



Reluctant Press presents:

A Lady For Life

Norman Way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

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A LADY FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

Foster homes aren't always what they seem. The general public has this notion that once a child is removed from a broken home or when an infant is put up for adoption that they are now in a safe, secure environment and will have a "good" upbringing.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Even with the best of intentions, "the system" doesn't always do right by the child. Overloaded social workers trying to manage their caseloads spend little time going beyond outward appearances when they visit a child in their new surroundings.

I was adopted as a baby and was put in my second foster home when I was a toddler. Parents are fond of telling a grown child when they relate an experience from early childhood that "you were too young to remember that." Unfortunately, very young children have a sense of what is going on around them even though they may not comprehend the significance of it. Even babies in the crib know the sound of anger or hostility compared to the soothing sounds of an attentive parent.

My earliest recollection is of playing on the floor with a toy dump truck. My stepfather was seated in his big chair reading his newspaper and taking occasionally swigs from a brown bottle. I pushed the truck aside and reached for my sisters doll and began straightening its dress.

The next thing I knew the doll was sailing out of my hands across the room and my step father's angry face was next to mine as his huge finger poked me in the chest.

"Boys don't play with dolls, only girls do. Boys play with trucks."

He pushed the truck back into my hands as he sat back down and resumed reading his paper.

I was terrified. I had no idea I had done anything wrong. I still remember the strong medicine-like odor on his breath and the serious look on his face.

For Christmas that year I got a baseball, glove and bat while my sister got a hairbrush set and mirror. We both got clothes. I got a pair of jeans and some shirts while she got a frilly white blouse and some pink ankle socks. I was very envious of her because I just loved that blouse and wanted to wear pink socks like hers too.

My parents were going out for a New Year's Eve party and I remember standing at the bedroom door watching my mother put on her makeup. She was wearing a slip and I remember walking over to her and touching the garment as she applied her lipstick. She pushed my hand away and told me to go back to the living room as the sitter would be here soon.

The slip felt soft and slippery. The smells from the open container of body powder and her perfume bottle excited me. I wondered why boys weren't allowed to have such sweet-smelling things or wear clothes that felt nice and soft as my mother's slip instead of the jeans and t-shirts I had to wear.

I always liked the pretty dresses my sister wore on Sunday to church. I felt uncomfortable in my suit, tie and oxfords. I wanted my own dresses in the worst way. When my sister had her ears pierced at the beauty shop after a perm, I wanted mine done too but I knew better than to ask.

Apparently there were two parts to the world I was growing up in, one for boys and one for girls.

I didn't understand why everything I liked were the things my mother and sister had and everything I disliked were the things my dad and I had. I felt strangely out of place in my "boy world."

I started school and found the same world existed there. Girls acted a certain way and boys did too. They were exact opposites. The worst punishment a boy could endure was to be told to go sit "with the girls."

I liked baseball and was a better than average player. Coaches often criticized a boy for "throwing like a girl" until he had enough practice and learned to throw the "right way."

I was smaller than most of my classmates and I learned right away that if someone pushes you, you push back or you would be a target the rest of your life. After being jostled in the rest room a couple of times by one of the older boys, I sidestepped him the next time, tripped him, grabbed his hair and banged his head against the sink.

Several days later I was sitting in the principal's office with my mother and dad. My dad stuck up for me because I had defended myself. I was not punished either at school or at home for what had happened.

That summer I was awakened one night by a loud bang and then my mother's scream. I found my mom in on the kitchen floor with a knife in her chest and a small revolver close by. My father was lying close to her with a red stain in the middle of his undershirt. A neighbor called the police before I could and soon my sister and I were taken from the house.

Within a week we were separated and placed in different homes. For the rest of that summer, I had occasional nightmares. Numerous sessions with a counselor helped me to get over the events of that night and the nightmares ceased.

My third foster home was far different. My adoptive parents were both teachers and they had one daughter who was two years older than I was.

I was in a different part of the city and when school started, I had to fit in again. My athletic ability helped me get some respect from the older boys. I disliked gym class but once again, being the smallest, I was occasionally a target. This time the wise guy lost a few of his front teeth and I wasn't bothered again.

I still found myself admiring the way girls dressed or fixed their hair. At home, my new parents would go grocery shopping on Friday night; I would sneak in to my mother's room and fondle her lingerie. I would open different bottles of her perfume and smell each one. Once, I held up a lipstick and imagined myself wearing it.

If my stepsister went along with them, I would go into her room. Although she was bigger than I was, I would try on her panties and stockings. I got very excited doing this and soon I was brave enough to try on her blouses, skirts and dresses. I was always careful about putting things back the way I found them.

There was something about the way I felt when I was dressed in her clothes. I felt at peace, like I really belonged in a dress or skirt. I would put on a pair of high heels and practice walking back and forth from the living room to the bedroom with a purse over my arm.

I tried to mimic the way the girls on TV acted. I imagined myself to be one of them and continued to play my little games without anyone ever finding out. I liked imitating the women in the advertisements as they extolled the virtues of the refrigerator, car, or makeup that was being sold.

That spring I gave up baseball and started tennis. Both my step-parents were avid tennis players and I enjoyed pleasing them with my abilities. I would begin my freshmen year of high school in the Fall and the tennis coach had already spoken with my step-dad about my trying out for the team.

The Fourth of July weekend brought us some new neighbors. Dennis and Marie Williams were partners in their own health food store. Their daughter Sybil was two years older than I was. In addition to being nearly six feet tall, she was also a strikingly beautiful girl who was an excellent tennis player as well.

I would watch her at the public courts where my parents took my step sister and me to play. I loved to watch her move on the court. A stunning girl, she was lithe and muscular but not in a masculine way. She was cat-like on the court with a smashing backhand.

She always wore a tennis dress; sometimes the skirt would flare up and I would catch a glimpse of her pink ruffled panties. I ached to wear panties and a dress like hers. Even more, I wanted to be held by her in those muscular arms. It was a strange way to think about a relationship and I had no means of explaining the way I felt.

The Williams' backyard had been converted into a grass tennis court so Sybil could get in plenty of practice at home when a court wasn't available elsewhere. I went over a couple of times and she beat me easily, almost if she was using me for exercise or a warm up until she could face some real competition this Fall when school started again.

We'd finish a set and then sip some lemonade together. She had a funny way of looking at me sometimes. I wasn't sure what it meant but I felt very relaxed in her company. She made me feel both wanted and secure. I had gotten to know and trust her as a friend.

She called me Friday night of the last weekend in July.

"I'm in a bit of a jam, Stephen," she said. Could you come over for a few minutes?"

"Sure," I replied. After hanging up the phone, I dashed across the street.

She answered the door right away and I followed her into the living room.

"I have a doubles match on Saturday and my partner twisted her ankle. I needed somebody to fill in but none of my girlfriends are free. I know this is a bit of an imposition and I hope you won't take this the wrong way but if you didn't have any plans for tomorrow, would you be willing to help me out? I have a smaller tennis dress you could wear as well as one of my mom's wigs. You have a very pretty face and no one will ever know, I swear!"

I thought I must be dreaming. I was sitting close to her on the davenport. Looking up into those big brown eyes, I could hardly refuse.

"I guess it would be okay, as long as no one finds out who I really am."

Her face broke into a wide grin.

"Super!" she exclaimed. "Come with me and we'll get started!"

I followed her into the bedroom. On the bed there were several pairs of bras and panties, as well as two tennis dresses.

"I'll be just outside the door. You get undressed and try on the panties first. Come out when you find the pair that fits the best."

She stepped out of the room and I undressed. The second pair I tried on fit perfectly. The pink tricot panties had four rows of white ruffles in the back. To say they felt wonderful against my skin was an understatement. I opened the door and she walked back in.

"Ooh!" she cried. "Those fit you just right! Now let's get you fitted for the bra."

The second bra fit better than the first and she placed two foam inserts in the cups. After adjusting the straps, she stood back and looked me over.

"Perfect!" she announced. "Now let's try on the dress."

She unzipped the tennis dress and held it up by the hem. I slipped it on and turned around. She pulled the dress down and zipped me up. I turned around again and she was all smiles once more.

"I can't believe how good you look. Step over here and look at yourself."

I walked over to the closet door and stared at my reflection in the full-length mirror. I had a hard time believing it myself. She unzipped me and pulled the dress over my head.

"Take off the lingerie and get dressed. I'll wait in the living room."

She walked out and closed the door. I reached behind me and unhooked the bra. I slid the panties off and placed them next to the bra on the bed. When I put my cotton briefs and T-shirt back on, I felt much different. I put on my jeans, cotton socks and sneakers. I

had felt so good in the lingerie and dress. Now I had to go back to being me again. I walked out to the living room where Sybil was waiting for me.

"Be here at nine am tomorrow and I will help you get ready. Tell your folks we are going to play tennis, they won't suspect a thing."

"Okay," I answered.

"Oh, here, I almost forgot!"

She handed me a disposable razor.

"Tonight after a hot soak in the tub, shave your legs and underarms. Be real careful not to cut yourself. Band-aids won't look good on a girl's legs!"

I nodded as she grinned at me again.

"I'll be careful," I said as I left.

That night as I lay soaking in the tub I thought about what the next day would bring. I scrubbed myself thoroughly. Then, using some of my dad's shaving gel, I lathered and shaved my legs very carefully. I didn't have much body hair to begin with but did my arms, chest and underarms anyway.

I let the water out of the tub and dried myself. I rinsed the razor off and washed the hairs that remained in the tub down the drain. I placed the razor in a tissue and set it on top of the medicine cabinet out of sight.

I rubbed some of my mom's hand lotion on my body and it relieved the stinging sensation of the close shave. I put on my pajamas and went to bed. How sensuous it would have been to be able to wear a nightgown to bed instead of my cotton pajamas, I thought.

The next morning, I shaved my face for the first time, even though there was very little peach fuzz to shave. I wrapped the razor back in the tissue and tossed it in the waste basket. After getting dressed, I ate breakfast and watched the morning news on TV.

About a quarter to nine, I picked up my racket and walked over to Sybil's house.

She opened the door and let me in. She was wearing her tennis dress and I followed her back to the bedroom. She stepped out and I undressed.

I put on the bra and panties, then I let her back in. She helped me get into the dress and zipped me up. I put on a pair of pink cotton socks and then my own tennis shoes.

"Sit at the vanity now and I will fit you with the wig," she instructed.

I sat down and after putting a nylon wig cap over my brown hair she adjusted the blonde wig in place.

"Tilt your face up a little and close your eyes please," she asked.

I did so. She combed part of the wig down over my forehead to form bangs and then pinned a pink bow just above the bangs.

"Open your mouth wide," she asked.

I opened my eyes to see her with a lipstick in her hand.

"Wait a minute," I said. "I don't think I should be wearing any makeup, it was just supposed to be a dress for the day I thought and..."

“SHUT UP!” she yelled at me. “Just do as I say.”

I was surprised at the commanding tone of her voice. I said nothing further as I opened my mouth wide. She pressed the tube of lipstick on my lips and gave it a generous coat of pink creamy lipstick. She then pressed the tube once on each cheek. With her finger in circular motions, she smoothed the makeup to give me a rosy “blush” look. When she finished, she put the makeup back on the vanity and stood up.

“Now look at your self in the mirror,” she said.

I looked at the reflection of a very pretty young girl staring back at me from the vanity mirror.

“You are really something! They are going to love you at the club! Since your name is Stephen Allen Wright I will introduce you as Stephanie Alice Wright. You will be my neighbor’s niece visiting from Portland, Oregon.”

I nodded without speaking. She handed me my racket.

“Let’s get going. Our first match is at ten-thirty and it’s a quarter to ten now.”

I got up from the vanity. She placed the makeup items in a small white purse and gave it to me.

I slipped the chain over my left shoulder like I had seen her do and with my racket in my right hand, I followed her out to the garage.

“When you get in the minivan or sit down anywhere, remember to smooth your skirt with one hand like this.”

I watched her open the door of the van on the driver’s side, setting her purse and racket down first and then getting in. With a sweep of her right hand, she smoothed her skirt and then sat down. I walked around the other side and did the same thing.

“That’s good,” she commented as she pushed the remote for the garage door. “Just keep doing what I tell you and everything will be OK.”

She started the engine and shifted into reverse as the door opened. She backed out and stopped briefly in front of my house as the garage door closed. I was afraid someone in the house might see us. She shifted again and we sped off.

She drove fast. I was terrified of her getting us into an accident and being taken to the hospital in girl clothes. The panties felt *so* good though. I glanced at myself in the side mirror. I liked the way I looked just as I had when I first saw my reflection in the mirror the night before. Now with a wig and makeup, I not only looked like a girl, I *felt* like a girl!

We arrived at the club and Sybil parked the van.

“Remember to straighten your dress when you get out. Walk a little slower, with smaller steps. Stay behind me and follow my lead. When you speak, speak in a softer voice” she admonished.

I felt I was being controlled. She was taking charge of everything and for now, I could only do what she instructed me to do until this day was over.

We checked in and waited our turn to play. Once play started, we made a terrific team and we won our games easily. At the break, I followed her into the locker room.

