

LIVING MY LIFE FOR ME

By Patricia Smith



ILLUSTRATED BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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LIVING MY LIFE FOR ME

By Patricia Smith

CHAPTER 1

I was born Lewis Ralph Wolfe, the third child in a family of seven children. I was the oldest boy, growing up with three younger brothers, two older sisters and a baby sister. It was continual chaos at our house. I grew up hating my life and never really cared much for my family.

My first memory in this world was the shame put upon me by my parents when I was four years old. I had a bladder control problem and wet my bed and my pants often. It was a belief of my parents that shame would cure anything; they made me wear dresses and other girl's things, saying that only a girl would have no control to hold her water. I was teased constantly until they discovered it was a medical problem and took the steps to correct it.

Our father worked as a self employed carpenter and our mother was sick most of the time, so it was left up to the older kids to take care of the younger ones. We could have friends at school, but we could not go and visit them nor could they come to visit us at our home. This left us feeling quite isolated and lonely.

When I was eight years old I had an experience which frightened me terribly, and I had no one to talk to about it. I recall arriving home after it happened only to be beaten for being late. When it happened again a few months later I still didn't understand what was going on. It was only as an adult, years later, that I realized I had been sexually abused by an old man. At the time, of course, I was too young to know better. I was confused for a long time about it.

I was always the smallest kid at school. Even two of my younger brothers and my older sisters were bigger than I was. They took great pleasure in pushing me around until they made me cry. I learned to cry quickly to avoid the pains they were sure to inflict upon me.

The only kids around who were my size were the girls who lived down the street from us. I could only play with them if I played their games. That meant playing with dolls, dressing up in their mother's old clothes, having tea parties and playing house. These are about the only happy times I can recall from my youth.

When I was sixteen I finished high school and went to work for one of my father's friends. My paychecks went straight to my father, which he was supposed to be putting in the bank for me. My spare time I spent working for my father to pay for my room and board. I got Sundays off, but I had to be in early so I never got to cultivate any real or lasting friendships. This was nothing new, though.

At the age of eighteen I thought I had enough in the bank that I should be able to purchase a used car and get my license to drive. Unfortunately, my father decided that it was a useless luxury for me to have a car and refused to allow it. He wouldn't even discuss it with me and wouldn't tell me how much money was in my account. We argued about this for months until he finally told me that there was nothing in any account for me. He was keeping all of my money to pay for my room and board all the way back to when I was born. He felt this was the only fair thing to do, and that I had an obligation to him and my mother for the wonderful and rich life I had led to date. He felt that another two years of work for his friend and him might clear my account with the family.

Of course I felt otherwise. I found another job working as a security guard. It didn't pay as much but allowed me to move out of my father's house and live on my own as my older sisters had done years earlier. I found a furnished room with a retired teacher who had placed an ad in the newspaper. Her name was Mrs. Reilly; she had a big house and rented the spare bedrooms to men she approved of. She was a peculiar lady, and food in the house was not allowed. Needless to say, board was not included with the room.

I no longer had to work fourteen to sixteen hours a day and so I found I had more spare time than I was used to. I didn't have the social skills required to meet new people, however. I was lost in my spare time, so I took to reading a lot of the books my landlady had in her house. Seeing that all I did was work and read, Mrs. Reilly took to talking to me and tried to help me find some other interests.

CHAPTER 2

Mrs. Reilly was a widow and at least sixty years old. I found out that her husband had left her quite well off when he passed away. She had a daughter living in Europe. As the authority and control teachers held over their students eroded, Mrs. Reilly decided the time had come for her to retire. In years past there was more power allowed teachers in the classroom. Now, some teachers like Mrs. Reilly feared for their own safety.

We listened to each other's stories and sympathized. We spent many an evening in her library just talking to each other and drinking tea. I had to find my board elsewhere so I invariably ate in restaurants and cafes in the area. These were the few times I left the house in the evenings. Gradually her other roomers moved on, and it was just me and her in that house. Perhaps because of the emptiness of the house, she began providing me with room and board for only a bit more than I had paid before. This was cheaper for me than eating out all the time, and better food for the most part.

