed with. Then she went on to tell my wife something about me possessing the LOOK that would sell ads in "our" magazine.

At that point, she turned to me to introduce herself as Karen's editor and major stockholder in the magazine publishing company. She reached out to give me that customary semi-hug and pseudo-sincere kiss on the cheek. While she was near she whispered to me that if I ever want to earn some money by allowing photographers to capture my beauty on film I should give her a call.

As she was walking away my wife asked what she had said to me. I waved her off with remark I would tell her later. Finally the women in the room and around us were dispersing and leaving.

"I'm going to find that make-up artist to remove my make-up," I announced. But Karen pointed out that she saw her leave a few minutes ago. "We are going straight home anyway so I can remove it there."

Out to the car we headed. As we got near, Karen asked if I wanted her to drive. With a nod I slid into the passenger seat saying that this ordeal had drained my energy level.

On the road we talked about her editor's offer. Karen looked at my face.

"Yeah, it would be nice to earn some money from that pretty face of yours."

About then, a Highway Patrol car pulled up along side, pacing his car right next to ours. I quickly looked at the speedometer and saw that we were within the speed limit.

"What are they doing?" I said, worried that something was wrong.

"That are checking US out," Karen smiled. "Just look straight ahead and ignore them. . .they will go away."

My heart was pounding by the time they bored with us and sped away.

“Write about that!” Karen laughed. “We women put up with THAT all day!”

As we came closer to home my wife brought up fact that we had not eaten for several hours and that we needed to eat. She pulled into a fast food drive-through and ordered our favorites. As the young man handed her the food he politely said, “Have a nice day ladies and enjoy your meal!”

I did not even respond to her smile as she handed me my share. I shook my head as I noticed the lipstick on my straw after my first sip.

When we arrived home, Karen went to the bathroom and returned with a jar of cold cream. “It’s a shame to remove such a beautiful makeup job!” She said as she handed it to me. But I didn’t hesitate. I dashed into the bathroom and scrubbed my face well!

The week at work went by without mention of my Color Analysis. I left for the weekend thinking Linda had let the incident slide. On Monday I found this was not case. On my desk were pictures of me with cape and make-up as I sat on a platform at the Color Analysis presentation. I looked over at her, and she smiled. “Now write the article about your fashion experience.”

My hand reached for the photos and I pointed them to my trashcan. “No thanks, I think these just belong in here.”

“Come now, don’t be childish. Besides I have other copies and I’ll have the another ‘Ladies Day’ article. . . even if I have to start writing it on your behalf.”

That dampened any thoughts of avoiding this embarrassing situation. Knowing Linda, she would definitely go over my head to our publisher. Better that I write my own words and thoughts! Seeing the pictures, I began to find the words to express my wonderment as to why colors can make person more flattering and more alluring when chosen correctly.

I tried to remember what the color consultant told me about my skin tone and the color of my hair---‘natural’. She made mention that peaches and shades of

pink were complimentary. In a question and answer box I asked how many of the readers knew what category of colors they fell into? Spring, summer, fall, or winter?

I reminded the readers that certain colors would be flattering on them while others may make them appear drawn out or drab.

I closed the article with a comment to check their closets for 'COLOR.' Then mentioned the Highway Patrol incident saying, "I hope he noticed my colors!"

Upon finishing I tossed it into Linda's bin for our editor to approve.

The next couple of days I went back onto my regular routine as I wrote an article on the importance of rain gutters to a home's roof and lot drainage.

I did another informative piece on the impact on families' lifestyles that a new deck could bring on.

When I arrived at work later that week, I found a pile of letters on my desk.

Each letter I opened was filled with complimentary comments about my color sense article and some thanked me for the excuse to force their husbands to update their wardrobes. Often, the letters closed with little remarks about how the makeup in the photos enhanced my beauty. Some praised me for understanding why many women feel it necessary to put on their "face" before going out.

Many mentioned outrage that I was "checked out" by the police. "See!" one reader wrote, "Less than an ounce of makeup and the world changes around you." She was right. It was scary!

Later that morning the receptionist sent up a pile of messages from callers complimenting my article and that they are looking forward to reading my next LADIES DAY piece.

Before I read all the letters or memos, I grabbed them up and stuffed them into one of my drawers in a rather frustrated attempt to make this LADIES DAY angle disappear. My hopes were quickly dashed when I was called into the editor's office.

"Great work! Your LADIES DAY articles are sub-

stantially increasing circulation numbers! Your experiences and reactions to feminine fashion and beauty intrigue women of all ages. Your articles are becoming topics of conversation all over town.” She looked at me with a serious business gleam in her eye. “We shall have to give some serious thought as to where your LADIES DAY articles should lead next.”

“Next?”

“NEXT of the series!” She went on to mention a possible salary raise, an expense account for new experiences, and full time assignment for writing more articles in LADIES DAY! With that she waved her hand indicating that I could leave.

“But. . .” I gasped.

“We’ll talk more about this later. Get going on the next installment.” And so I left her office with my head in a swirl of confusion and fear as to where my future with the newspaper would take me.

On the way back to my desk I searched out for a box to stuff my fan letters into. I found an empty box near the copy machine. I didn’t want Linda or my wife to read them. I jammed the letters into the box and I carried them out to my car. I intended to dispose of them in the refuse container at our apartment.

That night when I arrived home, I took the box directly to the garbage bin. I however, was not aware that several letters had fallen out onto floor of backseat. I did not become aware of this until Karen found them that weekend while we were cleaning our cars together.

She was vacuuming under my seat when the vacuum sucked up a letter into the nozzle. With a laugh, she held one up to ask if I was hiding secret love letters.

Quickly reading first one, then another, she shook her head. “Here’s one with a bunch of ideas_did you read these? ”This is great stuff!”

“I don’t want to read them,” I said. “And I don’t want to do anymore articles_but I guess I will.” I told her about my editor’s remarks about the increased circulation because of my LADIES DAY articles, and the possible salary raise. “She said I’d have a budget! She said I could start with a couple hundred a week! I could never spend that much.”

“Don’t be foolish. An expense account would be great! This kind of stuff is expensive! Many a woman would ‘die for’ such an account to cover beauty expenses.”

“Come on dear,” I sighed, “it’s an account to cover feminine fashion expenses. I’m not a female remember? There’s only so much I can do.”

During the car washing, we discussed the payoffs and problems. I could not see any real future for me in writing “LADIES DAY”. We had finished my car and were about to start on hers when she pointed the nozzle at me. While she was laughing, she sprayed me full force with the water. “AND we wouldn’t have to wash our own cars! AND you wouldn’t be all wet now!”

It was true. We got along but an increase in my salary would mean increase in our savings. We could travel and maybe even purchase our own home.

I crossed my hands across my face and ran towards her to grab a hold of the hose and kink it thus stopping the flow. I grabbed the nozzle and before long, both of us soon stood drenching. We both started to laugh together till it led to a very passionate kiss. When our lips finally broke apart, our eyes gazed into each others expressing an unspoken love.

“You don’t mind me doing all this girlish stuff?” I asked after we made love.

“Don’t be silly! I see this as a chance to double my wardrobe and get a lot of neat stuff! If you lost a few pounds, we’d be the same size!” she giggled. You are now on a diet!”

I laughed.

I started to think that the interest in LADIES DAY had passed over. Neither my editor nor Karen had made any mention of the suggestions made by readers. I hadn’t written an article for three weeks. Some inquires had been sent to the attention of my editor.

One day, she called me to her office and informed me that the circulation had dropped again since I had stopped writing about my experiences with women’s fashions. “We weren’t sure at first if it was your articles or something else. . .now we know. You are now a full-time columnist for STYLE.”

She handed me a sheet with list of all the stores that she had opened accounts---stores such as Marshall Fields, Fashion Bug, Lerner's, A Touch of Fashion. Along with that, she had made me a weekly appointment at the beauty salon called Strictly Feminine---where my wife had taken me for the waxing.

Before I could complain, my editor's phone rang and she waved me off. "You are on your own but we will discuss some possible experiences to write about later."

I walked out of her office with my heart thumping in fear. I considered walking back in to resign, but had great apprehensions as to how long it would take to find a new position. I thumped down into my desk chair with tremendous desperation. I couldn't help but read over again all the accounts she had opened in my name. Next to each was the credit limit. Seemed like a ton of bucks! None of them were in the name of "James". They were all in the name "Jamie." I read a clause stating that "all purchases must be used towards women's fashions and experiences for LADIES DAY. Each item bought must be related to an article or the item would be deducted from signer's pay."

My wife arrived home shortly after I had. When she entered the kitchen where I was preparing a chicken salad for dinner. She saw my sullen face. "What's the matter?"

"They took me off 'Home and Garden.' I pointed towards the list of newly opened accounts lying on the kitchen table.

Karen looked over the list quietly for a minute. When she looked up, the gleam in her eye sent a definite signal---we were about to do some major shopping. "WOW! WOW! WOW!" she kept saying. She sat the list down, walked over to give me a hug and jubilantly announced; "It says nothing about giving the clothes back! My wardrobe is about to expand big time!"

"And now I can't eat anymore. . .so you get new clothes!"