“Remember now, after you use the john, wash your hands and apply fresh lipstick.”

I nodded again as we walked through the doors that were labeled “Women only.”

I placed my racket on a table and walked to the commodes. I turned around and closed the door. My heart was pounding furiously. I was afraid I would be caught and my little secret would be out. I put my purse on the hook, pulled the dress up, slid my panties down and sat down to pee.

Around me there was a lot of laughter and frivolity. I was surprised at the vulgarity of some of these so called “ladies.” The conversation seemed to be centered around men, sex and penis size.

When I finished, I pulled my panties up and smoothed my dress. I slipped my purse over my shoulder and walked over to the sink. I washed my hands and opened my purse. I applied more of the bright pink lipstick and pressed my lips together.

Sybil stood next to me and when she finished washing, I followed her out to the patio.

“Remember when the food and drinks come to take small bites and chew slowly,” she instructed.

We ordered salads and diet soft drinks. While we ate, some of her friends came over and she introduced me. I found it easy to be Stephanie and felt very comfortable in my feminine role.

After lunch, we waited for our turn in the afternoon tournament. The competition was much tougher and we finished third. We had played hard and though Sybil wasn’t happy about the finish, she said nothing on the way home.

Back home, she sat me in front of the vanity and showed me how to remove the makeup with face cream. She placed the wig back on the stand and I removed the nylon wig cap. I saw myself as a boy in a tennis dress.

She unzipped me and I pulled the dress over my head. She put the dress on a hangar while I unhooked my bra. She stepped out as I removed my tennis shoes, pink socks, then slid my panties down. I got dressed in my male clothing and walked to the living room.

“Thanks so much for helping me out, Stephanie, I mean Stephen. I really appreciate it. You are a good player and make a terrific girlfriend too!” she laughed.

I smiled good-naturedly and left.

That night I thought about what the day had been like. I enjoyed being accepted as a girl and liked being with Sybil. I felt safe with her. She was an intelligent young woman as well as a fine athlete.

I wondered what kind of relationship this might lead to. I was very attracted to her but not in the normal male-female way. There was something about this that I found quite puzzling but certainly enjoyable nonetheless.

August passed uneventfully. Although we would see each other on the tennis courts and I would go over to her house occasionally to play her in her backyard, she never mentioned my short stint as her doubles partner.

My step-parents had not planned anything special for Labor Day Weekend. Three days of orientation the previous week had the school ready for its first week of classes. The weather were stormy Friday and Saturday so we would barbecue on Sunday.

I saw Sybil talking with my stepsister Sandy early Friday evening. When she came back in the house, she had a funny smirk on her face when she looked at me. The phone rang shortly after seven pm that night. It was Sybil and she was frantic.

"You gotta help me out!" she screamed into the phone. "I'm really desperate!"

"What's wrong?" I asked, wondering what would make her so upset.

"My cousin is getting married at two pm tomorrow. The flower girl and one of the other bridesmaids have gotten sick with food poisoning. I am going to fill in for the bridesmaid and I need you to be the flower girl. I have everything here but you have to come over now to fit the dress. Can you please, please help me?"

I thought about saying no. I really wanted to, but she was a good friend and neighbor. She was definitely in a pickle and I wanted to help her out. I hesitated momentarily, but then agreed to do it.

"Oh, thank you so much! Come over right away so I can fit the dress you will be wearing."

She sounded very relieved. I walked across the street and she opened the door before I could knock.

"I really appreciate this. Come with me and we will get you fitted."

I followed her back to the bedroom again. I undressed and put on the bra and panties while she waited outside. I let her back in and she opened the closet door.

"This is a petti-slip," she announced. "You put this on first under the dress to flare out the bottom half."

She held it up by the hem and I slipped it over my head. After she adjusted the straps, she removed the flower girl's dress from its hanger and unzipped it. The pink chiffon felt good as I put it on. She zipped me up and began putting pins here and there where the dress had to be adjusted. When she finished, she stood back and looked me over.

"Walk out to the living room and back so I can see how you look when you walk," she instructed.

I did so and when I returned, she was grinning broadly.

"That should do it. Try on these Mary Jane shoes and see if they fit."

She handed me a pair of pink patent leather shoes with a strap across the instep. I tried them on and they were a bit tight.

"That's OK," she assured me. "It's only for one day anyway."

I slipped them off. She unzipped me and helped me out of the dress and petti-slip. She left the room and I got dressed to go home.

"Don't forget to shave when you bathe tonight. You want to be girly smooth to look your best!" she said with a grin. "My parents will leave from work to go to the wedding so we will be here alone when you get here at ten tomorrow."

I took a hot soak that night and with one of my Dad's disposable razors and his shaving gel made sure my body was totally hair free.

I told my stepparents Sybil had invited me to a wedding and I would be back late. They never questioned me. Sandy had that same sly smirk on her face as she looked up from the book she was reading.

I left just before ten and went over to Sybil's house. In the bedroom, I undressed and put on the pink padded bra, panties and pink ankle socks. She came in and helped me with the petti-slip and dress. I put on the shoes and fastened the strap.

"Looks like I sewed everything just right. The dress looks like it was made for you. Now sit at the vanity."

I remembered to smooth my dress as I sat down in front of the mirror. I put on the wig cap and she adjusted the wig and clipped the bow above the bangs. She applied my lipstick, blusher and then quite unexpectedly gave me a squirt of perfume behind each ear.

"Why did you do that?" I asked.

"I want you to smell girly as well as look girly," she answered. "Now put on your gloves."

The pink wrist-length gloves were a tight squeeze but I managed to get them on.

"Wait in the living room while I get dressed," she ordered.

I walked out and sat on the sofa and waited. A half-hour went by and then she walked in the living room wearing a gorgeous yellow bridesmaid's dress, matching pumps, gloves and hairpiece.

"Zip me please," she asked as she turned.

I stood up, zipped up the dress and secured the clasp at the top. Her matching pumps had three-inch heels and combined with her six-foot height made her tower over me by about a foot. She picked up her matching purse and car keys.

"Okay we're all set. Now remember to act ladylike and feminine. When we get to the church, we will be told where to be and what to do, so don't worry about the ceremony."

Again I said nothing and just nodded as she turned and I followed her out to the car.

We arrived at the church. Sybil's cousin looked resplendent in her white satin gown. Her face brightened as we walked in and the other bridesmaids smiled as they saw me walking towards them.

After the ceremony was explained, we all took our places. Mark, the boy who was the ring bearer, took his place next to me as one of the bridesmaids handed me a basket of rose petals to hold during the ceremony and then toss in the path of the newly married couple as they walked back up the aisle. The ceremony began and everything went according to plan.

After pictures were taken, Sybil took me to the reception and dinner. Members of the family stopped by our table to thank Sybil and me for subbing for the two sick girls. I received many compliments on my dress and the way I looked. Everyone had a great time

and I enjoyed the fun atmosphere of the happy occasion. Sybil took me back to her house before the dance began.

"I am so glad you were able to help out," she said as she unzipped my dress. "I hate to take all this off, you look so pretty when you are dressed and made up."

I said nothing as I pulled the petti-slip over my head while she put the dress on its hanger. She stepped out and I took off my shoes, socks and lingerie. I got dressed and she returned to help me remove my makeup and wig.

"There, you're all set," she said as she wiped the last of the lipstick off.

"I can still smell the perfume," I complained.

She went into the bathroom and returned with a bottle of her father's aftershave. She dribbled a small amount into my open hands and I splashed some on my face and neck.

"That should take care of it," she said as she capped the bottle and returned it to the bathroom shelf.

"I have to get back for the dance, thanks again!" she said as she headed for the garage.

I went home and as I walked past my stepsister Sandy on the way upstairs, she stopped.

"You smell like perfume!" she said.

"No, Sybil gave me some of her dad's aftershave to wear to the wedding," I countered.

"That's awfully sweet aftershave. If I was a guy, I sure wouldn't wear it."

I didn't answer as I continued my way upstairs.

I read for awhile but couldn't seem to concentrate on the story. I kept thinking about how enjoyable it was to be made up and dressed in feminine finery. I thought about the way the chiffon dress and nylon tricot panties felt on my smooth skin. I was so safe and secure in my pink cocoon of femininity. I was very relaxed, without a care in the world. I wondered if girls felt that way too. Or was it just me?

School started again and I got into the routine of classes and homework. I had no trouble maintaining a B average. I wasn't overly fond of any particular subject except I did enjoy writing stories and was encouraged by my English teacher to work on the school paper next year.

Time flies when you're busy. With classes, homework and tennis, the school year went by quickly. I passed my exams and would be a sophomore next Fall. I would still dress in my sister's things when the family was away and wished what little body hair I had would not have grown back. I very much longed for the bonds of femininity and found some solace in surfing the net for information about my feelings.

I was still too young to work but the local newspaper had reprinted a short story I had published in the school newspaper and I received a hundred dollars for it. It was the first money I had ever earned and along with my parents' encouragement, I began to seriously consider a career in creative writing or journalism.

I began paying more attention to newspaper and magazine articles as well as the local and national news broadcasts. The style of writing and stories were presented to the TV audience was of great interest to me.

Shortly after school let out, we went to the mall one Saturday. We stopped at the health store where Sybil worked for her parents over the summer.

"Do you take a multi-vitamin?" she asked me as our parents chatted at the counter.

"Actually no," I replied. "My step-parents, sister, and I are all vegetarians. We eat a very balanced diet so we don't really need any additional vitamins."

Sybil smiled at me.

"You should really try this new brand of vitamin concentrate. It will give you additional energy as well as compliment your diet. We have one version for men and one for women. See for yourself."

She handed me a large bottle and I read the label. Except for a few items I didn't recognize, it contained the same ingredients as other brands I had looked at.

"I can get you a substantial discount if you buy a year's supply," she added. "That would include two bottles for you and your dad and two bottles for your mom and sister."

My step-parents and step sister joined us. After examining the bottles, my dad agreed with Sybil and handed her his credit card. Sybil went into the back room and came back with our purchase in a bag and rang up the sale.

At home, mom opened the bag and handed my dad and I the large bottles with the black top and my sister the two with the pink top to put in their respective bedrooms. That night I read the instructions. I was to take one after breakfast and one after supper. I opened the bottle and took out one of the large white pills. I popped it in my mouth and swallowed it with a glass of water.

I saw very little of Sybil over the summer except for an occasional game in her backyard when she needed a partner or once in a while when my family was at the public courts. She never mentioned my dress-up charade and I never brought it up either.

School began again and I threw myself into my studies. I got on the staff of the school newspaper and enjoyed the work.

Periodically whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would rummage among my sister's or mother's things and enjoy my brief dress-up routine. Despite all my research on the Internet, I was not able to find a way to resolve my feelings. I guess I had been seeking a cure that didn't exist.

There seemed to be plenty of men who were going through or had been through what I was experiencing. I knew that there was a difference between a man who is involved in cross dressing for eroticism and a man who crossdresses in hopes of becoming a woman one day. I would have liked to purchase the books about this sort of thing which are advertised on some Internet sites but with no credit card or proof of adulthood, I could not.

Shortly after the Christmas holidays, I noticed something unusual. My skin seemed to have developed a softer, smoother feel. My body hair, what little of it there was, had

grown back at a much slower rate than after the first time I had shaved. The hair on my head was soft and not as coarse as it once was.

I thought about those vitamins we had been taking but ruled them out since my dad's skin didn't appear differently; my mom and sister's appearance had not changed either. I examined the bottle and re-read the labels on both mine and my dad's and could not see any difference.

I enjoyed the ten days between semesters by playing more tennis and getting ready for the upcoming tennis season. The coach had assured me with my level of skill I would be able to start right away.

I was hoping to see a movie the last weekend before school started but a Friday night call from Sybil changed my plans.



"Wanna make a fast two hundred bucks?" she asked.

"Sure," I answered without thinking too much.

"Come down to the store right away. I will explain when you get here."

I hung up the phone and let my parents know where I was going. I ran four blocks to the bus stop and caught the express to the mall. I arrived at the store about thirty minutes before closing. The store was empty and only a few people were still in the mall itself.

"Wait behind the counter while I lock up and empty the register," she said.

I stood around and read the labels of the various health products while she finished her work.

"All done!" she announced. "Follow me back to the office."

I walked behind her as we entered the back room. After flicking off the store lights, she went into the office. There was a gray haired woman seated in front of the desk.

“Stephen, this is Mrs. Holden, the owner of the Holden Modeling School and agency. Blanche, this is Stephen Wright.”

I shook hands with the lady as Sybil spun the dial of the safe. She placed the money bag inside the safe and then took her seat behind the desk. Mrs. Holden handed Sybil a manila envelope.

“Those are quite nice,” she commented.

“I thought you might like them,” answered Sybil.

Mrs. Holden turned to me and eyed me carefully.

“As you probably know, the auto show opens Saturday at ten am. One of my girls has been unable to fulfill her contractual obligations to my agency and I am in desperate need of a replacement. Sybil showed me the pictures from the wedding and the tennis tournament and I must say you would be perfect for the job. She mentioned you would be interested in being paid the sum of two hundred dollars, is that not correct?”