I helped her around the house when I could. I saved her a lot of money and time since I was able to do the yard work for her as well as helping with the household chores. I cleaned and cooked, helped with the laundry and the shopping. Most importantly I saved money, putting it into the bank myself.

This gave both of us lots more time and little to do. It was Mrs. Reilly who came up with the idea of playing games to pass the time away. She usually beat me at checkers, so she taught me how to play chess and backgammon. Once I had the basics down I even beat her once in a while.

"I want to play a game you told me you played often as a child," she said to me one Tuesday evening during dinner. "I have been thinking about it for some time and believe it can be lots of fun for both of us."

"What game is that?" I asked her.

"Dress-up, remember?"

"Yes," I smiled, "but I played that with little girls and we wore their mother's old clothes. Just what clothes do you suggest we get dressed up in?"

"I had a young woman live here some time ago. she couldn't afford the rent, so she just up and left without taking many of her things with her."

"That's too bad."

"The poor thing just had to tell me and I would have let her stay until she got back on her feet. I'm not all that horrible, you know. There is a closet full of her things in the basement. I'm sure that if we looked we could find something for you to try on."

"And what will you be trying on?" I asked her.

"If you agree to try these things," she said, "I will buy myself a few things I would like to try wearing too. Styles older women like me don't usually wear. I think this can be fun for both of us, Lewis. Please say yes."

I didn't see where it could hurt anyone for me to oblige her in this pastime. Dress-up had been fun as a child, how could it be so bad now? It wasn't so long ago that I was playing with those girls down the street. I agreed to try and followed Mrs. Reilly to the basement. I helped her carry the boxes of clothes up to the living room where we sorted through them. The way she had packed and stored them, they appeared to be still brand new.

There was a lot of panties and bras, slips and teddies and assorted other lingerie. There were dresses and skirts and slacks and blouses and shoes and boots. The woman had even left behind a coat and some lighter jackets.

Some of the outerwear required a good airing out while all of the underwear and other lingerie needed to be washed. It all smelled of moth balls, which Mrs. Reilly had packed them with. I hung the outerwear on the clothesline while she began hand washing the lingerie. I finished before her and helped her wash the rest of it.

"I don't know if I should wear all of this," I told her, holding up a black lacy teddy. "Most of this stuff is really feminine. All I ever wore as a kid was a dress or a skirt."

"Except when you were four, right?" she reminded me.

"Well, yes. Then I wore panties and a slip too. But I had no choice then. They made me do it."

"I know. So given the choice, you won't even try it now?"

"I guess I could. But I need a couple promises from you."

"Yes, dearie?"

"One, you don't laugh at me. Two, you never tell anyone."

"I promise I'll never tell a soul. Though I may enjoy helping you get dressed, so a laugh will be my pleasure coming out, not an insult to you. Okay?"

"Okay. But do you think you should really be helping me to get dressed up?"

"Why not? I've seen naked people before. And since you've never had things like this on before, can you do it all without any help at all?" She was holding up a garter belt.

"I'll need some help, I guess. But the only time I've been naked in front of anyone was at the doctors. I think I'll be a little uncomfortable."

"Nonsense. Just think of me as another doctor then."

CHAPTER 3

I was five feet and four inches tall. I only weighed about 105 pounds. I was pretty skinny, so my boss only let me work security at dead spots like empty warehouses and such. I had long, sandy-brown hair but could get away with it on my job as I pulled it back into a ponytail when I was working. Not that I ever saw anyone as I paced about the empty buildings.

Mrs. Reilly was just over five feet tall and would be lucky to weigh 95 pounds soaking wet in a fur coat. She had short white hair with streaks of gray in it and she never colored it. I always saw her wearing what looked like sensible clothing for an older woman. She favored dresses with sleeves, a hem down to mid-calf and a modest neckline, not to mention her sensible, low-heeled shoes.