"We'll worry about that later. Mostly it's your waist. . .I see a waist cinch in your future!" she giggled. If we can make us the same size and can share clothes! Do you realize that you've just been given a huge salary

raise? These clothes and services could easily be worth \$20,000 a year."

I respond with a doubtful, sarcastic "Really?" Karen nodded as if I had a lot to learn about the cost of women's fashions and the cost of beauty. I did.

"And all you have to do is write about it! It's free! No more paying for cosmetics, haircuts, shoes, clothes. I'll help you figure out a reason for everything I want!"

That night we went out to buy our first purchases on my account at one of the department stores. Karen came up with the idea that I should buy several blouses and then write about the buttons on the left rather than the right along with the difference in the weight of fabrics and styles.

"We can even have them dry cleaned on the company. . .they charge more for a woman's blouse than a man's shirt! There's an article!"

I was wearing a pair of her shorts and the unisex sandals so as to help in choosing some summer blouses. Only myself must have felt my uneasiness in the women's section. None of the women around us seemed to pay any attention to me.

I wonder if the fact that Karen had insisted that I let her French Braid my hair again added to the confusion.

The first thing that I noticed about the clothes in the women's' section was that the colors seemed to be so much more vibrant with lime greens, sunshine yellows, peaches, pinks. More shades than I thought existed. Before I realized it, I was holding a dozen different blouses that my wife had picked out for me in various colors and styles. Some of them had scooped necks, a few without sleeves, a couple with embroidery on the labels or neckline. I was most embarrassed by the thought of wearing a very sensuous, silky, pink one that she had picked out for me.

With the bundle of blouses in my arms I approached the saleslady.

"May I help you?"

"Yes, I have an account here," I explained. When I gave her my name she smiled and acknowledge a friendly reply, "Oh, your with the newspaper!"

"Uh yeah. How did you know?" I muttered with a blushing red face.

"Oh, all of us here have been following your articles in the paper! We love what you are doing," she exclaimed too loudly for my comfort as other customers turned to look. "Your hair looks marvelous! Did you do it yourself?"

Soon, I was surrounded by the staff and customers as they babbled about my articles. While I felt like shrinking under a table, Karen just beamed and fielded questions on my behalf.

That evening Karen enjoyed helping me unpack the bounty of our shopping expedition.

"This is great!" She giggled as she neatly folded and put away piece after piece of lingerie, blouses, slacks and skirts. "I've already picked out what you should wear to work tomorrow," she pronounced. By this time I was so tired and emotionally drained that I didn't even want to discuss or debate it.

"Before we retire to bed, why don't you go have a shower and shampoo your hair dear," Karen said casually.

"I'm too tired honey, I'll shower in the morning."

"Please? I want to try something with your hair before bedtime." She gave me that hurt, little girl look that always got her way.

"Okay, but I'm ready for bed," I moaned as I headed for the bathroom.

When I returned with a towel wrapped turban style around my head and another towel around my waist I found Karen had changed into her slinkiest nightgown and had laid out a new pair of woman's silk pajamas on my side of the bed. These pajamas were of a featherweight, parachute silk material in a gorgeous teal blue shade. As I put them on with feigned reluctance I couldn't help but realize that they felt absolutely wonderful against my smooth skin.

"Come sit here dear." Karen said as she held the chair in front of her vanity out for me.

"What now?"

"I bought some things at the Wal-Mart today that

I'm dying to try." She replied without explanation. I sat down and watched as she began to comb out my wet, shoulder length hair. When it was all straight, I could see Karen in the mirror as she opened up a shopping bag and pulled out several packages of hair rollers!

"Those aren't for me I hope!" I exclaimed nervously.

"I charged them on your account. Come on honey. Your hair could use some body and wave. It just lies there. It looks great when we braid it but you need to try some other styles. It's one of the experiences that women experience. I bet it can be worth at least one whole article."

I was too tired to argue. With trepidation I watched as Karen combed out a section of hair at the front of my head, sprayed something from a pump bottle labeled "setting lotion" on it, then picked up a two inch diameter roller from the pile beside her and wound the section of hair around it.

Winding the roller towards the back, I watched as my hair was quickly and tightly wrapped around the plastic device. She picked up a long bobby pin and slid it along my scalp underneath the roller. Another section right behind the first underwent the same process and soon a second roller was pinned tightly to the first.

I watched in resignation as Karen wound roller after roller down the middle of my scalp then several more rows of neat rollers on either side of my head.

"Good thing I bought three dozen," she exclaimed as she gave my hair a final spray with the setting lotion. I thought she was done but she said to wait. I noticed that Karen had left a small section of hair in front of each cheek. Now she took one of these and with her finger she neatly wound the hair into a small circle. Taking two silver hair clips, she clipped this pin-curl securely against my temple. The same was repeated on the other side. Finally, she opened a package that contained a large, triangular hair net.

"Tilt your head way back." She instructed. As I complied, she lowered the center of the front of the net over my forehead. "Sit up slowly."

I did, and the rest of the net was draped over the large rollers on either side of my head and the back. I watched as Karen pulled the remaining ends of the net

together behind my head and the entire hairnet began to tighten down over my roller-covered scalp. With a deft twist I could see and feel as the hairnet was tied securely at the nape of my neck.

"There you go. Now not a single roller should come loose while you sleep."

"While I sleep?! I won't be able to sleep in these!" I complained.

"Now, now dear. I'll give you an extra pillow. You'll get used to it after a few nights. Just start writing your articles in your mind. . .that will put you to sleep!"

I didn't even catch the significance of the "few nights" remark but grumbling all the way, I retired for the night.

After a light, restless sleep I awoke and drug myself out of bed. True to her word, Karen had laid out my clothes for the day. I found myself buttoning up a sleeveless, vibrant yellow, silk blouse with a totally feminine, little Peter Pan collar. My fingers fumbled awkwardly unused to the task of fastening buttons on the other side.

My wife had chosen a pair of tan shorts and sandals to compliment the blouse.

When I reached for my watch she snatched it off the dresser. Instead she placed a delicate gold watch on my wrist. She stated that this watch was not a cumbersome as my sports watch, and that it better suited my light weight attire.

She explained that she put it on my account last evening while we were shopping. I complained that the face of this watch wasn't even half the size of my watch and that it was much more difficult to read.

"Another article's being written!" She waved me off with comment that I would get used to it in 'time'. She giggled at her own pun.

The blouse was totally feminine. No possible chance to claim unisex. After breakfast Karen indicated that we had to rush or she would be late for work.'

"Come in the bedroom dear."

"Karen, there's no time for that now," I joked.

"C'mon silly. Unless you want to go to work in curl-

ers.”

“Oh yeah, I almost forgot. I think my scalp is numb from these things digging in all night.”

“Ah yes, the efforts we ladies go through to look beautiful. At least you’ll have plenty to write about for a couple of days.”

Strangely, I had to agree with that last comment. Once again I took the seat in front of the vanity. Karen worked quickly to undo the knot at the back of the hairnet and very carefully lifted it off of my rollers.

“At least with these smooth, plastic rollers...which are called magnetic salon rollers...in case you were wondering for your article, don’t catch on the hairnets. Now let’s see how your hair took the curl,” She said to herself as she began to slide out bobby pins from the back rollers first.

I watched in amazement as Karen gently slid the rollers out of each section. My normally straight hair didn’t lose the shape of the plastic rollers once they were removed. I began to panic. As more and more rollers were removed my hair just snapped back into the round barrel shapes that were once rollers! Karen stepped back and smiled.

“Wow! Give your head a shake,” she instructed. When I did, I could see in the mirror that my curls moved, flexed but ultimately returned to their firm curls once I stopped. “I’d say that your hair holds a set better than average. Now let me comb you out.”

Karen picked up a brush and began to pull it slowly through my hair from front to back in the same direction as the rollers had been set. The barrel shapes gave way to lots of height and volume. The two pin-curls were still clipped at my temples. Giving all my hair a misting of a hairspray first Karen picked up a fine toothed comb and sectioned off the front section again. Pulling it straight up she took the comb and combed downwards towards the roots.

“This is called back-combing or teasing,” she explained. “You have to use it judiciously or one might look trumpy.” I watched as she went from section to section and back-combed my hair. Soon my head looked like I had a big football helmet on it.

Before I could comment Karen began to use the comb

to shape and arrange the curls and waves. Using hairspray throughout the process the style was beginning to evolve. My heart sunk in fear.

Karen's creation looked to all intents like I had just put on an expensive woman's wig! The hair was at least three inches high all over and it curled under neatly in a straight line around my neck. The two pin-curls were released and Karen carefully brushed through them leaving soft, kiss curls at my cheeks.

With a final, heavy misting of a flowery hairspray Karen stepped back and admired her work. "Well, what do you think? Should I have been a hairdresser or what? This style is a kind of bouffant pageboy. That's because of the way it curls under all around."

"I doubt any page BOYS wore hair rollers or used hairspray," I growled.

"You're probably right. This style is a girl's version. But you look so cute!"

"I can't go out like this."

That argument didn't last too long. Just as I had been persuaded to wear feminine shorts, blouses and sandals---I was talked into going to work with my bouffant pageboy hairdo.