I didn't recall any pictures being taken at the tennis tournament.

“Well yes, I am interested. What exactly would I have to do?”

“Do you know what a pointer girl is?”

“A what?”

“A pointer girl.”

“No. What is that?”

“These are the girls you see on TV standing by the product that is being advertised. Here you will just stand by the new car, smile and look pretty, something you already do quite well from the pictures Sybil has just shown me.”

I was a little stunned. I wasn't aware Sybil had been sharing those pictures with anyone or use them to advertise my feminine image.

“Well I don't know exactly, I...”

My voice trailed off as I saw a stern look on Mrs. Holden's face as well as a sharp look of disapproval on Sybil's face as well.

“I mean I have never done anything quite like this before and...”

Mrs. Holden held up her hand and I clammed up as she glared at me.

“Now look, young man, you have the opportunity to earn a substantial sum of money here for very little work. It's not like we are asking you to do something you dislike or you're not capable of and it would only be for two days.”

“I guess it would be OK. What do you want me to do?” I asked.

Her face became more relaxed and she settled back in her chair.

“Just be at the rear door of the beauty shop several doors down from this store. You should be there at 8 am sharp. The mall opens at ten and I need you dressed, made up and on station no later than 9:30. Understood?”

I nodded.

“Very well, now Sybil tells me you have never worn heels before so I want to get the shoes fitted first and give you some practice. Take off your shoes and socks so I can size you up.”

I did so and she measured my foot. She opened one of several boxes next to her chair and handed me a black leather pump with a four-inch heel. I slipped a nylon footie over my foot and tried the shoe on. It was tight so I tried on another size, which fit perfectly. After putting a footie on the other foot, I put the other shoe on and stood up. It was somewhat weird standing up straight but at an angle.

“When you walk out to your display, walk like this.”

She walked back and forth from the office to the loading door and back.

“Now you try it. Remember to walk slowly with shorter steps.”

I began my walk and found the trip over to the door and back to be fairly easy. If I was careful, I was sure I could do this. I made several more trips back and forth with Mrs. Holden making minor corrections each time before she was satisfied that I had it right.

“That’s fine. Please stand still while I measure you.”

She wrapped a measuring tape around my chest, waist and hips while Sybil wrote the measurements down. I sat down, removed the pumps and the footies, then put my own socks and shoes back on.

“Okay, that’s all I need. See you tomorrow morning at 8 am sharp!”

“I’ll be there,” I said.

“I’ll give you a ride back home and pick you up in the morning,” said Sybil as Mrs. Holden walked out the back door.

We rode in silence. I felt exhilarated by my first walk in heels. It seemed so natural and I felt good doing it. I really wanted it to be tomorrow already.

Back at home, I informed my step-parents that I was going to spend the next day at the auto show at the mall. They didn’t question me. That night I shaved my body again. I slept well that night dreaming of my next trip into femininity

The alarm went off at six-thirty. I shaved my face, dressed and ate a light breakfast. I left the house just as Sybil was backing the van out of the driveway. I got in and she drove us to the mall. After parking the van at the rear entrance to the beauty shop, we walked to the back door.

Sybil rang the buzzer and Mrs. Holden let us in. She handed me a foundation garment and a package of pantyhose.

“You can undress in the office. Put these on and come back out here.”

I went in the small office, undressed and put my clothes on one of the chairs. I stepped into the strapless body briefcase and pulled it up. It was a really tight fit. I opened the package of pantyhose and put them on as well. The sheer hose felt good on my smooth legs. I opened the door and walked out to the rear area of the salon.

Mrs. Holden looked me over as Sybil inserted two gelatinous breast forms into the cups.

"I want him in the Mermaid dress," she announced.

"What is a Mermaid dress?" I asked.

"It's a strapless tapered sheath dress that becomes more sharply tapered the closer it gets to the floor and at the hem is a spray of netting that flares out. It does inhibit walking somewhat so be careful when you get out on the floor," answered Mrs. Holden.

One of the attendants unzipped the powder blue dress and removed it from the hanger. She held it open and I took it from her and stepped into it. I was careful as the dress seemed quite narrow. I was barely able to squeeze into it but I did. Sybil quickly zipped me up, then helped me put on the black over the elbow gloves.

"You look fabulous!" said Sybil as she motioned me to one of the beauty shop's chairs.

One of the attendants stood over me and after curling my eyelashes with a scissor-like device, she applied blue eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara, then bright red lipstick and rouge. After clipping on a pair of four-inch long earrings, she placed a nylon wig cap over my hair and then a shoulder-length black wig.

"He's finished!" she announced.

Mrs. Holden placed the pair of black four-inch heel leather pumps I had tried on the night before at my feet and I slipped into them. I stood up gingerly and walked towards her the way she had instructed me the night before.

The girls were all smiles.

"Wow!" exclaimed Sybil.

"Wow twice!" exclaimed the attendant.

"Alright Stephanie, and that is what we will call you today, listen carefully. In about thirty minutes, you will walk out of here and to the left down the mall. There is a circular platform with a vintage black Chevy Corvette. You will step onto the platform and stand next to the car with one hand on your hip and the other touching the car."

Mrs. Holden took a stance like the one I was to assume.

"You must also smile at the people as the walk around and admire the car. Remember to keep your poise and that the car is the show, not you. Do you have any questions?"

"How long will I be standing there? I mean do I get a break or anything?" I asked

"Oh, of course, I was just getting to that. The show starts at ten and at one-thirty, another girl will relieve you. Come back here for lunch and a dress change and then you will go back out at two. This time you will go up the mall to where the red Ford convertible is behind the velvet ropes and do the same thing. At five pm come back here and we'll help you change. Is there anything else?"

"No, I guess not."

"Good. It's close to nine-thirty, so Sybil, why don't you walk Stephanie to the platform?"

"Of course, Mrs. Holden, I would be happy to."

Sybil was beaming as I stepped in front of her and began walking out the beauty shop entrance.

Despite the tight fit of the dress and the fact that I had never worn high heels before, I managed to move easily in a girlish gait. Sybil was very amused.

“When you get to the platform, there are two small steps. With both hands, take up the slack in the dress and walk up the steps carefully,” she instructed.

At the steps, I found very little slack in the dress but ascended carefully to the platform, then took my place near the front of the car and struck my pose.

“See you at one, Stephanie!” she said grinning as she left.

It seemed like an eternity before the mall opened but once it did and people began milling around, I felt less intimidated. I was part of the show and I began to relax and smile as people looked at me and the car.

There were a number of professional photographers there as well as regular people who wanted to take pictures of these classic cars from the fifties. As the morning wore on, the bright flashes became more and more frequent. Some people asked me to change my pose; I was glad to do so since it gave me a chance to move around a little. I was feeling quite girly and feminine despite the tight confines of the sheath dress.

Promptly at one pm, another model stepped up to relieve me and I made my way back to the beauty parlor.

Mrs. Holden helped me out of the dress and into a pink chiffon robe.

“Sybil is waiting for you in the break room. She has your lunch ready for you.”

I walked into the break room and sat across from Sybil at the table.

“How’d everything go, Stephanie?” she said with a smile. “You sure looked good in that dress!”

“Thanks,” I mumbled as I opened the container and spread some dressing on my salad.

“A number of the girls asked me about you but I assure you, your secret is safe with me,” said Sybil.

“I hope so,” I answered. “I can use the money but not the notoriety.”

I opened a diet soft drink and wondered about the afternoon. I hoped it would go as fast as the morning had. When I finished my drink, I made a quick trip to the restroom, then walked back to the rear area where Mrs. Holden was waiting for me. I took off my robe and she hung it up.

“Your afternoon dress is a pink party dress but first put these on.”

She handed me two floor-length petticoats, one inside the other. I stepped into them and brought them up to my waist. Mrs. Holden stepped back and smiled again.

“Good. They are just the right length! Now let’s get you into your dress.”

The attendant unzipped the strapless pink chiffon gown, took it off the hangar and helped Mrs. Holden slip it over my head. While the attendant adjusted it around the petticoats, Mrs. Holden zipped me up and adjusted the large pink bow at the base of the zip-

per. After pinning a small pink bow to the top of the wig, Mrs. Holden stepped back to look me over again.

“Just one last thing,” she said. “Open wide please.”

I opened my mouth and she pressed the tube of bright red lipstick to my lips, filling them in generously with a fresh layer of the creamy makeup. After brushing some additional red rouge on my cheeks, she sent me on my way.

Sybil walked behind me as I made my way up the mall to where the Ford convertible was displayed. She unhooked the velvet rope and I walked inside the enclosure. I took my place near the front of the car and struck my pose. Sybil and the model I had just relieved walked away. They were giggling about something and I wondered if it had anything to do with me.

The afternoon was uneventful as well. At five, another girl relieved me and I walked back to the beauty parlor. One of the attendants helped me undress and take off my wig and makeup. I went into the office to take off the pantyhose and briefer. I got dressed and checked myself in the mirror for any traces of cosmetics, then rode home with Sybil.

That night I lay awake and thought about how easy it had been for me to fit into a feminine role. I loved the way I looked as well as how it made me feel. It was a warm, exquisitely feminine feeling. I felt very relaxed and at peace with myself when I was “dressed.” I began to wonder how I was going to fit into a masculine world with such a love and appreciation of femininity.

Sunday was a repeat of Saturday except that I would be through at four instead of five. The crowds were smaller than they were on Saturday. After changing back to Stephen again, Mrs. Holden pressed two one-hundred dollar bills in my hand and thanked me for a job well done. I thanked her and Sybil drove me home.

After supper, Sandy looked at me quizzically as I sat down next to her on the sofa to watch some TV.

“Did you do something to your eyebrows?” she asked.

“No,” I replied.

“Well they look thinner and your eyelashes look like they have been curled,”

“That’s ridiculous,” I snapped. “Why would I do such a thing? Now don’t bug me.”

She turned her attention back to the TV.

Later that night after a shower, I examined myself closely in the mirror. You would have had to see me before and after my plucking and curling to see a difference. There certainly wasn’t much that I could notice. How Sandy had picked up on it was beyond me but then she was a real girl and I guess they knew more about such things.

The rest of the school year went quickly and the tennis team placed fourth in the state finals. Sybil got a scholarship and was making plans to move out to Oregon near the end of the summer.

I had another short story published which brought me \$250.00 as well as more encouragement from both my English and Journalism teachers.

It had been about four and a half months since the auto show and I could definitely see a difference in my skin tone and texture. My body hair had hardly grown back at all. When I stood naked in front of the mirror and did the "tuck," I had the appearance of a naked girl rather than a boy. Pushing my hands up under my nipples, there seemed to be more flesh there than there should be. It was almost as if I was growing breasts. When my parents and sister would go away, my sister's lingerie and skirts seem to fit better around the bust and hips which made my crossdressing that much more enjoyable.

With Sybil going to Oregon, her parents asked me if I would be interested in working part-time at their health store and I agreed. I needed to get a Social Security number so Sybil helped me do it on line and a week or so later it came in the mail. I had yet to finish my Driver's Education class so I had to hop the bus to work and back until I passed my driver's test. I couldn't afford to get a car just yet but I could borrow one of my parent's cars if I really needed transportation.

I started working the weekends before school let out. I liked the work and soon became knowledgeable about the products I sold as well as operating the cash register and learning the inventory system.

I bought a refill for my family and my self of the vitamin supplement that Sybil had started us on. The company had come out with a new and improved version of their product and Sybil had insisted on us getting started using it right away. I got an additional discount by bringing in the old containers which Sybil promptly discarded. I thought it was rather odd that she had placed my bottle of pills in a separate sack from the one containing my parents' and my sister's pills.

With the time I was spending at the store, I had less time for myself. My crossdressing became more infrequent, though the desire to do so had not. I limited myself to just trying on the lingerie rather than getting completely dressed. I continued to play tennis with my step-parents and step sister. My playing with Sybil had been sharply reduced though we did manage to squeeze in a couple of sets here and there.

I completed my Driver's Ed classes. I took and passed both the written and road tests with ease. I began reading some of the car magazines at the library to see what used cars had the best quality and reliability records.

Sybil suggested I take a couple of evening classes from a local private driving school that taught limousine driving. I did so and soon had my driver's license stamped to include chauffeur driving.

Work was progressing smoothly at the store and I was going to cut back to weekends only when school started in about four weeks. I would be a junior this year. In addition to my work with the school newspaper, I hoped to spend some time in the school's new communications lab. The school had purchased some used TV cameras and editing equipment.

Sybil was scheduled to leave for Oregon around the middle of the month. She called me at the store just as we were closing Friday night, the week before her big move.

"Several of my friends are throwing me a going away party at a local nightclub. They will pay you a hundred bucks to drive the limo to pick them up and take them home again after the party. Are you interested?" she asked.

"Sure," I answered.

"Great. I work one to nine pm with you on Saturday. Come over to the house Saturday morning about nine so I can fit you for the uniform. After we close the store Saturday night, I'll drive you to the limo rental and then we will pick up the girls for the party."