I worked the rest of the week because we had planned for a whole weekend of playing at dress-up. She had gone out and bought some clothes and things for herself. She put all of the clothes for me into one of the empty bedrooms and dubbed it our 'Girls Room'.

Anticipating the fun we were going to have she turned away a prospective roomer so that we would be alone. She never needed the money, just the company.

Friday afternoon arrived and it was a long weekend. We had three and a half days in which to have our fun dressing up. She had stocked up the pantry with groceries so we had no reason to go out until I had to return to work on Tuesday.

As soon as I got home from work she led me up to my bedroom and asked me to strip naked and put on the bath robe. She had a bubble bath already awaiting me. When she left the room, I did as she asked. She met me in the bathroom and coaxed me out of the robe and into the tub.

It felt strange to have this older woman giving me a bath when I was already a nineteen year old adult. She was on her knees beside the tub washing me with a sponge and making sure I was clean from head to toe. She made me shave my face, even though I didn't have much in the way of a beard. She produced a lady's razor and used it to shave my underarms and what little hair I had on my chest. Then I had to stand naked in water up to my ankles while she shaved my legs for me, too.

She rinsed me off with a hand held shower nozzle she hooked up to the tap, then helped me out of the tub and dried me off with a huge fluffy towel. She pulled the plug from the tub and led me to our 'Girls Room'.

I stood in the middle of the room trying to cover my private parts with my hands as she dusted my body with a large powder puff. Then she showed me the clothes she had laid out for me to try on first.

"I took the liberty of choosing these things for your first day dressed completely as a woman," she told me. "I hope you don't mind, or did you have a preference for other items?"

"No preferences," I told her. "I just don't want to stay naked for very long."

"I'm sorry," she said, smiling at me and handing me a pair of bright pink nylon panties trimmed with pink lace. "Put these on, dear."

I had to uncover my male parts to take the garment she offered and step into it. I pulled it up my legs and into place about my hips. I felt a flush creep over my face as Mrs. Reilly inspected my appearance in this ultimate of all feminine undergarments.

“Your penis is fairly large, as they go,” she told me, slipping the fingers of her right hand inside the left leg opening of the panties and adjusting my maleness down and into the crotch of the intimate garment. “All we have to do is hide it while you're dressed this way.”

She had me hold a bright pink garter belt to my waist while she went behind me and fastened the clasps together. Then she had me put the garters inside the panties and out the leg openings. She got out a brand new pair of nylon stockings she had bought for me and showed me how to roll them up, put my feet in them and roll them up my legs. Then she smoothed them into place and attached the garters. She did both legs for me this time.

Mrs. Reilly had a bra which matched the garter belt and the panties I already had on. She helped me into it, fastened the snaps behind my back, adjusted the straps to fit me and used rolled up pantyhose to fill out the cups. One pair for each cup. Then she rolled up a bright pink full slip and, after getting my arms into it, pulled it over my head and down my body. She gave me a smile as she smoothed out the slight wrinkles.

Pink was not a masculine color, so that is the only color she had picked out for me to try on first. She put on me a light pink, silk blouse with long puffed sleeves. It buttoned up behind my back, so she gave me a hand. She had me step into a darker pink skirt and again did up the button and zipper behind my back. For my feet, she had a pair of pink open-toed sandals with three and a half inch heels.

Mrs. Reilly instructed me on how to walk in the shoes as I followed her to her room. I walked back and forth across the room as she took off all of her clothes. I was getting less nervous as she saw me naked, but I never suspected I would see her. I quickly turned my eyes away, and fortunately she dressed much more quickly than I had. She had sheer pantyhose, a white uplifting padded bra, a white mini slip and mini dress and white pumps with four inch heels. Then she could show me how to walk in them as well as telling me. She had a fairly long haired wig for herself and makeup which took at least twenty years from her age. I was amazed.

Back in our 'Girls Room' she brushed out my long hair and showed me how to put on makeup as well. Arm in arm, we went down the stairs to the kitchen where she began to make our dinner for us. I continued to practice walking in the high heeled shoes I had on. It was trickier than I ever would have guessed. And my lessons were only beginning.