So I walked out to my car, once again reluctantly heading over to the newspaper in increasingly feminine attire. While I was driving along towards my destination I was calculating some quick comebacks for the expected satirical comments that Linda was sure to make. When I put my left arm on the opened window door as usual, I felt the breeze on my sleeveless arm.

Then I noticed the difference in size of tan mark from my old watch to where the light gold watch sat on my wrist. I had to admit that this watch was less cumbersome. . .but hard to read. More vittles for my articles. Writing interesting things about a man's observations of "fashion" was easy!

Just as I had anticipated I barely made it past Linda heading towards my desk when I heard Linda's greeting. "Good morning Sunshine! Nice WIG!" She had intentionally put emphasis on the word wig. Without thinking I fired back,

"It's not a WIG dear. . .it's my own hair!"

It struck me that I would have been better off going along with her assumption.

"Your own hair?! You mean you set it on rollers??"

"Uh. . .no. . .I mean Karen set it for me last night."

"And you slept with your hair up in rollers!?!?"

"Well...yes. So?"

"Get at that keyboard 'girl' and start writing! You've got a beaut' of an article in that one," Linda exclaimed.

And so that day I went on to write an article on what it was like to have your hair set and to sleep in hair rollers and a hairnet.

By the end of the day I had another article on how the buttons of a woman's blouse are different than a man's, and also the various multitude of textures, colors, along with styles available in a blouse.

Linda offered advice that I should also include choosing the right style to suit a woman's figure. Noting to me that not all women are built alike but have many different body types.

That remark was followed by statement that some women are full breasted which require blouses that have darts allowing for such endowments while others are small breasted 'like you'. The 'like you' was emphasized with a finger pointed directly at my chest.

For the next week, I wore blouses of all different colors, styles. On Friday, I was especially self-conscious when, (at my wife's insistence) I wore a very business-like blouse that closed with a long row of buttons up the back. How unmasculine!

And don't think that Karen let me get away with just one experience of hair setting. Every night that week I found myself sitting down before bedtime while my wife went through the process of putting my freshly shampooed hair up in rollers. She took the liberty of experimenting with different sizes of rollers and setting patterns. . .all so I could "have more to write about."

One night I slept on these huge, soda-can sized things that made my hair the next day look super smooth but full.

Another night, she used big rollers at the top and front but tons of one-inch diameter rollers at the back and sides..

The next day I showed up at the office in a pert little hairdo where the top was smooth and teased up while all around the back and sides masses of tight curls clustered around my head. My shoulder length hair appeared about six inches shorter due to the curls!

On Friday, when she wanted me to look very business-like, Karen took down my hair from the medium rollers I had slept in that night. Which, by the way, I was getting quite used to. After combing it out, spraying and back-combing the top and sides she took a brush and with a mischievous grin began to pull the right side hair tightly back. She brushed it smooth and tight against my scalp and held it firmly across the back of my head.

“Pass me some of those bobby pins please,” she said indicating a jar full of them on the vanity in front of me. I did as requested and she carefully slid pin after pin up against my scalp. After putting about a dozen in she removed her hand and to my surprise the hair on my right side stayed tight and up to the back of my head.

“I’m glad your hair has grown so much dear. It gives you the option of wearing it up or down.”

“What do you mean, UP?!”

“Come dear, how can you be a women’s fashion writer and not know what wearing your hair UP means?” she tsk-tsked. “Long-haired women like us can put our hair up off our necks in various ways. Sometimes for practicality, like when it is hot outside, or we are doing something and don’t want our hair to fall in our eyes. Other times, to look more formal or, as in this case, more business-like.”

“Do you mean you’re doing my hair UP?!” I stammered nervously.

“Yes dear. Don’t be so melodramatic. You’ve worn a French Braid more than once. That was wearing your hair up, wasn’t it?”

As usual, I let myself be persuaded. With more hairspray and lots of teasing of the hair swept from the

other side of my head. Karen created a fairly stiff mass of hair on the unpinned side in back of my head.

Next, taking a rat-tail comb, she took this mass of hair and folded it over where the pinned seam in back lay. With many more bobby pins the neatly rolled mass of hair was pinned securely into place creating a thick, neat vertical roll of hair up the back of my head. Touching up my top hair and spraying it all over with one last misting of hairspray Karen stepped back and handed me a hand mirror to look at the hairdo she had created. I was dumbstruck. I now sported the classic look of an elegant woman. Seeing the wonderment in my expression Karen spoke,

“That, my dear, is a perfect French Roll. Some people confuse it and call it a French Twist, but that’s slightly different. I’ll show you next time. But this, this is oh so chic!”

“But. . .it’s so feminine.”

“It’s business-like. Femininity is in how you handle yourself.”

I was not convinced, but once again I showed up at the newspaper with this most feminine of enhancements to my appearance.

On Saturday when I went in to write the article on blouses for the Sunday paper where the article was to be featured in the Style section, I entered the newspaper building a bit nervously.

Karen had chosen my clothes so I could easily find the words to describe women’s blouses. Driving to work, the feel of the soft white silky blouse with puffy sleeves, delicately embroidered collar, and pearl buttons was arousing pleasant sensations on my skin.

To accompany this blouse, she had insisted that I wear a camisole, because the blouse was so silky that the light allowed one to see through it.

The camisole was so silky that I felt light-headed with it on. “I’ve really become a swish,” I moaned. “I actually like the way this feels.”

“I think you’re ready. . .ready for some real fun.” With that she pulled out a black, pleated skirt she’d purchased with the newspaper’s money.

“That’s a skirt?”

“And my dear, I think you are ready for one.”

I blushed as I realized how sissish I'd become. “Oh my,” I moaned, “This has gone too far.”

“I think you are on the verge of finding a new self,” Karen said, holding up the school girl styled skirt. “Do you realize what fun we could have if you wore skirts.”

“Fun?”

“Girl fun! Girl fun with an expense account! Admit it, you like the way we've been together and even how the clothes fit.”

“But I'm a man!”

“We can compensate for that! All you have to do is write about what you are feeling. . .like about today. . .the first time you wore a skirt!”

“What's next? A dress?”

“First steps first. Let's see if you can handle the skirt.”

“You really want me to wear a skirt?”

My wife became serious. “You know how I feel about feminism. There will be no true equality until a man can put on a dress, do his hair and appreciate femininity. . .even delight in it.”

Before I could work out my feelings, I was in the skirt and my wife was handing me my black sandals to accentuate the blouse.

On the way out to my car she called to me. When I stopped and turned, she walked over to me with a smile then placed a very tender kiss on my cheek. In her right hand, she was holding a black straw hat with a black bow on it when she placed the hat on my head. “You must learn to accessorize your outfits.”

When I arrived in the parking lot at the newspaper, I was still trying to decide which approach I would use to describe women's fashion in “Blouse vs. Shirt,” the title of my article.

One thought in particular was to mention the cost factor, for I calculated that the cost of a well tailored blouse was twice the cost of a polo shirt. While I walked towards the entrance to the newspaper I questioned whether it was the cost of materials or the labor required for the more intricate sewing.

It had taken me a few hours of rewrites until I was completely satisfied with the article. I crossed my ankles while I leaned back in my chair rather pleased with my colorful remarks about blouses vs. shirts in the fashion world. When I sat forward to place my name for credit for some unknown reason I felt it necessary to give credit to both sides of myself in this exploratory mission into LADIES DAY. Thus I signed off with James 'Jamie'; without reference to last a name.

This article brought in even more responses to the newspaper, with many women asking what was the next fashion adventure for "Jamie." My editor was very pleased and she wrote me a memo with laudatory remarks on my articles.

She even suggested that they might result in a sizeable monetary bonus for both of us if I could continue to capture the hearts and interest of the women readers. She enclosed a few letters---a few came from men who had started to read the articles. One man so eloquently expressed, "You got guts man to venture into a woman's fashion territory...I can't wait to see where you go next."

For the next couple of weeks I continued to wear the various blouses that Karen had picked out for me on our first major shopping excursion. The fact that they buttoned on the left was no longer even given any thought. The colors did not even bring embarrassment as I chose a lavender or peach to wear to work.

One night as I arrived home from work I was greeted with a grin from Karen as she sweetly whispered Happy Anniversary.

"Our anniversary is still over a month away."

"Not that anniversary. You wrote your first LADIES DAY article four months ago."

While we were eating dinner I was told that we had an appointment at the salon for a waxing since it had been eight weeks since our last trip. A couple of nights ago as we were in bed, I could feel the hair stubble beginning on my legs. I tried to plead my case, of letting hair grow back out, but Karen overruled me.

"Think how dreadful your shorts would look. And it's about time we got you into a skirt again. Besides, intimacy with stubble is out of the question. I've come to enjoy rubbing up against your silky smooth skin."

And so, joylessly, I agreed to the trip to the salon.

I dressed for our appointment in peach cotton panties, peach blouse, and at my wife's insistence---that black skirt.

Upon arrival at the salon, the receptionist with a friendly, "Hello Karen & Jamie" greeted us! Karen was asked if we wanted the waxing first or the other appointment first.

"What other appointment?" I started to ask.

"The waxing first please," Karen replied quickly.

So I was once again led back to a familiar table to experience once more sensual smooth skin. My skin had taken on a soft sheen that was becoming rather pleasing to me even though I had protested.