"Okay, I'll be there," I said without another thought.

The next morning I walked over to Sybil's house and she let me in. I followed her back to the bedroom.

On the bed was a pink bra, panty and garter belt set along with a pair of sheer stockings.

"Wait a minute, I thought you were going to fit me for a chauffeur's uniform," I protested.

"Oh I am," she cooed. "But first you have to put your dainties on!"

She smiled gleefully as she went out to the hallway and closed the door.

I undressed and put on the lingerie items. I opened the bedroom door and let Sybil back in. She walked over to the closet and opened the doors. From the top shelf she removed a large pink box, and set it on the bed. After taking the cover off, she held up a pink satin short-sleeved blouse. I put it on and she fastened the buttons down the back. Next she handed me a matching pink miniskirt. Actually micro skirt would have been a better description. I stepped into the skirt and pulled up the side zipper and fastened the button. She flipped the two suspender straps over my shoulders and buttoned them on the back of the skirt. The last item was a pair of pink patent leather knee-length boots with three-inch heels. I sat down on the vanity chair to put them on. I pulled the zippers up the back and stood up for her approval.

"Everything looks good so far," she said. "Now sit back down."

"Why? If everything fits, what's the problem?" I wanted to know.

"Don't argue with me, just do as I say. Now sit down!" She gave me a little push as I plopped down on the vanity chair.

Quickly she applied pink blusher to my face and lipstick to my lips. Next she placed the nylon wig cap and her mother's brown wig on my head.

"Good," she remarked. "Now let's get going or we are going to be late for our appointment."

"Wait, what appointment?" I demanded to know.

"You'll see when we get there. Now get in the van."

I followed her and got into the van. When I sat down, my miniskirt rode up almost to the garter. I struggled to pull the skirt down as Sybil laughed out loud.

Thirty minutes later, we arrived at an office building. Sybil parked next to a limo and we got out. I followed her down the basement steps. The sign on the door read "Department of Motor Vehicles."

"I already have a license, why are we here?" I asked.

“You have a male driver's license, silly. The limo company is a female owned and operated company. Besides it's an all girl party. A friend of my mother's works here and she is going to help you. You *do* want to be 'just one of the girls,' don't you? Or perhaps we should let them in on our little secret?”

I knew better than to argue so I said nothing.

I filled out all the forms and Sybil paid the fees. After passing the written and road test for both regular and chauffeur's licenses, I was photographed. The lady behind the counter was all smiles as she presented me with my female driver's license with the addition of the chauffeurs stamp.

I said nothing on the way back home. I got undressed and removed the wig and makeup, then went home and had lunch. Before going to work, I took out my new license and looked at the lipsticked, pink cheeked brunette named Stephanie Alice Wright smiling back at me.

At work that afternoon we were quite busy with the Saturday crowds so I didn't have a chance to talk to Sybil. I guess she felt I should become her feminine companion whenever it suited her or if she was in a jam where I could do her some good. We closed the store a little before nine that night.

“The box with your uniform is on the desk in the office. Take it in the rest room and dress in there while I clear the register and do the books,” she ordered.

I undressed and put my clothes on the commode lid. I opened the box and donned the wig cap and wig first. After applying pink blusher and lipstick, I placed the makeup in the small pink purse along with my girl's drivers' license. It was hard not to be excited as I slid the panties and garter belt on. I smoothed the stockings on and hooked them to the garter. When I put the bra on, it fit more snugly than usual. I put the blouse and skirt on, then my boots. I slipped the purse over my arm and walked into the office.

Sybil walked around her desk. She pinned a pink satin beret to my wig, then buttoned the blouse and the suspender straps behind me. I tucked in the blouse and buttoned my skirt. Sybil was grinning from ear to ear as we walked to the van.

It was a short drive to the “Le Girls Limo Company” where I showed my driver's license to the smiling lady behind the counter and Sybil filled out the rental form. We got in the limo and I started the engine. As I shifted the car, I looked over at Sybil who was smiling at me.

“God, you are one gorgeous chick, Stephanie!” she announced.

I glanced up at my reflection as I adjusted the rear view mirror. She was right. I *was* a very pretty girl! As we pulled out of the parking lot, Sybil began giving me directions to the first girl's house.

In short order, I picked up two more girls. The three girls in the back seat were giggling and laughing as I drove to the nightclub. It was about ten-thirty when we arrived at a place called Angela's. I parked at the entrance and the girls got out. I parked the limo in an assigned parking place, locked it up and went inside.

I found their table near the back of the club. Sybil handed me a drink called a Pink Lady, a large glass of fruit punch with a pink bow atop the swizzle stick, then she intro-

duced me to her friends. After a few drinks, the girls loosened up quite a bit. When the pizza arrived, I had another Pink Lady.

While the girls enjoyed more alcohol, two male strippers began entertaining the crowd. As the crowd got louder, I began to wonder what they might think if they knew an impersonator was in their midst. After the show, the girls finished their drinks and I went outside to bring the limo around. The girls piled in, laughing and giggling.

I drove the first girl home. I opened the limo door and after she got out, she handed me a ten-dollar bill.

"You're a careful driver and a simply gorgeous sissy too!" she squealed with delight.

I said nothing as I got back in the limo. At the next stop, the second girl also gave me a ten dollar bill and remarked what a cute sissy chauffeur I was. The third girl had some trouble keeping her balance when she got out of the limo so I walked with her to her apartment door. She leaned against the wall as she rummaged in her purse. As I took the ten spot from her and turned to walk away, she suddenly grabbed the hem of my skirt and pulled it up.

"Wow!" she exclaimed. "You're a true sissy right down to your underpants! Sybil was right, you do look better than most girls, or drag queens for that matter."

I didn't answer her as she let go of my skirt. I walked back to the limo and drove to the agency. Sybil paid the bill and we got into the van for the drive home. She made no conversation until she shut off the lights as we pulled in the driveway. I wanted to ask her why she told her friends about me but I didn't.

"It's late and my parents are asleep so we have to be quiet."

Inside the house the only noise was the sound of my high heeled boots clicking across the kitchen floor as we walked towards Sybil's bedroom. I followed close behind her in the dark. Once inside her bedroom, she turned and wrapped her arms around me. After pulling me close, she kissed me hard. I was caught by surprise and felt myself getting hard under the panties. She unbuttoned the suspender straps, and kissed me hard again as she unbuttoned and unzipped my skirt. She yanked the skirt down, then pulled my panties, garter belt and stockings down around my ankles.

I was speechless as she opened the vanity drawer and removed a condom from the wrapper. She kissed me again and put the condom on me. Effortlessly she picked me up and dropped me on the bed. She took off her clothes and climbed on top of me. My mind was racing and my pulse must have been going 100 mph as she kissed me again and guided me inside of her. Our intercourse was short-lived. As I cuddled up close to her in the dark, I felt more womanly than manly.

"I couldn't leave without giving you a going away present," she whispered. "You will never be a he-man but at least tonight you became a man."

She got up and turned on the small lights over the vanity as I slipped off my lingerie. I sat down at the vanity and she removed my beret, wig and cap. After taking off my makeup with cold cream, I stood up so she could unbutton my blouse and unhook my bra. She placed these items back in the pink box.

I went into the bathroom, removed the condom, and flushed it down the toilet. When I came back out to get dressed, she had put her robe on and was sitting at the vanity, brushing her hair. I finished dressing and had to ask her some questions.

“Why did you tell the girls I wasn’t a girl?” I inquired.

“Girls share things and they can sometimes, almost always, keep a secret,” she answered.

“But not tonight apparently. Can you trust them not to tell anyone else?”

“Probably, though it might have been the alcohol that had loosened their tongues tonight. I wouldn’t worry about it if I were you,” she stated matter-of-factly.

“‘Probably’ doesn’t help me much. Another thing, what about those pictures you showed Mrs. Holden? Where are they? I want to see them.”

“In a safe place and you don’t need to see them. There are just a few snapshots for my photo album of memories. Besides, you already know how pretty you look en femme, I just wanted a few keepsakes.”

Her remark was made with a smirk on her face as she continued brushing her hair.

I could see my questioning wasn’t going to get me anywhere, so I decided to leave.

“Don’t forget your stuff,” she said as she handed me the pink box containing my lingerie, boots and uniform.

“Thanks,” I said rather angrily. “I’m sure I’ll have a lot of use for it when you are in Oregon.”

I tiptoed out the back door and walked home. I entered the house as quietly as I could and went upstairs. After closing the bedroom door, I turned the lights on and put the box on the bed. Taped to the top of the box was a small white envelope with the name “Stephanie” written across the front of it. I opened it up to find a hundred dollar bill, my payment for driving the girls around.

I took the lid off the box. On top of my uniform and boots was a smaller box. When I opened that up, I found a small bar of perfumed soap sitting on top of a pink baby doll nightie. I picked up the soap and held it under my nose. It smelled SO GOOD!

I got undressed and went into the bathroom. I took a shower and after I brushed my teeth, I returned to my room. I put on the top of the nightie and then the panties. I turned around and looked in the full-length mirror on my closet door. I adjusted the large pink bow under my chin. I reached over to the dresser for my comb and combed some of the hair on top of my head down over my forehead like bangs.

I had to admit I was pretty in pink.

I wanted so badly to use the perfumed soap and crawl into bed wearing that pretty nightie. I took it off and returned it to the box, placing the cake of perfumed soap on the top. After putting the small box inside the larger one with my uniform, I went in the closet and placed the large pink box on the floor while I dug some old clothes out of a large cardboard box. I put the pink box on the bottom and piled the old clothes on the top to conceal it, then shoved the box in the back corner of the closet.

I put my pajamas on, turned out the lights and got into bed. I kept thinking how wonderful the feminine apparel had felt against my skin and how nice it would have been to soak in a bubble bath as I scrubbed myself with that bar of sweet smelling soap. I quickly fell asleep, dreaming sweet dreams.

I was busy at work until school started again and then I cut back to Friday nights and weekends only.

I enjoyed my classes and the year went by quickly. I was happily engrossed in journalism, the school newspaper and the new communications lab. At State, our tennis team took second place.

Periodically, when my step parents and sister went away, I would dig out the box, dress up in my uniform and walk around the upstairs or put on the baby doll and lie down on the bed to read. Occasionally at work, Sybil's parents showed me her E-mails. Apparently she was doing OK, though she never mentioned me in any of them.

I dated once and awhile, borrowing my step dad's car to do so. I liked dating smart girls but for some reason most of them, as well as some of the other girls, felt a bit uneasy around me. To be honest, when I took a girl out, it felt more like being with a friend than with a member of the opposite sex.

Sybil had been my first sexual experience and it hadn't been a very good one at that. I had been masturbating for some time but that night my penis didn't get as hard as it used to and I ejaculated too quickly.

My desire to masturbate had dropped off since then but my strong urge to crossdress had continued. I took my daily vitamins and hadn't changed my diet at all. My skin tone continued to change, though unless I stood naked in front of you it wasn't readily apparent. My hair seemed softer and finer as well.

Because I was busy with a number of things, I avoided asking a girl to the prom. Another reason of course was that I was totally envious of the pretty dresses, high heels and make up they would be wearing. I had purchased several prom guides in January at a bookstore in a mall about ten miles away and spent a number of very enjoyable hours paging through them. So many dresses to die for!

I had found the name of a gender identity clinic in the area but because I was still a minor I could not get a consultation without parental consent. I continued to surf the Internet for information about transvestism and transsexualism, improving my understanding of what may be causing my feelings and behavior.

Sybil returned home for the summer and soon we were working together again in the store. I expected to be pressed into service as her chauffeur at some point. Then again, maybe she had something else in mind.

June and July flew by and it was almost time for Sybil to go back to Oregon. I would resume classes in about three more weeks myself. I was looking forward to my last year of high school. Hopefully this year our tennis team would bring the school the championship which had eluded us for so long.

Saturday night just before closing, Mrs. Holden stopped by and was chatting with Sybil while I was cleaning up the back room. I didn't see the auto show on the mall's sched-

ule of events for this year so I was curious about what she wanted. When I came back in from taking out the trash, I could hear them laughing about something. I walked up to them and both women were smiling at me.

“I appreciate you helping me out last year at the auto show and I hate to impose on you again but I do need your help. Sybil tells me you are off tomorrow. Do you have any plans?” said Mrs. Holden.

I could tell by the serious tone of her voice and that little smirk on Sybil’s face that if I did, they were not as important as what she was about to ask me.

“No, I have no plans for Sunday,” I answered.

“I am entertaining the mothers of some girls who are considering entering my modeling school and I am a bit short handed at home to help me serve tea and cake. I will pay you a hundred dollars for your trouble. Please be on time and don’t forget to shave before you come”

She whirled around and walked out before I even had a chance to ask any questions. Sybil was standing there with that smirk on her face and I had the feeling I was going to be back en femme again for everyone’s amusement. We locked up the store and Sybil drove me home.

That night I took a hot, soaking bath and shaved my body. The next morning, I shaved my face. I told my parents I was going to the mall and drove to Mrs. Holden’s house instead. I parked a block away and rang the door bell just before one. Mrs. Holden beamed at me when she opened the door to let me in.