CHAPTER 4

All in all, I had quite a Friday evening. Mrs. Reilly gave me directions right through dinner and into the evening on how to behave more femininely than I had been. How to move when I walked, how to sit and cross my legs, what to do with my hands and what expression I should have on my face.

When the sun was finally down and all was dark outside, we went out her front door to sit on the screened porch and watch people going by on the sidewalk. They could pass not ten yards from us. She had me try to change my voice and raise the pitch, but all I could manage was a falsetto which wasn't very convincing. I ended up sounding more like Mickey Mouse than like a female.

When the people were no longer walking by, we went back in to have our tea and make plans for the next day.

"Is there a mini dress for me to try on, too?" I asked her as we waited for the water to come to a boil.

"I believe so," she replied. "I guess there are more than a dozen dresses in all, just for you. The way this outfit fits you, I bet the rest will fit fine."

"Would it be possible for me to try on some nail polish?" I asked hesitantly. I couldn't help my shy smile.

"Of course, dear," she answered. "But I have a better idea. I have some false finger nails we can put on you, and you can see what it's like to have nails an inch long, or even longer. What do you say, do you want to try them?"

"Yes, please," I replied. That sounded like fun to me.

Mrs. Reilly went and got her nail supplies, then showed me what to do to apply the nails to my own fingers. She gave me a complete manicure and painted the nails a bright red. I held up my hands to inspect her work and marveled at how pretty and feminine my hands appeared to be with just the added nails and color. It was such a simple but effective touch. It would take an hour or so for the nails to harden in place properly, but she assured me I would be able to take them off before I had to go to work again.

It was well past our normal bedtimes when we finally turned off the lights and went back upstairs to the 'Girls Room' together. She had to help me to undress, and this time I didn't mind so much being naked in front of her. She was naked once again as well.

She got out a pair of matching baby-doll nighties, and after helping me into mine, put the other on herself. Mine was pink, of course, while hers was a bright shade of yellow. Then we went to our own bedrooms to go to sleep. The whole weekend was ours to explore this old game I had once played. Sleeping as a girl might be fun, too, I thought as I drifted off.

I remember having a dream that night about being a child again. I was playing with the girls down the street once more, and I recall their mother calling them from the kitchen. I looked up to see Mrs. Reilly leaning out a window, smiling and waving at the girls and me.

I awoke the next morning to Mrs. Reilly pulling the covers from me and arranging my nightie over my nearly bare bottom. I smiled up at her, seeing she was still in her nightie also.

“Time for breakfast, dear,” she told me. “Rise and shine, sleepy head.”

I looked at my alarm clock and saw that it was only six o'clock in the morning. I didn't normally get up until seven.

“What's the hurry?” I asked her, reaching for the covers.

“We don't want to waste all of our fun time in bed now, do we?” she asked. “I've been thinking, Lewis. I think I want to call you Louise this weekend, while you're dressing as a girl, of course.”

“That's fine with me, Mrs. Reilly. I guess Louise is a natural progression from Lewis, isn't it?”

“I suppose so. And I want you to call me Victoria from now on. Even after this weekend is over, no more Mrs. Reilly, okay?”

“Okay, if that's what you want.”

“It is. Now, out of bed and wash up. I'll see you in the kitchen and we'll get dressed together later.”

Victoria had coffee for both of us on the table when I appeared in my nightie. While I sat and sipped mine she got out her nail care supplies again and gave me a pedicure, cutting, filing and painting my toenails for me. She seemed to enjoy doing it and I didn't mind having it done for me. It made me feel more feminine being pampered like that.

CHAPTER 5

At eight o'clock, after several cups of coffee, she finally pronounced that my toenails were completely dry. Then I was led back up the stairs to the 'Girls Room' where I took off my nightie and put on the bathrobe. While I went for a shower, Victoria got herself dressed again in her white mini-dress.