When we were finished, I started to head towards the exit door. I was brought to a stop by Karen's voice calling out, "Whoa not yet Jamie!"

Karen walked up to me as she fumbled through her purse for a few letters. She handed three letters to me. "These are only a sample of the many sent into the newspaper asking when I would experience 'earrings'."

I held the first letter in my hand and read the lady's request to write about the experience of wearing pierced earrings. While I was opening the second letter my wife put her hand on my elbow and led me to one of the styling chairs. My heart must have missed a few beats as my wife and the beautician sat me in the chair. I gasped for a breath while I looked into my wife's eyes pleading for a reprieve.

"Karen, this is really asking too much."

"Now Jamie, think, we can share earrings. And since you have that wonderful expense account we can both enjoy expensive earrings."

The beautician placed one mark on each ear, but my wife held up two fingers. To my chagrin a second mark was placed on each ear. Before I could prepare myself, I felt the first of four sharp pains as the girl used the piercing gun on my ears. It brought tears to my eyes.

Not only because of the pain, but because now I saw myself with four gold starter earrings glinting prettily.

In each ear I had one 24 carat gold stud with a small diamond and the other earring was a plain gold ball. On the way home Karen explained how I had to care for the holes and that she was looking forward to the day in about six weeks when I could experience the feel of dangling earrings brushing my cheek.

The next day while getting dressed for work I thought of putting small band-aids over the earrings as possible camouflage. But finally I gave in to the realization that I couldn't hide forever this new Fashion statement affixed to my earlobes. Of course, Linda noticed immediately as I sat down at my computer. With her a finger she pointed to her ear lobe.

"I look forward to your article on care for newly pierced ears. And of course later on the experience of wearing different styles with different outfits."

"What outfits?" I sarcastically replied. She snickered and gave me a wave off followed by on word "Later."

During the day, while I was writing my article on comparing the comfort of men's and women's shoes, I found myself again and again with my fingers twirling the newly placed gold studs. Somehow it was even relaxing to sit and twirl them as I typed. There was something provocative about being pierced like a woman. A ritual that nearly all women went through and now so had I!

The next two articles I wrote were about my experience with my new pierced ears, and in the second article included the new necklace along with several rings that my wife had bought for me on my account. My third article on jewelry was hard to find the words about the exhilarating joy that I found over just a ring.

One morning, near the end of August, I found a little box next to a glass of orange juice that Karen had poured for me. When I opened the box I found a diamond engagement ring along with a wedding ring that matched. The set looked familiar. . .it was the same exact style set I had purchased for her!

With out ceremony, she reached out and took off my

wedding band. She placed the engagement ring and wedding band on the appropriate finger and she hugged me. She whispered into my ear, "We now are really a matching pair."

"You charged a diamond ring!" I gasped.

She nodded holding her hand up to mine. "See how pretty your fingers look and everyone will know you are taken!"

My words in that newspaper article expressed how my heart glittered as bright as the diamond. Every time the light caught it and made it shine, I felt loved. When I wrote that I never knew how a diamond could express such LOVE, I never expected such a response. For the whole next week the newspaper was inundated with letters, phone calls, e-mail, and telegrams which complimented me on having such insight through experiencing it from the other side.

My wife had not read my article on the jewelry until her editor had handed her the section with my expression towards diamonds and their special glow. Karen later told me as she whispered words between kisses of how her editor kept telling her that I was a very special person.

Those kisses led to many hours of passion as we rekindled our fire of love. Our hands explored each other's bodies.

Karen aroused a new pleasure in my nipples that I had never experienced before. What with the waxing and soft materials, it was as if my skin had taken on a much more sensitive awareness to touch.

We awoke most mornings cuddled in each other's arms still slightly damp from the perspiration of passion. With a smile and a tender kiss I was greeted with a good morning and the invite that if I washed her back she would reciprocate. We walked into the bathroom together hand in hand.

I washed her body and shampooed her hair as she reciprocated on me. As we were drying off and heading to make a quick breakfast, we caught the weather for the day.

I was running a brush through my full, long tresses. After five months without a haircut it was now well onto my shoulders.

The TV had said that it was going to be a hot day in the nineties so I decided that I'd tie my hair back into a ponytail to keep cooler. Last night happened to be a night that I got to sleep without rollers for a change.

I walked back into our bedroom to get an elastic and found Karen putting her long hair into a French braid. I stood for a moment to watch her. She noticed my gaze.

"It's going to be hot out there today. I'm going to keep my hair out of the way. How about you?"

"Yeah, I was just coming in here to look for an elastic. I was going to put my hair in a ponytail."

"Ponytails are okay but why not go for something a bit more classy?"

"Classy? What do you mean?"

"Here, sit down," she said as she finished her hair. She stood up offering me the little chair in front of the vanity. I sat down and watched as she began to brush all my hair from front to back. The quality shampoo and conditioner I used caused my hair to be soft and shiny. It was nearly all one length so even my front hair fell down to the jawbone.

"Now Jamie, tilt your head back. Look straight up at the ceiling for a couple minutes." I did as requested and I felt Karen brushing the hair above my brow back then catching it in her right hand. Deftly, her hands move tugging at that hair and then picking up more hair behind the first section, I felt the tugging again. She had me gradually tilt my head back down and I saw that my top and side hair disappeared upwards and to the back of my head. Her nimble hands kept pulling and tugging as she worked down the back of my head.

Finally, she reached over on the vanity and picked up a ponytail elastic. This was fastened at the back as she picked up a few bobby pins. I watched as she tucked them in along the sides behind my ears. Then Karen took a can of hairspray and began spraying my whole head enveloping me in a cloud of perfumed mist.

"Wow, beautiful! Take a look," she said as she handed me a large hand mirror. I turned my head around so that I could see the back of my head reflected

in the large vanity mirror.

“Oh my! You’ve braided my hair like yours!”

“Isn’t it nice?”

Karen had woven a perfect French Braid that started from the front of my head and incorporated hair neatly into it right down to the nape of my neck. Not a hair was out of place. “It was the best French Braid I’ve ever done!” she exclaimed.

After I finished admiring the feminine hairdo, she made me turn around as she made some sort of final adjustments at the back. “Here, wear these!” She put a pair of her one inch, hoop earrings into my holes. With a mischievous smile she pronounced, “There, now you’re ready for the heat out there.”

I finished dressing in a pair of shorts, blouse, and sandals. On the way to the car I felt as though outdoors was one large steam bath. During the drive to the newspaper office my thoughts were on an article I was to write but the unbearable heat caused a lack of concentration on my driving.

When I saw flashing lights, I was seized back into reality. With my heart pounding, face red, I pulled over and awaited the inevitable. The police officer approached my vehicle and with a typical smile politely asked to see my driver’s license.

Over the last month I had found carrying my wallet in my shorts or skirts uncomfortable so I left my license in my glove compartment. I leaned over and retrieved my license, which I handed to the officer. He scanned over the picture and kept looking at it and the license several times.

I became nervous and reached back behind my head to release the tension building in my neck. It was then that I felt the large ribbon that my wife had tied to the end of my braid!

The officer questioned where I was heading. I responded that I was heading to the newspaper where I worked.

As if dawn were awakening, he smiled, “Oh. . .now I get it. You’re that writer who does LADIES DAY. At first I thought you were a woman and that this was

your husband's license."

"That's me."

He went on to tell me that I had not come to a full stop at a stop sign. He handed me back my license and said, "You should have your newspaper's lawyer or someone write up a letter and get a picture of yourself the way you look now. you know, in female attire. It's not against the law but what if there was an accident?"

He wrote out a warning ticket for me, which I was supposed to show my editor. "Here you go. Be more careful next time. And by the way, you wear women's fashions well. You look good. You had me fooled until I looked at your license."

Upon arriving at work I laid my brief case on the desk next to my computer. When I walked past Linda she pointed to my head. Her remark was, "Cool!"

As I walked on by towards my editor's office. The door was open. I placed the warning ticket on her desk and started to walk away so as to meet my deadline.

Her hand reached for the ticket and after reading it she asked me to explain. "The officer told me to get a letter to explain why I was dressing in women's clothes. He was nice but thought I should have a current picture."

She waved me off with remark that she would handle the necessary paperwork.

Once back at my desk, I called my wife to share the nervous experience of the morning. She reassuringly calmed me down, saying, "So the officer thought you were a young lady at first? That must have been interesting?"

"Yeah, I guess so." I ashamedly admitted.

"That must have raised your blood pressure a few notches! i wish I'd had you wear a skirt this morning."

"Why?" I asked. "He saw enough of my legs with the shorts."

"Trust me," she giggled, "It's different."

The rest of the day went rather routinely after the morning upset. I became enthralled on my computer with writing my article and all was forgotten. With a

week's research I was able to write an excellent article on hair styles and their comforts and heartaches.

When I placed the article on Linda's desk, she asked me to wait a minute. I stood there while she browsed through the article. She set it down and remarked,

"Well done. You're not only pretty but smart too!"

At that she pointed towards the editor's office and told me, "The editor wants to see me before you go home."

After a knock on her door, I was asked to enter. I was motioned towards her desk and she reached out to me with an envelope.

"This should take care of any legal aspects of Ladies Day."