“I’m glad you are always so prompt. Follow me and I will help you get ready.”

I followed her to the back bedroom.

“You can change in here. When you get your lingerie on, let me know. I’ll be in the kitchen.”

I walked over to the chair next to the bed and began taking my clothes off. On the bed was a black bra, panty and garter belt set along with foam inserts and a pair of fishnet stockings. As I put the items on, I began to feel relaxed and delightfully feminine. I turned around in front of the full-length mirror on the back of the bedroom door and checked to make sure the seams of the fishnet stockings were straight. They were, so I opened the door and walked into the kitchen.

As I entered the kitchen, I smelled the aroma of fresh brewed coffee. Mrs. Holden turned from the oven and placed a chocolate cake on the cooling rack. Her face brightened when she saw me standing there in my lingerie.

“Go back in the bedroom and sit at the vanity. I will be right there as soon as I finish frosting the cake,” she instructed.

I returned to the bedroom and sat down to wait.

A few minutes later she came in and applied eye shadow, eyeliner and mascara. She roughed my cheeks with bright red rouge, then applied a thick layer of matching lipstick. After opening a package of red press-on nails, she matched the correct size nail for each

finger. A white choker was next, followed by clipping on a pair of four-inch earrings. The wig cap and shoulder-length black wig were next followed by a white maid's cap.

"Now stand up please," she ordered.

She adjusted the bra straps a little, then she handed me two white elastic garters.

"Slide these on so they are just above the knee," she instructed.

I put them on while she opened the closet door. She took two short white petticoats off their hanger and slipped one inside the other, then handed them to me. I stepped into them and brought them up to my waist. After unzipping a black satin puff sleeve French Maid's dress and removing it from the hanger, she held it up by the hem and I slipped it over my head. She adjusted the hem around the petticoats and zipped me up. Next she placed a pair of black leather pumps with four-inch stiletto heels at my feet and I put them on. She handed me a white mini-apron to put on, then she took several steps back and looked me over. Judging by her smile, I looked OK.

"Oh! I almost forgot!" she said as she turned from me and picked up a small bottle off the vanity table.

"I don't think I should wear any perfume, Mrs. Holden. The last time, my dad's after-shave didn't quite mask it all and my sister mentioned it."

"Don't be silly. I won't use that much and besides what kind of pretty French Maid wouldn't want to wear French perfume?"

She took the cap off and tipped the bottle upside down against my neck. She rubbed it back and forth several times on both sides and then on my wrists too. The scent was very sweet and very feminine.

"There, we're done," she announced. "Now let's go into the living room."

I walked out of the bedroom ahead of her and while passing the mirror in the hallway, I saw how the jarring effect of the stiletto heels made the stiff petticoats bounce the skirt of the minidress. We entered the living room and she took a seat on the davenport.

"You walk effortlessly in those heels, Stephanie, even though you haven't had much practice. Do you know how to curtsy?" she asked.

"Thank you," I replied as I stood in front of her. "I know what a curtsy is but I don't know exactly how to do it," I answered.

"Okay. Grab the hem of the dress and petticoat on each side with both hands, shift your right foot behind the left, bend down at the knees and then back up again. Now you try it," she instructed.

It took me several tries before I got it right. Then I did several more for good measure.

"Excellent. Now I want you to walk back and forth across the living room in front of me. Put one foot in front of the other while keeping your elbows in and your forearms across your body with the hands dangling at the wrist. Begin!"

I followed her instructions to the letter. She watched my every move with a sharp eye.

"Very good, Stephanie, now walk over here and come to a stop in front of me and curtsy again."

I did as she asked and she smiled broadly.

“You are absolutely wonderful, Stephanie! Remember, whenever you come to a stop, keep your legs together and curtsy when you enter or leave the room. Let’s go set the table.”

She got up and I followed her to the dining room. We covered the table with a beautiful white table cloth. At one end of the room was a large china closet. She stopped in front of it and turned to me.

“A word of caution before we set the table,” she began. “You’re not used to having long fingernails so when you reach for something, keep your fingers extended and grasp things with your finger tips. Be certain you have a proper grip because everything I have here is expensive fine china and some of it is irreplaceable.”

I nodded and she handed me four small plates. She picked up three more and we placed them in front of each chair. The cups and saucers were next. Finally, a fork and spoon was placed on either side of the small plates with a folded cloth napkin just to the right.

“When my guests arrive, please greet them at the door by saying 'Good afternoon, ladies' and curtsy as you do so, then direct them to the living room. We will be chatting for about an hour as I explain the program my school offers. Stay in the kitchen until you hear the bell. When I ring, you will come into the living room and stop in front of me, curtsy and ask what is needed. It is important that you are prompt, polite and conduct yourself in a subservient manner. Now, follow me into the kitchen.”

My head was spinning a bit as I walked a respectful distance behind her to the kitchen. I hoped I could keep everything straight. I was feeling as good as I had ever felt in my life. I was pantied, petticoated, be-wigged, made up, perfumed. With those four-inch stiletto heels, I was mincing in my best effeminate manner as my saucy French Maid mini-dress floated over the petticoats. It was sheer ecstasy!

She cut the freshly frosted cake into squares and set it on a silver cart. She removed the center from the coffee pot and dumped the grounds in the garbage, then plugged the pot back in again to keep it hot. She placed a half a dozen tea bags in a beautiful china teapot.

“When our guests arrive and have been seated in the living room, turn the burner on and bring the water to a boil, then pour it in the teapot and put the lid on. Let it steep for about ten minutes, stir and then ten minutes later, remove the bags. Set the teapot and coffee pot on opposite ends of the cart when I ring for you. Ask each guest what beverage they prefer and then pour them a cup of their choice. Place a piece of cake on each plate and then leave. Do you have any questions, Stephanie?”

“No, I think I can remember everything.”

“Good. Now put these items in the middle of the table.”

She handed me a sugar bowl with spoon and a small pitcher of cream. She followed me into the dining room carrying a small plate with lemon slices and a squeeze bottle of honey. We placed the items in the middle of the table within easy reach of everyone.

“I guess we are ready!” she said as she surveyed the table.

We walked back to the living room to await the arrival of the guests.

"Oh my goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Holden suddenly. "Would you mind picking up those dead leaves under my plant shelf? I must have forgotten them this morning."

"Of course I will," I said as I walked over to the shelf. I bent over and picked up the leaves, oblivious to the fact that when I did, my panties showed. I took the leaves to the kitchen garbage can.

When I returned to the living room, the door bell rang and I walked to the front door to greet the first guest. I checked my appearance in the large mirror on the wall, then opened the door.



"Good afternoon ladies," I said as I curtsied. "Please follow me. Mrs. Holden is waiting for you in the living room."

I led them into the living room and as they exchanged pleasantries, I went back to the front door. The other guests arrived shortly and after they were seated, I went into the kitchen to await the bell.

My nervousness had subsided. I turned on the stove and when the water began to boil, I poured it in the teapot. At the appointed time, I removed the teabags and tossed them in the garbage. The waiting made me more nervous than anything. I took several steps down the hall and checked my appearance in the mirror again. She was right. I did make a very pretty French Maid!

The time seemed to drag on. In some respects, I wanted this to be over with but in others I would

have liked to live a feminized life like this. Some would think I was play acting or fantasy role playing. For me, I wasn't acting at all. I was being my natural feminine self and loving it!

The tinkling of the bell interrupted my thoughts. I walked into the living room. Stopping directly in front of her, with my legs together, I smiled and curtsied politely.

"Yes, Mrs. Holden. How may I be of service?" I inquired.

"We are finished with our business, please bring in the cake and beverages," she ordered.

"Yes, Mrs. Holden," I replied. I curtsied and went back to the kitchen as the women headed for the table.

I pushed the cart into the dining room and placed a piece of cake on each plate, then poured the lady's choice of beverage into her cup. When I finished, I curtsied and went back into the kitchen. Shortly there was a burst of laughter. I was not able to hear their conversation but wondered if she had told them about me.

About a half-hour later, I heard the bell again and walked into the dining room. The women had just gotten up from the table. I stood before Mrs. Holden and curtsied again.

"Yes, Mrs. Holden, what do you need?" I asked.

"We are finished. Please clear the table while I see our guests to the door," she said.

"Of course, Mrs. Holden," I answered as I began picking up the plates.

While Mrs. Holden saw her guests to the door, I stacked the plates in one pile, the saucers and cups in another and put them on the cart. I folded and placed the napkins on the cart and then put the silverware on top of them. I pushed the cart back into the kitchen and left it next to the sink. I waited there until Mrs. Holden came back. When she did, she was all smiles.

"I have firm commitments from all of them for their daughters to attend my modeling school," she announced. "Now let's get at the dishes. You will find a pair of pink latex gloves in the top drawer to your right. Put them on and fill the sink with hot water; the bottle of dish soap is at the bottom of the cabinet to your left," she ordered.

I followed her instructions and began filling the sink with hot soapy water. I placed several items in the hot water and began washing and rinsing them off. After Mrs. Holden dried them, she placed them on the counter. When we were finished, she hung the dish-towel up and tossed the napkins down the laundry chute.

"I need you to vacuum the living and dining room carpets before you go. Leave you gloves on the sink. The vacuum is in the hallway closet. I am going upstairs to change,"

I nodded and followed her down the hallway. She went upstairs and I wheeled the vacuum into the living room and plugged it in. I was just about finished when she came back downstairs.

"Do you mind terribly if I took a couple of pictures of you?" she asked. You make such a pretty and charming French Maid. You're a perfect example of what grace, beauty and femininity are."

"I guess it would be OK," I answered.

"Okay, now stand just to one side of the vacuum cleaner, please."

I did so and she took several pictures.

"Now stand near the fireplace with your arms at your sides but your hands bent up at the wrist so your fingers are parallel with the floor,"

Again I posed the way she asked me to as she took two more pictures.

"For the last one, please grasp the hem of your skirt and petticoats with both hands and raise them up to your waist,"

I followed her orders without question, even though I was curious why she needed a shot of me showing off my lingerie.

"All done!" she said. "Come back to the bedroom and I will help you undress."

I followed her and sat down at the vanity. She took off my earrings, makeup and removed the wig. I stood up and kicked off the heels as she unzipped me and pulled the dress over my head. I slid the petticoats down and stepped out of them. She went out into the hallway to wait while I removed the rest of my lingerie and put on my male clothes. I had become Stephen again. As I walked out of the bedroom, she handed me two one hundred dollar bills.

"I appreciate you helping me out, Stephen. Good help is hard to find nowadays,"

I smiled and nodded. As I left, I wondered if she really knew how enjoyable it had been for me as well as how welcome the money was. The image of that pretty French Maid stayed in my mind all the way home.

Upstairs, Sandy was just coming out of the bathroom as I went in. I splashed some aftershave on my face and came back out to find Sandy waiting for me.

"You smell like that new French perfume I saw on TV!" she exclaimed with a serious look on her face.

"No I don't, and I don't know why you keep saying that!" I argued.

"Are you gay or what? Do you have a boyfriend you keep meeting at the mall? You sure spend a lot of time there," she shot back.

"No I am not gay and where and with whom I spend my time with is none of your business. Stay out of my life!" I shouted back.

I was getting concerned because if she had mentioned to my step-parents either last time or this time, I was going to be in a jam, if they believed her.

At supper, nothing was said about my "day at the mall." I don't think Sandy had said anything to either parent but occasionally she would glance at me with a funny look on her face, then look away.

School started again and I was once more engrossed in my studies. Because I had been published, I had received a number of inquiries from local schools as well as from Sybil's school in Oregon about entering their communications or journalism programs.

I looked over the brochures carefully and kept them in my dresser drawer. It was my senior year and I had plenty of time to decide what I wanted to do.

I turned eighteen in October; the day after my birthday I drove to the Gender Identity Clinic across town to make an appointment for a consultation. I made sure they understood that I was not to be contacted at home, just at work. The woman smiled and said confidentiality would be assured.

In two weeks, I reported to the clinic for an early evening appointment. I had told my step-parents I was going to a movie. I checked in at the reception desk and waited a few minutes before my name was called. I walked down the hall to the therapist's office and walked in.

Dr. Gwen Easton was a tall broad-shouldered woman. She got up from her desk as I introduced myself. We shook hands and I took a seat opposite her.

"Now tell me about your self, Stephen," she began.

I started out with my earliest recollections of my childhood and over the next hour and a half detailed my life story to date. When I finished, I felt drained, emotionally exhausted, and was almost in tears.

She had been making notes as I talked. She smiled briefly and then began spoke in a husky voice.

"That's quite a story, Stephen. First of all, you are not alone. Those cabinets behind me are filled with stories like yours and I want to help you. Step into the exam room, get undressed and lay down on the table. I will be with you shortly,"

I went into the next room. I took my clothes off and put them on the chair. I felt so vulnerable laying there naked. Dr. Easton entered the room a few minutes later and began the exam. In addition to the poking and prodding, she took a blood sample. When she finished, she made notes on her clipboard and handed me a plastic cup.