When I came back to the room she dusted my body with talcum powder on the huge puff. She watched as I put on the underwear she had laid out for me. She wanted to make sure I did everything as she had shown me how to last evening. White panties and garter belt, sheer beige stockings and white bra. I had some trouble putting the bra on because I wasn't accustomed to using my hands behind my back that way. I used the same rolled up pantyhose to fill out the bra cups.

Victoria left me then to have fun trying on any or all of the female clothing there. She had some chores to attend to and wanted to do them in her mini dress and high heels. I told her I'd lend her a hand later but she insisted I have fun with the clothes.

One by one I tried on every dress, skirt and blouse there was in that room. Victoria was keeping her things in her room, so everything there was mine. I tried on slacks and jeans and shorts. I put on and took off the full slippers and half slippers with camisoles, and the teddies, too.

I tried a few things on twice, trying to match things up or to see what looked good on me in the mirror. What I didn't try on twice was tried on three or four times. I even tried on all of the shoes and boots, slippers, jackets and the coats that the girl had left behind.

After all the clothes were tested to my satisfaction, I settled on wearing the white underwear Victoria had me put on that morning. Then I sat down at the vanity table she had set up and played with the makeup she had left there for me: eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara, eyebrow pencil, lip liner, lip stick, clear lip gloss, blusher and the cover stick. I used the pressed powder in the compact to cover the shiny areas of my chin and forehead. I played with my hair, trying for a unisex look without cutting my hair at all. I played for hours and hours and forgot all about having lunch. Victoria forgot too, as she worked at pretending to be decades younger than she really was.

I was able to carefully pull a white full slip over my head without disturbing my makeup or mussing my hair. Then I stepped into a pale blue cotton dress with short sleeves, a round neck line and hem that came to mid thigh. I put on a pair of black, spike heeled T-strap sandals. The heels were at least four inches high and tapered drastically.

I put on the gold watch Victoria had supplied me with and the clipped on some earrings. I admired the thin gold chain around my neck and the gold charm bracelet on my right wrist. She had some old rings which she lent to me, and I fit a couple onto my fingers of both hands.

I really liked the way I looked and felt dressed as a girl. I went down to the kitchen and saw that it was getting close to dinner time. Victoria was in her laundry room ironing a huge load of lingerie, so I made dinner for us. Breaded veal cutlets with my Spanish sauce, whipped potatoes and broccoli with a cheese sauce. For dessert I made

my deep dish apple crisp and could serve it with either cream or ice cream. Both Victoria and I had healthy appetites, but no matter what we ate, we never gained any weight. That's just the way our metabolisms were, so we ate whatever we liked. I had never really appreciated it before.

Victoria finished her work in time to help me set the table. She complimented me on my choice of dress and jewelry, on the way I had done my makeup and my hair. She helped me bring the food to the table and we sat across from each other to enjoy it.

"You are turning into a very adept young woman, Louise," she told me as she tasted the veal. "Oh, this is delicious! I was so busy I forgot all about both lunch and dinner. I 'm sorry."

"Don't be," I told her. "I forgot about lunch too, and the only reason I remembered dinner was that I glanced at the kitchen clock when I came down before. I saw you were still busy, so I cooked."

"Did you try on lots of things today?" she asked.

"Everything except for the bras, panties, garter belts and the stockings. I figured that if one fit, they all would. And everything is a perfect fit, too."

"I am so glad to hear that. I doubt that young girl is ever coming back, so you can have all of her clothes to wear any time you want, Louise."

"Aren't you getting more tenants to fill up your rooms?"

"No, not as long as you live here with me. I want you to dress up as often as you want to. Having others around may put a damper on our fun. I think I may even prefer to see you dressed as a girl all the time."

"I'm pleased with the way I look in girls clothes, and I like the way I feel in them. If you aren't bringing in more people, I might get dressed up every weekend." I saw her smile. "And maybe some weekday evenings!"

"I would like that, I think."