With my well manicured fingers, thanks to trips to the salon, I opened the letter. I read the document that had been written by the newspaper's lawyer. I also noted that it had been notarized by the Mayor's office, the police department, and a psychologist.

She informed me that a copy is on file with all three but that I should keep this copy with me when I am out. "The police department says you should get a new picture for your driver's license."

I nodded agreement.

I arrived home before my wife and placed the envelope on the kitchen table to show her later. The drive home had left me feeling sticky and uncomfortable since I do not have air conditioning in my car. So I decided to jump into a cool shower. The cool water was so refreshing that I had not heard my wife arrive home.

It was a surprise when she pulled back the shower curtain and stepped in with me. We repeated the morning ritual of washing each other. Just before we were to get out she raised her arm to inspect her armpits. She reached for a razor on the shower shelf, and shaved under her arms. Then she lifted one of my arms for a look. This was followed by a few gentle strokes with her razor under each. When we stepped out of the shower she used a powder puff on each of us. The dry feeling was a welcome relief, but the scent was a bit flowery or feminine.

I looked at her rather questionably which brought on inquiry as to if something was wrong. I shook my head with a negative response though that is not what I felt.

She had brought in two terry cloth short bathrobes into the bathroom, so we both left with wet hair in our robes. We sat on the couch to discuss the letter that had been written. We spoke for over a hour before she brought up the subject of dinner. "I don't feel like cooking on such a hot muggy night. Mind if we go to that new air-conditioned restaurant?"

"It sounds like a piece of heaven," I replied..

Neither of us had taken out our French Braids in the shower. I had just removed the white bow, which had so deftly been placed there that morning. I reached for a clean pair of shorts and a casual T-shirt.

"Honey?" I heard her ask. Karen held up a short, sundress that still had the tag on it. She laid it on the bed next to the one that she had chosen to wear. "Would you like to try something even more comfortable and cool than shorts and a T-shirt? This has a loose open feeling, less fabric to cling to body, just straps and a open back."

I reached for the shorts and shook my head NO.

She placed her hand on top of mine and said, "Wait!" She slipped on her sundress. Then did a turn around for me to look at her. The dress was above her knees and the back was definitely scooped, and then her hand reached out for mine, which she placed on the soft fabric near her bodice. The fabric was lightweight cotton. She reached for a pair of scissors and cut off the sales tag.

"I think you are ready to wear a dress. . .be a dear. At least try it on. . .please?"

Standing there only in my cotton panties, I raised my arms so that she could slid the dress down over my body. I felt so naked.

"Oh, I'm so glad that we shaved under our arms!" Her hands adjusted the bodice on the dress. When I looked down the support or cut had somehow given the impression I had small breasts.

I was led over to the big mirror on our closet door to get a look. As I saw my reflection I looked at my wife. Now her breasts definitely filled the sundress, but my reflection was of a thin small-breasted woman. I turned around to take a peek at the bare back and the way it fit over my bottom.

My heart was racing in fear of even having something so feminine on. My mind could not even fathom why I was even considering saying OKAY to her request. I stood there mesmerized.

Since I had not responded, my wife placed another silk hair bow at end of my braid to match the yellow in the flowers on MY sundress. Next she came over and removed the little gold studs in my ears to replace them with large dangling gold loops. Her fingers felt my face for traces of beard.

"Hmmm. . .the electrolysis is really working at eliminating your beard. Aren't you glad I made you start?"

"I shaved just before entering the shower." But, the fact was she was right. Each trip was making shaving less of a necessity and not having a beard shadow made me appear younger by ten years.

Karen sat me down at her vanity. While I looked at her through the mirror while her fingers felt my face.

I asked, Should I should stop electrolysis. . .it's PERMANENT, you know."

She looked at me from different angles and replied, "You would be foolish to quit. Remember how you hated shaving?" I brought up the cost, which would probably be \$6,000 or more. "Hey, it's being taken care of by the newspaper! At least keep going until they complain!"

"They haven't said a word about any expense. I bet they have a syndication deal in the works. . ."

"Besides, then I won't get razor burn when you're 'down there' pleasing me," she whispered with a seductive giggle. "Let's do you up right tonight."

My face was covered with a foundation and some make-up to enhance my beauty. When Karen had finished, she remarked that she was learning a lot about beauty by working on me. Like the hints that the color analyst had given me awhile back.

As she reached for her sandals she tossed mine

towards me.

"We're going to experience a 'LADIES' night out. And don't worry, you'll fit in fine." Were her reassuring words.

"After the run in with that cop. . ." I said finding my keys.

"It's okay, I'll drive," she said. I sighed in relief. I was still shaking as I looked once again at my image in the mirror not believing that the feminine reflection was mine.

Karen put her hand on my shoulder and then slid the strap of one of her shoulder bags onto it. I glanced in the bag to see my keys, wallet, and some make-up along with a hairbrush. My hand was gently squeezed as I was led out of our apartment door.

While walking to her car, I felt awkward with the shoulder bag as she called it. The straw and leather trim bag definitely fell into my definition of a purse. Karen noted my uneasiness as my arm bumped the bag.

"Relax," she told me as if it were nothing more than a gym bag at my side.

"In a few days you won't even notice it's hanging there. It'll become like a part of you."

"What do you mean, 'in a few days'?"

"Your editor suggested that your next article should be on shoulder bags and 'purses'. A few department stores are taking out ads to run next to your article. Linda said they were fighting for the position. They might even find a permanent sponsor!"

My mind went to business. I knew I wanted a raise along with all these "bennies". I had to be careful. I'd seen this happen before. A column takes off---writer gets big raise---column dies---writer out on butt. I would move slowly. "I'm really scared," I admitted.

"Your first time out in a dress" she giggled, "and I bet not your last. You realized that if you can pull this off, you can wear anything and just blend in! No one laughing, just another female out and about."

"And you get a lot of new clothes!"

"That too!"

As we drove to the restaurant, Karen started a lesson on the types of bags that women used and their

practicality. As we waited for our dinners, my wife pointed out various styles of bags, fabrics, sizes, and practicality. "See how ladies carried their purses with them everywhere. . .even to the powder room," she informed. "If you start wearing dresses, you'll want a couple nice purses."

"I have to admit," I whispered, "I love the way this dress feels against my skin."

"Shall I buy you another one tomorrow?" she asked, checking my downcast eyes."

"Could you?" I asked not even looking up.

When we arrived home I undressed and followed my wife into our bathroom. There I was instructed on the importance of removing make-up before going to bed. I smeared on the thick remover and somewhat marveled at how plain my face looked without the added color.

Before applying a night cream to our faces both Karen and I took turns washing each other's hair. With now casual familiarity, we took turns putting each other's hair up on rollers for the night. As bizarre as it seemed to me I felt a strange excitement as my hair became tightly imprisoned in this feminine ritual.

We both put on large cotton sleep shirts and slid into bed. Tired as we were, Karen had other ideas and going right to sleep was not one of them.

Soon we were lying together snuggled in an after-glow as she questioned in a affirming tone, "Now tonight wasn't all that bad for your first 'Ladies Night Out,' was it? Tomorrow, I'm going to buy you a bunch of new dresses and maybe even a few for work!"

I was too tired to even discuss it.

Awakening the next morning to the alarm clock I laid in bed for awhile to listen to the weather for the day. The forecaster predicted another hot and humid day. I reached out and turned off the radio followed by a lazy roll out of bed and a long bath.

Reaching into my drawer, I searched for clean underwear and headed towards the closet in my lavender panties to get dressed for the day.

My clothes decision was a pair of lightweight tan

cotton slacks, white and yellow blouse, and tan sandals. I was standing in front of dresser mirror trying to decide on accessories if I dared.

My fingers played with my earlobes debating whether I should leave in sleep studs or to wear a pair of the dangling earrings that my wife recently purchased for me.

When Karen walked by, my hand was holding the set of yellow sun flowers earrings I'd worn the night before with the sundress.

"Those are perfect for today!"

"I don't know. . ."

"Here, sit down, I'll do your hair," Karen instructed as she held the vanity chair for me. I sat down and watched with nervous expectation as my wife methodically removed pins and rollers from my hair leaving a mass of soft, bouncy curls.

"I think we'll stick with something casual today," she remarked and began to run a brush through the curls. As she worked on my hair it transformed into a softly waving, full of body mass. Taking a hair elastic she pulled the hair back gently, not pulling the softness away too much from the front and fastened it in back into a loose ponytail. Then she turned around and picked up a bright yellow woman's baseball hat with a large back vent opening.

Carefully, she slipped the ponytail through the cap's back vent and then pulled the cap down slightly over my hair. The cap was smaller than a normal baseball cap and had a longer brim.

Taking several bobby pins, Karen slipped them in strategically to hold some long wisps of bangs neatly back and several to secure the cap to my hair. Finally, she picked up a matching yellow scrunches and wrapped it around over the hair elastic behind the cap.

Without discussion, she finished her ministrations by picking up and putting the sunflower earrings into my ears and securing the backings.

"Perfect! Yellow looks great against the color of your hair."

As I gazed in the mirror I shivered at the extremely girlish appearance that the cap, earrings and hair created. Once again, I failed to register a significant

protest.