"Give me a urine sample. Leave it on the counter, then get dressed. Come back into my office when you're finished,"

I nodded as she left the room. A few minutes later, I sat back down in front of her.

"You are in excellent health, Stephen. I attribute that to your athleticism and a proper diet. Your skin is exceptional as well. Have you been taking female hormones?" she asked.

"No. I do take vitamins. My neighbors own a health food store and we buy a brand from them that is supposed to be very good. My step dad and I take the men's tablet and my step mom and sister take the woman's," I answered.

"The reason I ask is because some men like you buy stuff off the Internet rather than go to a doctor. Ninety-nine percent of that stuff is crap and some of it may even be dangerous. Your skin has a very soft texture to it and I noticed some fleshiness in your breast area. Are you *sure* you are taking the men's formula?"

"Well, I think so. I mean Sybil, that's my neighbors' daughter who also works in the store, sold us the stuff. My step dad and I have a black capped bottle and my step mom and sister have the pink capped one,"

“What do the tablets look like?” she asked as she removed a pink capped jar from her desk drawer.

I was a little bit alarmed. Vitamin tablets were vitamin tablets so I had always thought.

“Well, they’re just white tablets with 500mg on them,” I answered.

“White? You mean like these?” she asked as she removed the cap and showed me the tablets inside.

“Yes,” I answered. “Those are the ones,”

“Stephen, the men’s tablets are brown. If you have been taking these for two years, I can see why your body is changing. The women’s tablets, in addition to vitamins, contain some estrogen. That’s probably why your skin is so much like a girl’s and it explains your fleshy breast area,”

“Sybil must have switched them on me. It’s the only explanation that makes any sense.”

“Well, at this juncture I would continue to take them. When you run out again, just buy the women’s bottle. Now, roll up your sleeve and I will give you a booster shot,”

I stood up and rolled up my sleeve. She removed a very large needle and inserted it in a bottle. After drawing the clear liquid into the needle, she swabbed my arm with alcohol and plunged the needle in.

“This will accelerate the physical changes you have been experiencing. Make an appointment in sixty days and I will see you again. I understand you are not telling your family about this?”

I shook my head no.

“I want to do this on my own. This family has been good to me, but this is something I want to keep to myself,”

“I understand. Well that’s all for now. See you in about two months,”

I left her office and stopped at the desk to make another appointment, then drove home. A lot of things were going through my mind as I drove. I was certain, however, that I had done the right thing. The big question was, how was I going to handle the transition and keep it from everyone?

Back home, I immediately went upstairs to my parents' room and opened the bottles on both dressers. Sure enough! My step mom's capsules were white like the ones I had been taking and my step dad's capsules were brown. Sybil must have been the culprit. I was angry at first but then as I looked in the mirror over the dresser and saw my girlish skin, I calmed down. I guessed it was for the better.

I got back to my normal routine. Just before the holidays, I went back for another consultation and booster shot. Sybil was home for about ten days but I said nothing to her.

When classes resumed, I dreaded the upcoming tennis season. I loved the game but I was afraid one of the guys would notice my “fleshiness” and say something to the coach or the other guys, so I informed the coach I would not be back for my last season and instead wanted to concentrate on my work in the communications lab.

By spring, I had received my third booster shot. I started taping my breasts so they wouldn't show. I had only one worry and that was at what point would I be able to successfully make my transition into my feminine persona and begin living life full-time as a young woman. I had let my hair grow out a little but kept my nails short, though they were longer than I had ever let them grow before.

As graduation approached, I became more and more apprehensive. My counselor was upset that I had not heard from any of the schools I had applied to. Of course I had lied about that and had only applied to one school, the one Sybil was attending. She E-mailed me that she had a friend in administration and was going to see if she could speed up the process for me.

I did publish another short story in a regional magazine and the five hundred dollars I received for it went for electrolysis. My facial and body hair was pretty fine to begin with. I would still need additional treatments but not as many as the man with an average beard would need.

I also got some experience in front of the camera as well. My story of the tennis team's loss in the finals and placing second in the state tournament brought inquiries from several TV stations about summer internships but they were seeing me as a male reporter and that's not what I wanted to be.

The stress of trying to stay focused in school, choose a university, and figure out how to transition was beginning to take its toll. I lost some weight and my stepparents and Dr. Easton had asked me about it. I told them both not to worry, it was just a result of a difficult last semester. I stopped the occasional weekend tennis game with my family, using my studies and work at the store as an excuse. Actually, even with the tape, I was beginning to "bounce" a little too noticeably.

About two weeks from graduation, a man came into the store and showed me his private investigator's badge and photo ID.

"I'm looking for Stephen Allen Wright," he stated.

I am Stephen Allen Wright," I said.

"I need to see some ID please," he said.

I showed him my male driver's license. He smiled and handed me an envelope. I signed the form.

"Good luck kid," he said as he turned around and left the store.

I tore it open to find a letter from an attorney in Cleveland, Ohio explaining that my birth mother, whom I had never known, had been killed in a car accident. She had left me the sum of one hundred thousand dollars. Attached to the letter was the check.

I stared at the letter and check for a few minutes, then put them back in the envelope. A sum of money that large was enough to boggle anyone's mind to say nothing of an eighteen-year-old's.

"Hello! Anybody work here?" came a voice from in front of the cash register.

I slid the envelope in my back pants pocket. I rang up the man's purchase, placed it in a plastic bag, and apologized.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to ignore you," I said as I handed it to him.

After he left, I took the envelope out and re-read the letter and looked at the check again. It all seemed to be okay. I was suddenly flooded with relief. It was as if a giant weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I now had a green light to do just exactly what I wanted, though I was still unsure of exactly *how* I was going to that. Sybil's dad walked in from the back room and we closed the store for the night.

When I got home, I didn't say a word to anybody. I placed the envelope inside a book. I had an awful lot to think about. After going to bed that night, sleep was almost impossible. I worked Saturday and Sunday but it was difficult to keep my mind on what I was doing.

I spent my evenings of the next week studying for final exams, though I was sure I would pass them with no problem and I did. Friday night, my stepparents and sister took me out for a celebratory dinner. A letter of acceptance had arrived from Oregon but because I was late applying, I wouldn't start until the next fall. I did not mention the letter and when I was asked if I heard from any of the schools, I just shrugged and said "You'll know when I know."

When Sybil came home and started working in the store again, she saw me purchase a year's supply of vitamins. I had brought the black lid from the old bottle so if my family saw it, they would not be asking me why I was taking women's vitamin tablets. Sybil saw me exchange the lids in the back room.

"So, you like what I have done for you so far, Stephanie?" she cooed.

It was hopeless to deny anything. What was obvious to Sybil had not been obvious to most others.

"Yes. I am much happier now that I have come to grips with the person I really am. I saw a doctor at a nearby clinic that specializes in people like me and have begun taking hormones in addition to these pills."

"Have you said anything to your family?" she inquired.

"No and I'm not going to. I was thinking of just leaving them a note thanking them for everything and saying I was off to see the world or seek my fortune or maybe join the military. Then I would simply disappear and have no further contact with them," I replied.

"Sounds like a plan to me. I will be glad to help you. In fact, there's an opening for an administrative secretary in the communications department beginning July 1. I could E-mail them a letter of application stating you are moving to the Portland area and are looking for full-time work. Of course it would be as Stephanie Alice Wright. In addition to an interview, you would have to pass a civil service test which you could take on line from the satellite campus here in town," she added.

"That would be great! It's May 22nd. When would I have to be interviewed?" I asked.

"Let's get you set up for the test first," she declared.

I was very excited about living and working as a female. I knew the sooner I transitioned, the sooner I could be eligible for the surgery. I could hardly concentrate on my work the rest of the week.

Sybil notified me of the time and place for the test. I found the test easy. I used my home E-mail address and got a prompt answer to report for an interview on June 15 at 10 AM. I was ecstatic. I now had to make the most serious plans of my life.

The next week, I sorted through my belongings and took the bulk of them to the local thrift store. In the back room, Sybil took my measurements. Thanks to my part-time job at the store, I had received two credit cards with a thousand dollar limit each. I did not mention the check and told her I didn't want to spend more than five hundred on each card. She agreed. Between clothes, shoes, accessories, makeup and hair care items she managed to stay under my budgeted amount, but just barely.

She packed these items, except for a pink pantsuit I would be wearing on the trip and for the interview, along with several books on makeup, hair and nail care. My box from home with my chauffeur's uniform and night gown were also included. "You might need it again!" she giggled.

She then shipped them to her friend Lola Dean in Portland who would hold them for me as well as meet my flight when I landed.

I got a referral from Dr. Easton to a clinic in Portland and a physician there. I gave notice to Sybil's parents that I was quitting and picked up my last check on Thursday. Sybil took me to the travel agency to pick up my ticket in the name of Stephanie Alice Wright. I paid with my credit card, then we went to the bank. I went inside alone. I presented my male driver's license, the letter and check and got a money order made out to my femme name for a hundred thousand dollars. I cashed my paycheck and wrote out two checks to the credit card companies for my recent purchases and then one check for cash, leaving only a dollar and thirty seven cents in the account.

She drove me back to her house and I dressed in my lingerie, flat shoes and pink pantsuit. I applied pink lipstick and blusher. After a short stop at the beauty salon for ear piercing and a cut and style, she drove me to the airport. On the way, I mailed a letter to my step-parents and the credit card statements. Along with the check I had enclosed a letter closing my account. The wait at the airport was less than an hour but it seemed forever. Sybil hugged me goodbye and I boarded the aircraft.

The flight was a good one and with the time change, I arrived early Friday evening. Sybil's friend

Lola met my flight and took me out to eat and then to her apartment. The next day, Lola took me around to look at apartments.

On Monday, I opened a checking account with thirty thousand dollars and put the rest in CD's. I found a nice furnished apartment near campus and she helped me move my things in. With the last of my cash from my old account and paycheck, I purchased some bed linen and towels. At a thrift store, I bought some dishes, pots, and pans to set up housekeeping. I bought a cheap throwaway phone and activated it. The phone company couldn't come until Thursday. After they left, Lola picked me up and drove me to the interview. I was pleased with the way it went. At the social security building, I presented my

old male driver's license and social security card to the large black woman behind the counter.

"I'm..." my voice almost cracked.

"In transition?" she asked with a smile.

"Yes," I said.

"I understand."

She proceeded to rattle the keys on her computer keyboard. Shortly, she looked up at me with a smile.

"It's all taken care of, Stephanie. You will receive your new card in a few days. Good luck, honey,"

"Thank you so much," I said as I paid the fee.

The next stop was DMV where I picked up a booklet to study for my driver's test. Several days later, I used Lola's car to pass my test and get my Oregon driver's license. I tossed my old male driver's license in the garbage but kept the old female one in case of emergency. The next day, my social security card arrived with the name Stephanie Alice Wright. A letter of intent to hire also arrived and I was more ecstatic than I had ever been in my life.

I purchased a small two-door hatchback and some insurance. I took Lola out to eat and we celebrated my re-location and my halfway point of transitioning.

I stopped in the office the Friday before the Monday I was to begin work and picked up my campus parking permit.

"The Associate Dean wants to see you before you go," said the current secretary,

I had been interviewed by the administrative assistant, Susan Marks, who would be my supervisor. I waited a few minutes and the Associate Dean came out and extended her hand.

"Hi Stephanie, I am Sharon Browning, the department head. Please come into my office,"

I shook her hand and followed her inside. I noticed that everything on her desk was arranged in neat stacks and not a single paper clip was out of place.

"I want to welcome you here on behalf of Susan and myself. Your qualifications are excellent and the staff and I are looking forward to working with you. Despite the casual atmosphere here on campus, this is the Dean's office and I want you to be more dressed-up. You cannot wear jeans and I don't want you in a pantsuit, either. You will wear slim skirts and blouses. For practical purposes, pumps should be limited to three-inch heels. Be conservative with makeup and please do not wear any cologne or perfume. It's important to have a professional appearance but not an unfeminine one. Do you have any questions?" she said as she sat back in her chair.

"No, I understand," I answered.

"Good. We'll see you here Monday morning at 7:30 AM sharp,"

We both stood up and shook hands again.

The weekend seemed to drag on forever. I didn't have a lot to do. My wardrobe was pretty basic but would do until I got a couple of paychecks ahead. I didn't want to touch the CD's, saving them for my surgical expense.

I didn't sleep much that night despite a hot soaking bubble bath. Of course I had lathered myself up with the bar of perfumed soap the girls had given me at Sybil's going away party. The pink nightgown felt so good and so right as I crawled in bed. I finally dozed off and the alarm clock shocked me awake.

I didn't feel like eating. I put on my foundation garments and hose. Looking myself over in the mirror, I was quite pleased. I chose a light pink blouse and black skirt. After I applied pink blusher and lipstick, I put the make up and my ladies wallet in a black purse. I stepped into the matching black leather pumps and walked into the kitchen. I put a can of diet soda and a cup of yogurt in a brown bag and walked out to my car.