We finished our meal and I served the dessert. Victoria wanted it with ice cream so I dug it out of the freezer and put a scoop into each bowl. When we were done she rinsed the dishes and loaded them into the dish washer. We had our tea on the front porch and watched the people stroll by once again.

CHAPTER 6

It was summer time and the sun didn't go down until quite late so the people walking by outside saw us sitting on the porch. I liked the idea that people other than just Victoria saw me in my new feminine attire. But unlike Victoria, they had no idea that I was not a real girl. And they saw Victoria as a middle aged woman, not as the senior she really was.

In an attempt to make our weekend as enjoyable as possible for both of us, Victoria suggested we get into her car and go for a short drive. Having been seen on the porch without incident gave me the courage, so I agreed to a ride in her sedan.

We both went to our rooms and each got a sweater in case it turned cool while we were out. Victoria got her purse, then picked out an older one she never used and handed it to me. She helped me pick out an assortment of makeup to put into it, along with my house keys and my wallet.

Stepping out the side door of the house we were suddenly in full view of anyone who cared to look at us. I felt a shiver of anticipation run up my spine as I walked as gracefully as I could to the front passenger door of her car. She got in the driver's side, then reached across to unlock the passenger door for me.

I had watched women get into cars before and tried it their way. I put my butt on the seat first, then swiveled around, pulling my legs up and into the car. Then I reached out and pulled the door shut.

"Very nicely done, Louise!" Victoria complimented me. "Are you sure you haven't been out in dresses before?"

"Positive," I replied. "I remembered seeing women enter cars that way, so I thought I would try it."

"In a dress, that's the only way to remain ladylike. Now, where do you want to go?"

"I don't know. How about through the park and back?"

"Okay. That's a nice drive."

Victoria headed off, and we got a lot of looks from the guys who were out showing off their cars. Girls didn't give us a second look, but the guys sure did. I'm sure I looked my age, though Victoria could have passed for either my older sister or my mother.

Coming out of the park where we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, Victoria noticed she was low on gas. She pulled into the nearest service station. The male attendant eyed us both rather closely as he received Victoria's instructions for full service. He filled the tank with gas, and as he was checking the fluid levels under the hood, he had a younger man come over to clean the windows for us. Victoria paid the bill and drove over to the edge of the lot. The service attendants got to see a lot of both of our legs, but not enough to suit Victoria.

She asked me if I wanted to practice my driving and would let me drive us home. I needed all the practice I could get, so I jumped at the chance. Instead of letting one of us slide across the seat, she insisted we both get out and walk around the car to get in

the other door. Both of the guys were watching and got an eye full as she got out her side, then another as I came around the car and slid behind the wheel. They were still watching as I drove away, even though they had other customers to serve. We both laughed about it as we left the station.

I should have paid more attention to my driving. We only got a block away when a cop car pulled me over. It was only a spot check, but I had to produce my learner's permit and the vehicle registration anyway. The cop obviously liked the way I looked, until he saw from my permit that I was male.

"You dress like this all the time, Mr. Wolfe?" he asked me.

"No, sir" I answered sheepishly.

"Well, it's not against the law, as far as I know. Just watch the road and do what your sister says." The cop should have seen Victoria's license, as I only had a learners permit. I suppose that after realizing I was a boy dressed as a girl, he didn't want to pursue it any further. I was just glad to get going again.

I was shaking like a leaf in a wind storm the whole drive, and it took me all of a half an hour to settle down again. I drove where Victoria told me to and soon found myself at the edge of town. I turned around, under control again, and we both laughed at what we had just been through. It had been a close call for both of us.

Apparently it wasn't close enough for Victoria, however. She liked the rush she had gotten when the cop pulled us over. She had me pull into the parking lot of a roadside cafe, shut off the car and give her the keys. Then we got out and went inside for a coffee.

The place was nearly empty, which allowed the waitress to give us both a pretty close examination. I must have passed, as she handed us both menus before turning to get the tea we had ordered. We looked at the menus before deciding not to have anything. We were still full from dinner.