So, that day I walked into work with my bright yellow hat and sunflowers dangling from my earlobes. By now though, my feminine look was becoming quite acceptable to all at the newspaper. . .all in the name of the popular LADIES DAY column.

My day was busy, what with putting together details on an article I was writing about various skirt styles and how they hindered movement.

I even sent out replies to a few people who had written in about the LADIES DAY column. One young woman wrote to say that my article on jewelry and diamonds prompted her to purchase a engagement ring for her fiancée which was a wedding band with diamond chips on it. This of course prompted me to hold my left hand out to admirer the lovely ring my wife had adorned upon my hand.

Late in the afternoon I was called into my editors office. As she wrote on a memo to me... 'We need to talk!' When I entered her office she was on the phone as usual, so she just motioned for me to take a seat.

A few minutes later she hung up then called her secretary telling her to hold all her calls for awhile.

She noticed my earrings and remarked, "I saw a patch of sunflowers on my drive into work this morning. . .your choice of earrings are well suited for the day."

"They were my wife's choice," I said cheerfully.

"I have to tell you," she said placing sheets out in front of me that showed the sales of the newspaper over the last quarter, "I don't know why but we just did a survey. You have one of the "most read" sections of the newspaper!"

Her finger pointed out that LADIES DAY was in the top three, but far exceeded the others with written replies. She looked at me and said with a smile, "WE need to discuss the direction and style the LADIES DAY column will take in the future." It sent a chill up my spine in fearful anticipation of words I was about to hear.

"We have hired another writer to permanently take over your home improvements article writing. We

have several other newspapers that want to take on your articles and a syndication deal in the works. That means more articles per week but a bigger budget and of course a 'piece of the action'. I want you to gear up your work on LADIES DAY."

So it seemed that my exploration into the world of Women's fashions was to expand rather than wane as I had assumed would happen.

A folder was placed in front of me with a copy of all purchases thus far on my accounts. I noticed that some new store accounts had been opened with some very fashionable designer stores. "Money is no object," she said, "Quality, insightful writing is what we are after. . .do you need an office?"

"An office?" I exclaimed. No one got an office but the biggies.

"Let me see what I can do."

I left the Editor's office with copies of quarterly reports to share with my wife. A smile came to my face thinking that MY articles were responsible in part for sales and advertising space to be up for a full quarter.

Since we had just started the month of September I fathomed briefly what impact my articles written in July and August had been to warrant the Newspaper to request I do LADIES DAY full time. They hadn't complained about a dime of the thousands put on the expense account. I couldn't get them to buy me a tape measure for my home improvement column!

Just a few seconds after I had settled into my seat at my computer I was summoned back to the editor's office.

In her office she was on phone. "Uh huh...right...okay, talk to you later." When she hung up the phone she looked at me and said, "That was the owner of the newspaper, Mr. Rich."

"Gawd?" I joked. He owned everything. . .we called him GAWD because you knew he was there but you never saw him.

She handed me a sheet of paper with the address of a television studio. "Be there at 10am tomorrow morn-

ing for a demo taping.”

“A what?”

“Do you know that Mr. Rich who owns us also owns the TV station KWTW?”

“No.”

“Well, Mr. Rich has been so pleased with what your LADIES DAY column has done to promote Sales, he is considering doing a weekly TV spot on Sunday evenings with you on a spin-off called, LADIES NIGHT. The advertising department seems to think that a male learning and sharing experiences in Women’s fashions would have an appealing twist to draw viewers. So you have been asked to go down for a demo so that your camera demeanor can be judged worthy for television.”

Before I could say anything she just waved her hand to go and sent me on my way back to my desk.

Even though I had my doubts about whether I wanted to pursue this path forward into television, my next hour at the office was filled with a sense of accomplishment. I was a good writer and people were finally seeing it.

As I sat at my computer, practically in a daze, I kept recalling how my column had the most responses from the readers. I was giving myself credit that my words stirred readers to take time and give me feedback.

I was in the middle of thinking of how to write future

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articles when Linda shut down her computer. She yelled my way, "Aren't you going home tonight Sunshine? Time to shut down!"

I looked at my watch and replied, "What a fast day!"

The computer was quickly shut down and I walked out to the parking lot with Linda. On the way towards our cars she told me how happy she was about me taking on LADIES DAY full-time. She placed a peck on my cheek and a typical woman's gentle hug. She said, "It's about time the executives noticed where my value was to the newspaper. I discovered you!"

The traffic was slow because of construction on a sewer line. I didn't know whether I would even tell Karen about the "screen test."

However, when I walked into our apartment, Karen greeted me with a mixed drink, a smile, and congratulations!

"What are you congratulating me for?"

"Because your editor called my editor today. They talked about future topics for articles in your LADIES DAY column. During the conversation, she mentioned that you were to do a 'screen test' tomorrow for a television spot." Karen took a sip of her drink and continued, "You're definitely a shoe in to become television celebrity."

"A laughing stock, you mean."

"Nothing that's done well can be laughed at for long."

..

That evening as I sat in my silk pajamas while Karen set my hair in medium rollers she started to discuss whether I should dress masculine or feminine.

"Feminine!" she stated. "That's what got you to this point! the only question is whether to dress casual or executive style for the cameras."

"Casual!" I insisted.

"I don't know, for a first impression I think you should go with executive style."

"And what do you suggest?"

"Just leave that to me dear. I enjoy thinking about these things late at night when you're asleep. I'll make sure you make a perfect first impression on them."

The next morning, I found that Karen had arisen early and had already laid out my wardrobe for the day. Feeling nervous about meeting a group of strangers, I nearly panicked when I saw the outfit she had chosen.

The newspaper staff and even most of our neighbors had seen me in a variety of most un-masculine attire and hairdo's but these were strangers and company management!

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Let's shock them," she giggled. "That's what you are selling, right? A man who can look good in feminine fashion."

With Karen watching, I removed the pajamas that slid off easily over my hairless, moisturized skin. I picked up the expensive, light blue panties with twin lace inserts at the hips and pulled them up my smooth legs. I had never worn underwear that was this expensive or beautiful.

"Don't forget what we talked about," she shyly twinkled.

"Okay," I moaned. I adjusted my privates so that they were neatly tucked under and between my legs. It was uncomfortable but Karen insisted that it was necessary for the sake of 'modesty'.

The panties' matching lacy blue camisole with thin shoulder straps was next. I shivered as the dainty garment literally floated down over my roller-covered head and settled over my chest and tummy.

"Here put these on. It's part of the business look," she said, handing me an unopened package of sheer pantyhose.

"Pantyhose?! I can't wear those!"

"Sure, sure. you are always complaining about what you can't wear! Can't wear a blouse. . . can't wear your hair up. . . You have and you will again. Come on, why do you think you have this opportunity? It's because 'YOU HAVE' experienced women's fashions. In this case, I think that the pantyhose will be looked at as a plus! Let's face it, by the time you've written your column a while, you will have done everything a woman does."

"Except have babies! That's where I have to draw

the line!”

She laughed and cooed, “We’ll see.”

My wife’s cool rational thinking did make sense. I was going to have to get over my ‘guy’ instincts. “Well. . .okay. I guess you’re right.”

And so, for the first time, I sat down on the edge of the bed and under Karen’s instruction rolled on my first pair of women’s pantyhose.

“These are extra sheer so you have to be very careful.”

She was right. Once I had them up over my panties, the filmy stockings were barely discernable on my legs. However, they did give my smooth legs an extra degree of shine and an even color.

For a second I caught myself with the bizarre realization that I was admiring my legs. . .just as I used to admire a pretty woman’s!

And the feel of the cool, light constriction all the way from my heels to my hips was quite intoxicating. The “control top” smoothed everything sleekly back between my legs.

Karen chose a burgundy pair of walking shorts than were very full and just past knee-length, a lilac blouse, black sandals with one and half inch heels, and a pair of earrings with little purple flowers. The shorts were quite snug around the hips but flared out broadly at the hem. In the mirror, they looked to me like a skirt!

“Very nice. Conservative yet stylish. . .unless you’d rather wear a skirt?”

“I have enough things to worry about,” I crabbed.

“Now sit down and let me do your hair.”

“Nothing too fancy okay? I don’t want to be too embarrassed in front of strangers and the BIG boss.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll just comb it out for fullness today.”

By this time, I should have become nervous anytime Karen told me ‘not to worry’. I sat in front of the vanity mirror and watched as my wife, merrily humming a tune to herself, removed the pins and rollers from my hair.

I realized that my pulse was speeding up. As much as my manly pride tried to assert itself, I now knew that watching something as unmanly as having my

hair curlers taken out and seeing the springy curls all over my head was becoming a sensual thrill that I was finding hard to resist.

As a man, I knew that I should angrily storm into the bathroom and soak my hair to remove the feminine curls, then march straight to a barbershop for a crew-cut.

Instead I looked at my image in the mirror and thought about whether I should ask Karen to put my hair up in back again or pull it back into a twist! What was happening to me? Was I just fading away into the shadows to be replaced by a demasculinized replica? Yet somehow all this made me MORE?, I was now the writer and creator of the hit fashion column LADIES DAY? It was important to go to work with curls, women's clothing and earrings, right?