The drive to work was short and I was a bit early. I sat there in my car, a combination of fear and excitement. Finally I slipped my purse over my arm and grabbed my lunch sack. As I stepped out of the car, the sun broke through the clouds. My first day at work, my first day en femme, and the sun was shining too!

I walked with confidence from the parking area to the administration building. Entering the office, I was greeted by Susan who had arrived a few minutes ahead of me.

The day went much better than I expected and so did the rest of the week. By the end of the month, I was very comfortable in my job and my feminine lifestyle. Things would be shifting into high gear by the end of August as school started up again.

I enjoyed my job and the people I worked with were just great. In addition, I had become quite feminine, not only in my appearance but in my mannerisms as well. Where before I had become quite adept at play acting my feminine role, I now could *be* my feminine self and didn't have to act.

Smoothing my skirt under me before I sat down came as natural as applying fresh blusher and lipstick after my lunch break. I liked the image I saw in the mirror and enjoyed the pampering at a local salon when I was due for a manicure, pedicure and haircut. The clicking of my high heels as I walked down the halls of the building was not lost on me, nor was the occasional admiring glances from the male employees.

I spent several hours a week at the library reading the fashion and health magazines. I enjoyed my shopping trips to the mall, even though I bought very little. Just the ability to walk through the women's department of any store, especially the lingerie section, without fear was enjoyable in and of itself. I was still not totally fulfilled but at least I was in a position to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

My electrolysis was nearly completed by the end of October and the laser treatments, while expensive kept my legs looking great. I felt good about myself. Following my first appointment with Dr. Barbara Townsend at the clinic and my Fall booster shot, I was feeling even better. She was quite pleased with the physical progress I was making as well as my attitude and that I had found employment.

Halloween fell on a Saturday and I had planned to stay home. I had not done any socializing since moving to Portland. I did not care for the bar scene and because I was still

biologically a male, I was afraid of the consequences if my date found out I wasn't quite the female he thought I was.

Friday afternoon, I had my back to the desk as I was rummaging through the filing cabinet looking for a file I had misplaced. Behind me a man cleared his throat.

"Excuse me," he said. "Is Dean Browning in her office?"

I turned around and locked eyes with him. They were large, warm brown eyes. His brown hair was naturally wavy and his smile was white as the snow I had left in Minneapolis. I looked at the schedule she had left me.

"She is in a meeting until four or so. Can I give her a message?"

My heart was pounding as I looked for my pen.

"No, that's okay. I was just wondering if she was going to be at the mixer after the lecture by Richard Kane. She has my cell number. Have her give me call. I'm Reed Donlevy, D-O-N-L-E-V-Y,"

"Okay, Mr. Donlevy, I'll tell you she called...I mean I'll have her call you," I answered. I felt my face get hot with embarrassment and I knew I must be blushing.

"Call me Reed, and if you don't have plans, please come. Sharon said you were new around here. It will give you a chance to meet some people," he added with that blinding, infatuating, marvelous, contagious, devilish, add-your-own-adjective-smile of his.

As he left, I tried to remember what exactly it was I had been doing before he came in. The phone rang twice and when I finished with both calls, I picked up where I had left off.

Dean Browning returned from her meeting as I finished what I had started.

"A Reed Donlevy was here and asked you to call him about the mixer after Mr. Kane's lecture,"

A smile creased her face.

"So you have met Mr. Donlevy, have you? Be careful, young lady, that's quite a smile he has. He came here from Canada many years ago to teach for two years and never went back,"

I felt my face flush as she walked to her office. About twenty minutes later, as I was about to leave for the day, Sharon stopped in front of my desk.

"Do you have a little black dress?" she asked.

I was familiar with the term but had kept my wardrobe to a minimum to move out there and hadn't bought anything to socialize in yet.

"Well, no not yet. I came out here on a limited budget and haven't really expanded my wardrobe yet," I answered.

"Get one!" she said with a big smile. "Reed wants you to come to the lecture tonight at eight and stay for the mixer afterwards,"

"Okay, I will be there," I answered.

As I walked down the hall, I don't think my feet hit the ground once. Instead of driving home, I drove to the mall. I found a short-sleeved, black velvet dress at a terrific mark-

down. It fit me perfectly and I got the same knock-off on the black suede pumps and matching handbag.

After a light supper, I opened a package of press-on nails in a dark red shade and covered my pink nails with those. I made up my eyes and then applied my blusher and dark red lipstick. I got dressed and checked myself over in the mirror. I thought I was pretty much a knockout, as the guys would say. After putting my things in the matching bag, I shut off the lights and walked to the car.

Arriving at the lecture hall, I parked and walked inside. There were a few faculty members already there and many students from the creative writing and journalism classes. I went down to the front and took my seat. I spotted Reed and Dean Browning off to my right chatting with some of the students.

Richard Kane, the featured speaker, was an internationally known writer of horror fiction who returned each year at Halloween to speak to the students. He had dropped out of college after two years with the success of his first book "Damnation City." His recent book "The Devil's Menu," about a retired couple who take in abandoned and orphaned children and take care of them for several years before they are sold to an underground cult where they are sacrificially killed and then eaten, had drawn much criticism, not so much for its cannibalistic theme but the fact that it involved violence against children.

At 8 PM sharp, Dean Browning walked to the podium at center stage and the audience quieted down.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce our speaker this evening, Mr. Richard Kane,"

Mr. Kane, in full Dracula costume with incisors and carrying a glass of wine in one hand, walked to the podium.

"Thank you. In spite of the recent criticism of my latest book, it's nice to know I'm still welcome here."

"You know, I'm not really the depraved, decadent, degenerate monster some people think I am. Though I never married, I really do love children. In fact, I just had a little girl myself this past Thanksgiving. I was going to have the little boy at Christmas but he escaped! I'M JUST KIDDING, FOLKS!"

He paused to take a sip from his wine glass as laughter rippled through the audience. For the next forty minutes or so, he talked little about himself. Instead, he concentrated on the basics of writing a good story and the necessity of using good grammar and punctuation. The ability to create believable characters with real feelings and emotions is central to any story. The difference between an ordinary line or phrase and a great one, is as someone once said: "The difference between lightning and lighting bug,"

"In closing, I thank you again for your invitation. Remember to follow your passion. Passion is what makes life worth living,"

Finishing his wine, he set the glass on the podium, swung his cape around with a flourish and walked offstage to applause.

Dean Browning walked to the podium as the applause died down.

“Thank you, Mr. Kane. Ladies and gentlemen, you are cordially invited to attend the mixer next door for coffee and punch,”

I got up and followed the crowd out the side door and down the hall to a large meeting room where tables and chairs had been set up. I helped myself to a glass of punch as Susan Marks came in the room.

She introduced me to some of the faculty I hadn't met yet.

We were making small talk when Reed Donlevy entered the room. He spotted me and came towards us.

I excused myself and met him halfway.

“I'm sorry about the other day. You probably thought I was a real ditz,” I said.

“Not at all, Stephanie. Let's sit down over here,” he motioned to a smaller table with only two chairs.

I don't remember much about that conversation. I kept getting lost in those big brown eyes. Afterward, he saw me to my car and bid me a good night.

Back home, I undressed and took a long soak in a perfumed bubble bath. I loved the feel of my soft, hair-free skin. After drying myself off with a large pink fluffy towel, I dusted myself with sweet scented body powder. I put on my pink nightie and stood in front of the mirror. I reveled in my femininity. I got into bed and dreamed of being in Reed's arms.

The weekend seemed to drag as my thoughts kept going back to him. This situation had complicated things quite a bit. I hadn't expected something like this to happen, at least not during my transition. I knew I had to keep my focus.

I wanted to be in a normal relationship in every sense of the word. I had not dated for fear of being found out but now if he asked me out, I wanted to be with him.

The holidays were approaching. I lied and said I had made plans to return to the Midwest to visit relatives. There were some excellent bargains just before Christmas and I added some things to my wardrobe. I got a super deal on a computer system, having used Sandy's when I lived with the Tiltons. Sybil came over just before she left for the holidays and helped me set it up.

I dug out my stack of yellow note pads and went over my outlines of story ideas. I began to craft the first story on the computer and that kept me busy in the evenings and weekends. I saw Reed only once before school let out for about two and a half weeks. He was headed for Canada for the holidays.

It was tough not having a family Christmas. I ate out for Christmas dinner just as I had for Thanksgiving. The restaurants were not crowded and I enjoyed not having to cook for myself.

After the holidays, I saw Dr. Townsend. She gave me another shot and pronounced me fit for SRS. I set a date for June First. It would be the end of one life and the beginning of another. I was positive it was the right choice.

I went shopping again after the holidays to take advantage of some terrific mark-downs. I needed to replace my bras any way as I had gone up another cup size. Normally,

the hormones do not enlarge the breasts as much as mine, forcing many transsexuals to have enhancement surgery. I wouldn't need the additional surgery or expense as I had blossomed quite nicely!

On Valentine Day, Reed called and asked me to dinner. I accepted. I rushed home from work and changed into a red taffeta party dress I had bought on sale after the holidays. I put on bright red press-on nails to match my fire engine red lipstick. With my red patent leather pumps and matching purse, I knew I looked good! After an obligatory squirt of French perfume behind each ear and on my wrists, I was ready to go.

Like a true gentleman, he picked me up on time. He even opened the car door for me at home and the restaurant.



The candlelight dinner was marvelous. It was one of those small out-of-the-way places. It had a small dance floor just off the dining area. When he asked me to dance, I accepted before I realized I had never danced backwards before, let alone in heels!

On the floor, my left hand seemed to go automatically to his shoulder as I laid my right hand in his left.

"Slow and easy," I said. "I'm kind of a klutzy dancer."

"I don't believe you," he said with a smile. "But I will go easy."

I did my best anticipating his movements and in no time at all, I felt like floating around the room.

The soft music and his firm but gentle grasp made it so easy.

We sat back down and sipped our drinks until our orders came. It was like a dream come true for this girl.

When we were finished, he drove me home.

At the door, I turned and put my arms around his neck. His kiss was warm and I wanted desperately to ask him inside but I knew I couldn't.

"Thank you for a wonderful evening," I said. "I enjoyed the dinner and your company very much,"

"You're very welcome," he said. "We'll have to do this again sometime,"

"Yes, we will. Good night, Reed," I said.

He turned and left. I took my keys out of my purse and let myself in the apartment.

Later, I was sitting in front of the TV in my pink chiffon robe trying to remember what I was watching. The news came on and I couldn't get interested in that either. Finally I gave up and after buffing my nails, I went to bed.

Back at work, I became busy. Once school was in full swing, I had several chances to stop by the communications lab and was impressed with their facilities. Except to attend one of Reed's writers' workshops, I did not see much of him. I published the short story I had been working on and began another one from the three remaining outlines I had left.

St. Patrick's Day was Saturday and Reed asked me out to dinner. I begged off because I would be at the lab all afternoon and didn't know how late I would be. He suggested a Sunday afternoon lunch and I agreed.

I enjoyed the Saturday lab and it was almost 6 before I got home so I was glad I could shift our date to Sunday. I ate half of the big salad I had picked up on the way home and put the rest in the fridge.

As much as I was looking forward to my date with Reed on Sunday, I was getting increasingly worried about our relationship. Sooner or later, things would come to a head and I wasn't prepared to deal with that just yet. If I had completed my SRS, I would not have such doubts.

Reed was a warm, wonderful human being. His was kind, thoughtful, humorous, add as many adjectives here as you like and then some. I wanted him. I wanted him as much as I wanted my surgery. I wanted to spend the rest of my life with a man like that. I was surprised at myself for thinking that. I never had thoughts about any man before. Maybe it was the hormones. Maybe it was love. What to do next?

Sunday, I slept late. I had juice and toast, then walked to a nearby Gas & Go place to pick up a Sunday paper. I found nothing interesting in all the sale fliers but there was a reprint in the business section of an article that had appeared in the college newspaper that I found curious.

There had been several disappearances in and around National Products Inc. The company was a large defense contractor and though the plant had been closed down for many years, there was still a small staff on hand to maintain the buildings and equipment.

Among the missing were a number of vagrants who had taken up residence in two of the outlying bunkers where ammunition had once been stored and a child from an adjacent trailer park, whose bicycle had been found near a small hole in the fence on the plant's northwest side. Police were continuing their investigation but had turned up no new leads in almost a year.

I was intrigued by this story. It was written by a senior on the staff of the paper. He was majoring in journalism and environmental studies. I read the whole article with great interest. Despite the length of the article, it was concise and well written. I made a mental note to contact him when I got to work the next day.

I tossed the paper aside and worked on my stories for about an hour.

I decided to wear a light green chiffon blouse, slim black skirt and pumps. As an afterthought, I pinned a small green bow in my now shoulder-length hair. I applied my makeup and, of course, some French perfume.

Reed was on time and we had a delightful lunch at a small restaurant near the mall. He was charming as usual and when we got back to my place, I invited him in.

I made us some tea and sat next to him on the couch. We made small talk for awhile and then he set his cup down next to mine. He slid his arm around my shoulders and leaned forward to kiss me. I moved away slightly.

"Reed, I..." My voice trailed off as I looked away.