We were half way through our tea when a rowdy bunch of young guys came in hooting and hollering. They eyed us both and whistled at the sight of our legs. We just ignored them as they moved past us. They were practically drooling on the floor. Once they were past us we both got up, went to the cash register and I paid for our tea. We left a small tip for the waitress; girls never tipped much for just tea.

A couple of the guys followed us as far as the door and gave another whistle as we walked across the lot to the car. I got in the driver's door, since Victoria wanted me to drive us home. Once more we had a good laugh at having gotten away with our masquerade. It sure felt good, fooling those guys so close up. I knew then that I would have to do it again some time, just to be certain that it wasn't a fluke.

CHAPTER 7

We got home without any further incidents, and I backed her car into the driveway. We took our time getting out of the car, locking it up and walking to the front door of the house instead of the side door, which was so much closer. It was still light enough outside that anyone on the street could see us quite well.

There was no longer any hurry to get inside. We both enjoyed our walk in the public eye. Once in the house, though, we went upstairs and got changed into our nighties. Then we came back down for more tea and conversation about our little outing. We stayed up and talked until after midnight. I fell asleep as soon as I put my head on my pillow.

Bright and early Sunday morning Victoria woke me up again. She was dressed once more in her normal, every day style of clothing. She sent me off to the shower as she made up my bed and laid out the clothes she wanted me to put on. She was there to dust me with powder and help me dress.

Yellow silk panties and sheer beige pantyhose went on first. The yellow bra had the pantyhose to fill out the cups. I then put on a yellow mini slip which just barely covered my torso. She directed me as to what makeup to put on and how to do it while she brushed, blow-dried and styled my hair for me. She chose the jewelry she wanted me to wear and I put it on. Then she helped me into the yellow mini dress I had tried on yesterday. I slipped my feet into the off white pumps she had put out for me. The one and a half inch heels were very easy to walk in compared to the four inch heels from the day before.

Coffee awaited us in the kitchen, and we had a cup each before collecting our purses and heading out the side door to the car. I was all for another drive, which is what I thought it was going to be. Victoria, however, had other plans. I should have known by the fact that she was wearing her usual, older clothes.

A public appearance in broad daylight for both of us would have been too risky, particularly since she decided we should both go to church that morning. I hadn't been to church since I left home, so I was expecting it to be a challenge. Especially since I was dressed as a girl. To be safe, Victoria wore a simple gray dress with a pretty string of pearls. She left all the masquerading to me.

She parked as close as she could to the church, but that was still about a block away. I tried not to panic as I stepped out of the car in front of the other families walking to church. We had to one block to the arched entrance. When we got inside, we stayed at the back of the nearly full church and sat through the entire sermon.

For the first time perhaps in my entire life I stayed awake for the whole service. I suspect it was the nervousness I felt about being in such a public place dressed like I was. I found myself smoothing and re-smoothing my skirt across my legs as a nervous tic. Victoria held me back so that we were among the last to leave and were seen by everyone else who left before us. There were many people lingering outside. They must have thought I was her granddaughter.

I felt the eyes on me as I walked past and through the crowds of people congregating on the sidewalks. I felt the rush of adrenaline from my masquerade. I had the fear,

though men and women alike smiled at us as we passed by them. I didn't get over it until long after we were in the relative safety of Victoria's car. Then I let out a nervous little laugh for having gotten away with it again, and in full daylight this time.

Victoria had felt the rush too, even though she was not in her costume. To prolong our enjoyment she took me out to lunch at a restaurant frequented by many of the other churchgoers. We got a table near the center of the room, and it took me some time to get used to being seen as a girl. I tried my best to act like a lady, and took my cues from Victoria.

We had a long and leisurely lunch, then walked confidently back to the car for the drive home. I had been worried that my voice might give me away, but the rest of me passed so well that my voice wasn't a huge concern. It was almost a let down to walk into the house again, but I knew I would be going out again as a girl soon.