My stormy thoughts were brought to an end as I once again concentrated on what my lovely wife was doing to my hair. Karen was using a rat-tail comb to lift each section of my hair and firmly backcomb it, then hairspray, section, tease, and more hairspray. "You have to learn to do this yourself. . .SEE! Another article!"

She worked from front to back and down each side of my head teasing and backcombing my hair outward three to four inches from my scalp. With an overall misting of hairspray, she took the comb and began to comb out the ends of each section to smoothly cover the heavily teased base. As she worked over from the top down to the sides my hairdo took shape.

Ten minutes later she did a final spray with extra hold hair spray and stepped back. My silent prediction that I should worry was correct. My hairdo was perfect. Perfect that is if I was a woman! Perfect for Oscar night. Perfect for a supermodel. Perfect for anyone but a male!

Karen had taken my normally straight flat hair and turned it into a very full woman's bouffant hairdo. The front hair rose straight up from my forehead three inches before curving back and over my crown. The hairdo stood three inches away from my scalp all over and at the back probably four inches before it curled under neatly.

The whole hairdo was highlighted by neat rows of

subtle 'bumps' which clearly hinted where every roller had been. Those bumps were an unequivocal statement that this hairstyle was the result of having been set with rollers! My hand went up to cautiously touch the top of my hair. The hairspray gave my hair a firm top layer that resisted my hand when I touched it.

It reminded me of the ladies I would sometimes see on the old Lawrence Welk Show with similar bouffant hairdo's that could probably withstand a good gale force wind without getting a hair out of place.

"Karen! That's what you call just 'full' hair?"

"So sue me, I got a little carried away---creatively."

"But it's. . .it's too. . ."

"Conservative?"

"No! Too feminine!" I blurted out.

"You mean too feminine to go with. . .your pantyhose? Or with the blouse? Or maybe the earrings? Let's face it, I am now married to the most feminine man I've ever seen. . .and I love it!"

She had me and she knew it. Lately, I found myself feeling much more emotional and less aggressive. I didn't expect to win this debate either. I was counting on her opinion more and more.

"Are you sure it's alright? I don't look too stupid?"

"No dear. It looks 'beautiful' dear. I'm sure they will be impressed by your commitment."

As I was heading out the door Karen told me to stop by the nail salon since it was close to the television station. "Have your nails redone and filled," she ordered. they are getting too unshapely. I made you an appointment this morning."

I was given a big hug along with wishes that the "screen test" found me photogenic. Shortly we both were heading down the road to pursue our days.

When I walked into the salon I was taken immediately to the manicurist's chair because they had been told I was on a tight schedule. I was surprised when two nail technicians came over to the chair I was sitting in.

One technician took my right hand to inspect while the other sat down on a stool to remove my sandals.

"Jamie, could you please step into the washroom and remove your pantyhose? Your wife ordered a pedicure too."

I flushed with embarrassment but found my voice was failing me. I meekly did as the pretty young woman had asked then returned. My feet were placed in large pan with warm water.

"I'll let those soak then be back in a few minutes." The warm water made me relax.

True to her word she returned shortly with a tray of tools. Soon my feet were worked on with a little pumice stone, lotion, and then the nails. In unison my hands and feet were being pampered.

"Beautiful ring," the girl said as she worked on my nails. "My girlfriend just got one just like it from her boyfriend."

"My wife gave it to me," I said, blushing at how femininely it glittered.

The manicurist went on about her friend's ring her engagement. "Her fiancée is so hot," she rambled on unceremoniously.

Distracted, I was amazed at how delightful it felt to have my feet worked on. As I sat there I thought that this was definitely something to write about in future.

When it came time to put on polish, one of the manicurists held up a bottle of polish that matched my blouse.

I pointed to bottle called Pink Pearl. It seemed the closest to NEUTRAL.

At the counter, I signed the account charge, and added a generous tip for each of the ladies. When I signed my name, I was well aware of the glistening sheen of the polish and the pointed shape of my fingernails. I took a quick glance at my polished toes conspicuously showing through my transparent nylons.

Even though it was early September, the sun shone brightly through the car window. I reached for the sunglasses that my wife had just purchased for me a few days ago.

As I reached towards the glove compartment, my chest bumped against the steering wheel. I felt a sensitive twinge through my silky blouse and camisole.

I had noticed over the past few months, a softening of my skin but this soreness was new.

I felt one chest and then the other. The pang of sensitivity was under my nipples that had balled up and pressed outward like I was chilled---but I wasn't!

I had been on one of Karen's funny diets for months now and had lost a lot of weight at my waist, shoulders and upper arms. While I wasn't hungry, I worried that the diet might be unhealthy. I took vitamins and felt good but I made a mental note to ask Karen if the diet could cause my skin on chest to become puffy and sensitive.

She was happy now. . .we wore the same size in almost everything but shoes. I was a half a size larger.

When I pulled into the TV studio parking lot, I focused back on what was at hand. It was about nine fifty-five. Thinking I was cutting the appointment close, I quickly looked into the vanity mirror to check myself out. Patting at my hair, I thought of how VAIN I was becoming.

"Dare I?" I pondered. My face looked a bit washed out so I freshened my lipstick. I caught a security guard watching me.

Upon entering the studio's sliding doors I was greeted by a young cheerful receptionist. She looked at me closely and then replied, "Oh, you must be Jamie!"

She pointed towards hall and said, "You will be taping in studio 3." I removed my sunglasses and walked on down the hall, my sandals making a girlish click as I walked.

Shortly after I entered, one of the many men standing around came up to me and extended a hand in greeting. "Hi, I'm Norman. You must be Jamie from the newspaper?" He announced to all, "PEOPLE! THIS IS JAMIE. He's the one who writes articles on LADIES DAY for women from man's point of view."

Rather than dazzle them with my articulate wit, I just nodded hello. "She no dumb blond!" he added.

With a forced smile, I asked, "So, what's the plan?"

What's the television station expected to get from the video we were about to tape.

Norman gave me a very serious once over look. "Well one question is already answered, "You're not bad looking."

"Really?" I replied sarcastically, thinking he was making fun of me.

"Yeah, I was expecting some hairy brute or drag queen type. The way you look, I can see you are well suited for being a spokesperson on Women's fashions," then he added with a chuckle, "Just don't try to get any of the men around here in a dress!"

"I wouldn't dream of it," I said with a scatterbrained tone.

"Okay legs, follow me and we'll get started." I ignored the 'legs' comment and followed him to meet Mary, the make-up artist. I was told that he would be back in fifteen minutes to get me for the taping.

Mary asked, "Have you worn full make-up before? i notice the nail polish and lipstick."

I nodded.

"Do you have any favorite brands?"

I went on to explain, "I have only worn make-up a couple times. Once was when I did a article on Color Analysis."

"And the others?"

I blushed but admitted, "The other night when I went out to dinner with my wife."

Her eyes gave me a quizzical look and I explained that she was the one who encouraged me to get into all this.

Mary put on a foundation as I further explained the whole situation with the newspaper and the LADIES DAY column.

As she was working on my face she remarked on how little of facial hair I had.

"Electrolysis treatments," I stated. It wasn't a secret. . .it was in the paper.

Mary giggled and told me, "You have nice skin. You'll like not having to shave your face again."

Soon Norman returned for me. While we walked back to get in position for the cameras, I was told what

was expected of me. I heard the director yell, "Roll!" and they had me read some things, including my own articles.

About a hour later Norman informed me that we were all done. "I think the 'powers to be' will like what we shot," he said matter-of-factly.

The following day I returned to the newspaper and my little cubicle with desk and computer. My drive to work that day had me thinking about next article for LADIES DAY. I immediately sat down to write my thoughts on the joy and luxury of having a pedicure.

I came up with the word to tell the pleasure of having one's feet pampered until the glistened like a honey baked hams.

I wrote about the whole experience from soaking in the pan to the final stroke of polish. The article ended with comment: "Women should never take their feet for granted. If you are expected to spend hours a day suffering in high heels, your feet deserve A TREAT!"

My article ran the following day and the response from the readers was quick. Women wrote in saying their feet thanked me for the suggestions.

The Classified section and the advertising department sent me memos from various nail salons that had been overwhelmed on a single day. Many had taken out new ads because of my article for Pedicures and foot massages.

A memo on my desk from my Editor had a smiley face along with the comment, "Nice going----once again!

You now not only boost circulation but also the revenue from Ads."

A few days later my wife had made a appointment for both of us---it was time again for a waxing. When we entered the salon I was greeted with overwhelming cheerfulness.

The receptionist informed me that the owner wished to speak to me and I was shown the way to her office.

Once inside her office, the owner went on to share how grateful she was for my article on Pedicures. Her appointments had tripled in the past week.

"The fact that some of my regular customers," she smiled, "have seen you here, has brought in a tremendous amount of business." She held my hand daintily as she spoke sweetly, "My staff and I thank you for the increase in our incomes. From now on, you deserve SPECIAL TREATMENT!"

I graciously acknowledged her words, but inside my stomach I felt queasy. Did I want special treatment from a woman's beauty salon?

A couple weeks later, I entered the salon for my electrolysis appointment. I wanted to cancel but my wife insisted that I continue with the appointments.

I tried to finagle my way out because I was getting scared. More often than not, I was now being referred to as Miss or Mrs. if people saw my wedding ring.