"Is something wrong?" he asked.

I bit my lip. I didn't want to lose him but I had to tell him something. I knew that he might not accept the truth so I skirted it just a little, a typically feminine ploy.

"Yes, there is. It's me. I like you very much but I have some upcoming surgery that I hadn't mentioned and..."

He sat back, his mouth open.

"Are you sick?" he inquired.

"Not exactly," I answered. I hesitated as I looked at those wonderful brown eyes.

"Well then, what is it? C'mon now, you can tell me, can't you?"

I took a deep breath. "It's female in nature. If everything goes right, I will be OK but I will never have children," I answered.

"Reed, I like you a lot and I think we have something special and I didn't want to lose you,"

He shook his head and drank the last of his tea.

"I understand completely," he replied. "When are you going to have this done?"

"I'm scheduled to have the surgery on June 1st. I'll have about a two-month recuperative period and then I should be OK,"

He nodded as he set the cup down.

"Do you need anything? Is there something I can do?" he asked looking at me very seriously.

“No, not really. I have everything taken care of,” I answered.

“Well alright then, but you be sure and let me know,” he said as he got up.

“I will, Reed. I will,” I answered.

I got up and walked to the door with him. He turned and kissed my cheek. After he left, the tears came.

Promptly at midnight, the security guard at National Products Inc. stubbed out his cigarette and picked up the clock. He got into the pickup truck and began driving around to the various buildings. At each one, he unlocked the door and went inside. He turned on his flashlight and walked to the rear of the building. Inserting and turning the key into the clock, he glanced around the interior, then walked back to the front. After locking the door again, he returned to his truck.

The last stop was the side entrance of the main building. He entered the building and began walking down the long flight of stairs. Halfway down, he heard a gurgling noise and shined his flashlight over the soupy mess that covered the floor.

Recent rains must have backed up the water again, he thought as he surveyed the dark oily mass beneath the main manufacturing floor. It seemed like they were always unplugging the sewer drains here. He turned his back on the mess and inserted the key into the clock. As he turned it, something touched his shoulder.

It had watched him carefully as he moved down the stairs. When the guard turned to face the key station and insert his key, the two longer front tentacles slithered forward under the slime, one stopping at the guard’s ankles, the other arching up about shoulder high.

After the guard removed his key and was about to turn back to the stairs, the tentacles wrapped around him. One tentacle pinned his arms to his sides while the other tentacle quickly wrapped itself around the guard’s legs, yanking them out from under him.

The clock fell from the guard’s hands as he opened his mouth to scream but the only sound in the room was the cracking of the guards ribs as the tentacles squeezed the life out of him and dragged him under the oily slop where the open beak waited to chop up its first meal in more than a month.

Watching the news before I went to work Monday morning, I learned of the disappearance of a security guard at National Products Inc.

An hour after I arrived at work, I talked briefly with the student who had written the article in the Sunday paper. He told me he was on his way to talk to the police investigating the matter. The only thing that had been found was the guard’s clock and cap.

I kept busy at work and tried not to think about my upcoming surgery. I didn’t like having to lie to Reed but I really felt I had no choice. There are few people who could accept such a thing.

April brought more sunny days and another follow-up appointment with Dr. Townsend. This one was short.

“You are as ready as you are ever going to be, Stephanie,” she said. “See you on the First!”

I left the clinic and returned to work where a message was waiting for me. The communications lab was sending a crew along with Steve Dale, the author of the article on the disappearances, to the lecture hall where there was going to be a press conference at 4 PM and they had invited me to join them.

I finished up my work for the day and went directly to the hall. I arrived around 3:30 to find the local TV stations as well as our lab crew setting up cameras and sound equipment. I was happy to be there as this had been quite a mystery for some time and the police had no leads to date.

At precisely 4 PM, Marvin Conn, President and CEO of National Products Inc., walked to the podium and surveyed the audience of students, reporters and many members of the general public who lived close by the plant.

“Thank you for coming. I know many of you have concerns about the recent developments around the National Products facility. Let me assure you that we are co-operating fully with local law enforcement agencies. We intend to beef up our perimeter security by installing new fencing. In addition, a number of homeless people who have taken up residence in two of the outlying bunkers have been removed to a downtown shelter. The bunkers will be sealed up this coming week by the company installing the new fencing.

“In terms of environmental concerns, this company has complied with all state and federal regulations in effect when production started and upgrades were made as soon as the new regulations were enacted or changed. While there has been some ground contamination over the years from the settling ponds, they have been cleaned up and we do not anticipate any further leakage. Water samples from the surrounding area have been tested and are within regulatory guidelines. There are copies of all reports on the table in front of you. Are there any questions?”

From the front row, a number of hands shot into the air. Mr. Conn bit his lip before pointing out the first reporter.

“The guard that disappeared was inside the building. Is there a possibility that someone or some thing is on site and is disposing of the bodies?”

“I can’t speculate about that. You should talk to the police,”

Our student reporter stood up.

“There have been problems in the past with ineffective drainage, especially during a heavy rain. How are they being addressed?”

“We have had periodic backups in the main and branch sewer lines. They are usually cleared in 24 to 48 hours. It would be cost prohibitive to replace the sewage and drainage system since we are no longer in operation,”

One of the environmental professors stood up.

“Is it true that the main line once drained into the river?”

“Yes. With new environmental regulations, the old pipes are no longer in use,”

“Do you mean to say they are totally disconnected from the main system?”

“Yes, I believe so,”

“So there is no possibility that something from the ocean or river could have come up those pipes and is responsible for the disappearances?”

“I can’t imagine what that something would be but it sounds pretty far fetched to me. Maybe someone on campus could better answer that than me,”

The professor nodded and sat down amid the whispers from his colleagues.

A female reporter from one of the TV stations stood up next.

“Are we facing the prospect of an unknown being, genetically altered by the chemical pollution put out by your plant, terrorizing the local population?”

“Now you are stretching things a bit,” the CEO smiled.

“But doesn’t nature somehow find a way? There were some strange marks in the sand near the fence where the boy disappeared and similar ones near the steps where the guard disappeared,”

“I saw Jurassic Park with my grandchildren and enjoyed it very much. However this is not a fantasy movie and I think we should move on,”

There were several more questions, then the press conference was brought to a close. The copies of the reports were quickly scooped up as the crowd began to disperse.

The department chair of the biology department was making a fast exit out the side door. I ran after him as fast as I could in a skirt and heels.

“Professor, wait a minute, please!” I called out to him.

I caught up to him as he was opening his car door. I was nearly out of breath and took a moment to compose myself. He had a worried look on his face.

“Professor, what about the comment that genetic mutation caused by the pollution may have spawned something that was a danger to the people around the plant?” I asked.

The man looked at me with a deadpan stare.

“With all the chemical and biological havoc that our industries have wreaked on this planet, it’s a small miracle any of us are left at all. Don’t assume that because you don’t see a three-legged frog around here, like the ones they found in Minnesota or people with two heads and four arms, it means it can’t happen. Now leave me alone. Good day!”

I was a bit stunned at his reaction. I made my way back to the hall as our communications crew was getting their equipment packed up. Steve Dale smiled at me as I approached.

“Conn knows how to cover his ass, doesn’t he?”

“Don’t they all? I just tried to get something out of a biology professor and got nowhere,”

“Don’t try. They’re pretty closed-mouthed too. I mean, they have to be. Even if there is nothing to it, you can’t create a panic,”

I left the hall and drove home thinking about this local mystery. I hadn’t been very environmentally astute back in Minnesota but I found this quite interesting from both the environmental and journalistic standpoint.

A month later, I sat glued to the TV as I watched the news film of the fire department battling a major blaze at National Products Inc. Apparently, a lightning strike from the previous night had struck a transformer that exploded, sending burning oil on the roof and the main structure had been almost completely destroyed.

If something was in that plant, it certainly was dead now, unless of course it escaped through the sewer system.

Later in the week at a press conference, Marvin Conn announced that after the cleanup, the building would not be rebuilt. He was hoping to sell the property to a developer for a shopping mall or maybe an apartment complex.

My medical leave of absence had been approved and I had thirty days before my surgery. Things were slow at school as the year drew to a close. I cashed in two of the CD's and made out money orders to the surgeon and the hospital. I paid the next two months' rent and was hoping the last month of waiting would go fast but it didn't.

When it was time, I packed a small bag. Sybil had graduated but was staying on for a graduate program. She and Lola would take me to the hospital. I checked in the hospital and chatted with the girls for a while. After they left, I was left alone with my thoughts. This was it, no turning back now.

I was prepped early the next morning and wheeled into the operating room. Dr. Townsend was there, all scrubbed and ready.

"Ready, honey?" she asked.

My mouth was too dry to speak so I just nodded and closed my eyes. I barely felt the pick of the needle as the lights went out.

When I woke up, I felt like I was on another planet. A nurse came in and whispered to me that everything had gone perfectly with no complications. I closed my eyes again and rested.

The post-operative period went just as well. They had me up and around within a few days, much to my dismay. I felt I needed more bed rest but these days, no matter what the surgery, they seem to want to boot you out the door right away.

Eventually my pain and discomfort subsided. I began eating and moving around more. I was getting stronger by the day and at last Dr. Townsend came in and pronounced me fit for discharge. She examined me one last time and signed the chart.

"Any last words of advice?" I asked her.

She smiled down at me.

"Well, you were a man once, weren't you?" We both laughed

"My mother once said that being born a female was something I had no control over. Whether or not I would be a lady was something I *could* control," she smiled again.

"Good luck, Stephanie. See you in thirty days for your follow up,"

She left and I took off my hospital gown and got dressed. I signed out at the desk and waited downstairs in the lobby for Sybil and Lola to pick me up.

Sybil handed me a beautiful bouquet and we went out to eat lunch. Back at home, I took a warm bath and marveled at the skill of my surgeon.

In the coming weeks, I began experimenting with a six-inch plastic vibrating dildo. It was a strange but pleasurable sensation to have something inside of me. I wanted it to be a real man, hopefully Reed.

With two weeks to go before I was scheduled to begin classes, Susan announced she was leaving for Florida. Her boyfriend had been discharged from the Navy and he would be attending an aircraft school there. Dean Browning offered me Susan's position. I would have to upgrade my wardrobe and begin wearing two-piece suits or business-style dresses.

I was appreciative of the offer. I was torn between four years of college and then a job hunt or staying on here and work. The salary was less than I would be making in private industry but the benefits were excellent and I liked my job and the people I worked with. A positive, friendly work environment was more important to me than money. Plus in four years, if I had to move, I would be leaving Reed behind.

I deliberated over a week and talked it over with Sybil. I made a trip to the County Clerk's office and presented my female Oregon driver's license, a letter from the clinic and a faded, barely legible copy of my birth certificate. I was presented with a new certificate as "Stephanie Alice Wright" and most importantly of course the word "female" in the sex box. I was now a complete woman, at least as much of a one that I could be.

I had an early dinner date with Reed and we discussed my options. There were pretty good arguments for both decisions, though perhaps the best argument was sitting across the table from me. We enjoyed a movie and then I invited him in.

We sipped some wine and then seemed to run out of things to say. I took the empty glasses into the kitchen. He stood up and I put my arms around him and kissed him hard. I took his hand and led him into the bedroom. I was scared now, more than ever.

"Are you sure it's okay now?" he asked.

"I'm sure," I answered. "But take it slow, please."

And take it slow he did. He was gentle. It hurt but I liked having him on top of me. Afterward as I lay cuddled in his arms, I began to cry.

"I'm sorry," I began. "I..." my voice trailed off.

"It's okay, Stephanie, you were fine. Just relax, you are too tense," he said in a soothing tone.

Later, we made love again. It was more pleasurable, for both of us this time. I drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, I made breakfast and Reed left around 10. I cleaned up the dishes. I decided to accept Dean Browning's offer. Stephanie Alice Wright/Stephen Allen Wright would be deleted from the registration list. I would stay on the staff and build my life here. I was a lady now, a lady for life. And I wanted to be HIS lady too.

THE END

EPILOGUE

The retired man wearing a T-shirt, shorts and flip flops swung the metal detector in front of him as he walked along the beach. He was certain with the stormy weather the last couple of days that he would find some interesting items washed up on the beach.

As he neared the large rock outcropping a half mile from the river outlet, he stopped. He removed his headphones and mopped his forehead with the battered Portland Storm baseball cap. Recalling the stories of pirates, smugglers, and buried treasure he had heard as a child, he continued walking towards the mouth of the outcropping. Near the entrance, he noticed some unusual marks in the sand and followed them to the water's edge.

It had watched the figure for some time as it moved closer to where it lay in wait. When the figure turned and moved toward the water, the two front tentacles slithered silently along the beach, stopping just behind him as he, too, stopped.

One tentacle rose up and wrapped itself around the figure's arms and chest while the other wrapped itself around the legs and pulled the figure backwards. The figure struggled, dropping the metal detector. The headphones and cap fell to the ground as the figure, its eyes bulging in terror and mouth open but unable to scream, was dragged inside the cave where the open beak waited to chop into pieces its first meal in more than two months.

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