I blamed it mostly on the fact that my face was becoming smoother and softer looking with the steady electrolysis. Shaving had become a chore of the past. Sometimes when the electrologist had a cancellation she would call the newspaper and arrange for me to come in during the middle of the day. I was even cutting down the time of the appointments. . .the electrologist was having trouble finding any hair long enough to treat.

That morning when I entered the salon I was greeted with smiles and friendly hellos from the staff. The electrologist greeted me at the receptionist desk with cheerful conversation, and I was informed that the client who was to be after me canceled. In midst of talk she told me, "We can do two hours this morning!"

As I lay on the table, her fingers felt and searched out any new growth on my face. My upper lip was given great concentration till she ran her finger across my lip and cheeks then in sweet voice proclaimed, "Your face



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is as smooth as a baby's bottom!"

Seeing that we still had more than a half-hour left. Her hands coaxed me into sitting position. She asked that I take off the burgundy T-shirt that I was wearing.

"Why?"

"Your wife called and requested that if time permitted, we get the few hairs on your chest."

When she pulled the shirt over my head I don't think she was ready to see my embarrassment, for after the shirt cleared my face, she noticed I was several shades of red.

She tried to relax my fears. "No big deal...even some women have chest hairs removed. You don't want smooth cheeks and a hairy chest!"

I was too shocked and embarrassed to speak out that I wanted to keep my chest hairs.

After she had treated my chest hairs her hands went to my belly button and she said, "I might as well get these few also while we're at it."

We were finished before the buzzer went off. I was told to put my shirt back on, but that someday she would give me the bikini treatment. "Someday you might want to write article about wearing a bikini bathing suit at the beach!"

During the drive home my thoughts wandered over many things. I stared at my hands. My long, slender finger grasping the wheel. My brilliant pink nails and wedding ring startled me when the sun hit them. I had girl's hands! My nails like little flowers growing on the ends of my fingers.

I rubbed my bare, naked arms, shivering slightly through the silky fabric of my camisole and blouse. I felt my nipples kink outward into little balls.

I got mad. When I got home, I was going to rant a bit to Karen for ordering my chest hair removal without asking me.

I wasn't ever going to be wearing a bikini to the beach! I thought of how self-confident she was under the constant stares and ogles of the guys on the beach.

When my wife and I first went to the beach together, she told me how much she hated the 'wolves on the beach' but looking good was important. I always felt

like I needed to protect her from the stares.

I arrived home all set to let Karen know that I did not appreciate her call to the electrologist but I was greeted at the apartment door with a warm loving hug. "Honey?" she said, "This a beautiful Fall day. Let's go for a bike ride on the path. She led me back to our bedroom.

On the bed lay a pair of spandex shorts, ankle socks, tennis shoes and a top. My so-called anger fluttered away while I dressed. While looking into her sweet loving face, Karen's nimble fingers found their way to my hair. She quickly had it in a braid that was touching my shoulders. "We don't want you running into any street lights because your hair gets into your eyes."

Soon we were peddling down the path with our helmets on. The wonderful sensation of an Indian Summer's warm breezes blowing against us was invigorating. We chatted and laughed about many things. How odd, I noticed. Our conversations were mingled with discussions about women's fashions and issues. Conversations unknown six months ago.

One topic that had never come up before was sexual harassment at work. Karen shared with me that one of the corporate executives of the Fashion magazine was hitting on her.

My blood pressure rose immediately and I wanted his name. I wanted to go beat the man.

"Shhhh! Relax. This is just a normal part of what women go through at work. You ought to write an article about how difficult it is for women to walk the ethical business line, and get the respect they deserve without feeling like they are whining."

While we rode along I asked, "Be more explicit about what is offensive to women."

"Women like compliments on their clothes, hair, perfume and such, but sometimes a man uses the compliment to suggest we want to be sexual."

"Some girls wear such short skirts," I said, "Even I can assume they want the attention."

"Haven't you noticed that a few guys stared at your legs whenever you are wearing shorts. . .or skirts? Remember how they looked at you when we went to

dinner and you wore that sundress? Were you being SEXY?"

"NO!" I blushed. "I was. . .I guess I was being feminine?"

She smiled and said, "Don't be shy, dear. . .even I found myself eyeing your legs now and then. Your silky shapely legs are pleasing to both eye and touch."

Looking at her legs, I said, "Right back to you!"

As I rode on down the road, my thoughts went to analyze men were sizing up MY legs. I laughed to myself, "What do they expect to get?" I started to think of how I could incorporate "harassment" into a LADIES DAY article.

We had finished two legs of the county bicycle path when Karen suggested that we take a rest before turning around to head home. At a rest area, with drinking fountains, we set bikes in the racks. We took a long cool refreshing drink, and lay down on a grassy slope to rest awhile.

Both of us had our helmets off lying in the grass with our eyes hazily half-closed enjoying the laziness of the warm weather.

After about a few minutes of silence, Karen reached over to stroke my temples. Her fingers played with my braid while she whispered, "I love sharing our lives together. Now more than ever!"

My head turned towards her soft lips. Our lips met and we shared a long lingering kiss. Her lip-gloss melted with mine as we kissed gently, careful not to smear out lips beyond repair.

Coming up for air, I admitted to her, "I feel the same way. It's like my feelings towards life itself have become more intense with each feminine experience."

"I've noticed."

Back at home, Karen, with a seductive twinkle in her eye, suggested we take a shower together. "I'll wash your back if you wash mine!"

Lathered up in the shower, Karen was scrubbing my back with the loofa when she reached around my back with her free hand to tease my nipples.

Quickly my sensitive nipples became erect and I

moved back against her in a sexy way. "Oh, so you like that?" Both her hands found my nipples and began caressing them.

"Easy!" I moaned, "that hurts. . .and feels good!"

"Sorry," she said while she slid around in front of me. She showered me with kisses from my neck then to my aroused nipples. "But these need to be kissed!" Gently at first then with passion, she tweaked, twisted and pinch at my smooth hairless nipples.

Later, when I was drying off, I noticed that my nipples hadn't retreated but stood out from my chest in little crowns. I turned in front of the mirror looking at myself from different angles.

Over the past couple weeks I had thought that it was my imagination that my breasts were more prominent and pointed. With the weight loss, I was so think I could count my ribs but there was a softness around my chest. Not much different than when I was heavier but more conspicuous because they were jelly-like mounds on my skinny frame.

My fingers lifted and manipulated the soft tissue. My nipples were so touchy that sometimes a camisole silky fabric felt like sandpaper against them.

That night when I lay in bed after the lights were out, I debated whether to ask Karen if she had noticed changes in my body. Could wearing feminine clothes cause a male some kind of physical damage?

"Honey? Are you awake?"

"I am now."

"Have you noticed any changes in my body?"

She replied with a sugary positive, "Sure!"

So I asked, "Well? What?"

She rolled over to talk to me and said, "For one, you lost that beer gut and have a great shape."

"I've noticed that my hips haven't lost any weight

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and my chest. . .it's very sensitive."

"Isn't it great," she said moving close to me, her hands gently flowing over my chest. "It could be from the female hormones?"

"WHAT?"

"Those vitamins you've been taking? One of the pills is estrogen. . .to help you loss weight in the right places."

"NO!" I yelled.

"But Honey, they worked! You are almost exactly my size in every way."

"You gave me hormones to expand your wardrobe?"

"I thought that since you would be wearing women's fashions, they would fit better if you were softened up a bit."

"Why didn't you ask me? What about my health and any effects on my sexual prowess?"

"I think we've proved that THAT is not a major problem. As far as health, I talked to a doctor. He told me the dosage, side effects, and what effects to expect. Millions of women take them everyday!"

"But no men!"

"That's not true. Millions of men took them for years for prostrate problems. Do you feel bad or sickly?"

"No, I've actually never felt better."

"See," she giggled. "But if you are worried, I'd like you to get a check up. I've already discussed this with the doctor. Female hormones work best when they are cyclical. He said he could give you a shot every week for three weeks and one week off for your 'period!'"

My stern look put her on the defense as she blurted out, "Just a thought!" She moved closer and rubbed against me and whispered, "We could be on the same cycle!"

"NO!"

Over the next couple of days, I was angry with her for tricking me into taking such a serious drug. She, of course, was her normal, loving self. As a week went by without hormones, I began to feel blah.

I realize that enjoyed the feeling of my body's new softness. The tenderness and sensitivity in my breasts while sometimes annoying was more often pleasant.




The tenderness in my breasts while sometimes annoying was more often pleasant. That night in shower when Karen caressed and kissed my little breasts, I was thrilled. One night she even had me try on a bra!

That night in shower when Karen caressed and kissed my little breasts, I was thrilled.

A week after my wife had told me about the hormones, I received a memo about my television screen test. The producers had brought in a random "focus" group of people to view and make comments about a television segment of 'LADIES NIGHT' hosted by me early Sunday evenings.

Continued in Ladies Night, TV FICTION CLASSICS # 55.

TV FICTION CLASSICS
MAGAZINE
"BORN TO BE A BRIDE"
Some guys will do anything for a buck...
Bill even agrees to act as a wife!



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IN THE PINK

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*"See son." None of the guys will make fun of
your fatty chest THIS summer."*

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