Victoria changed into a black miniskirt with a white blouse and white, four-inch heels. She slipped on her wig and applied her makeup. We spent the rest of the afternoon lounging on the porch, then I made dinner and we ate early enough so that we could go for another drive while it was light enough out to be seen. I needed the driving practice if I was going to get my license anytime soon, and we both needed to be seen by as many people as we could. That rush alone made the dressing up worth while.

Monday was the Fourth of July, and we cruised around town and dined out, both of us in our costumes. I call them costumes, since I couldn't go to work in my dresses and Victoria wouldn't go any where she was known. We only went places that no one knew us at all.

That was a weekend to remember for both of us. But on Tuesday morning I had to go back to work as my male self. I decided to ease myself back into the male world.



That week I was assigned to a department store for the eight hours it was open during the day. I figured there would be no harm done if I kept on my toenail polish. And since no one saw under my uniform, I wore panties and pantyhose. No one noticed that I spent an awful lot of time that day patrolling the women's clothing sections.

When I got home from work the first thing I did was get changed into all female clothing. I soon took to wearing only my female things at home and nighties to bed. I only wore the male things I needed to go to work I also figured I should wear my male things when I went for my drivers license road test. I passed it easily thanks to Victoria and all the driving she had allowed me to do.

During my evenings Victoria taught me how to use various types of office equipment in preparation for finding a better job in an office somewhere. Typewriters and personal computers, fax machines and copying machines. She had books on all of them, and when I got good on the theory she took me down to the retail stores and showed me the actual equipment. I picked up a small home computer on sale and was able to practice keyboarding and using various word processor programs.

I remained her only tenant for five years, until she turned sixty-five and I was twenty-four. I had purchased her car from her since I knew what kind of shape it was in. It was a good arrangement because she wanted to sell it to someone she knew and I needed the transportation. Victoria sold it to me a lot cheaper than I could have found anywhere else.

The only office job I could find was across town. I had to work nights, after the buses quit running. My only hope was to have the car. After my data entry training period, I had to work in the building all alone most of the time. There was the cleaning staff who came in at night and some of the warehouse people had to stay late once in a while to do stock counting or other duties I knew nothing about. For the most part I just turned on the alarm system and did my work in relative peace. And when my work was done I could go home early. If there were problems I had to stay late to take care of them, but I got paid overtime for anything more than eight hours a day.

Some changes were bound to happen, I could tell. The first was that Victoria's daughter came back to the States from Europe, where her husband had been posted with the Air Force. With her family moving back in with her temporarily it was best for everyone that I find a different place to live. I had enough in the bank account that I chose to find myself an apartment rather than just another room to rent. Besides, an apartment would give me more privacy. I needed that now more than ever.

CHAPTER 8

I found a one bedroom apartment in a residential area fairly close to where I worked. It was unfurnished, so I had to spend a little money and buy the things I needed. I found the furniture I needed, some new and some used. I had it delivered and set up for me. I got a complete bedroom suite which included the double bed, mirrored dresser and lingerie bureau plus a matching vanity table and chair. I bought a small kitchen table with two chairs and a dining room table with four chairs. I got a desk for my computer and a wall unit to store my few books in. I bought a comfortable chair to sit on, a love seat for possible future guests, a coffee table, end tables and a pair of lamps. I also bought a portable stereo for entertainment. It had dual cassette decks, AM/FM radio and a CD player that held up to six CDs.

I had to eat out until I bought dishes, pots and pans and stocked the pantry with food. I also had to spend a lot of money on the things you can't eat or enjoy. A broom and a mop, a pail, soaps and cleaners, paper towels and toilet tissues, facial tissues, cotton balls and swabs. I even bought a small vacuum cleaner and garbage bags. Invariably I would forget to buy one or two things and have to run back to the store every time to get them as I remembered them.

Mrs. Edith Steiner was the landlady. She was a nice little old Jewish lady who lived in a house on the other side of town with her children, all of whom were older than me. I had to sign a lease with her for one year so I was locked in for at least that long. Ron Kowalski was the caretaker of the building and lived right across the hall from me. He'd retired and got free rent to keep the hallways clean, the yard well groomed and in the winter, the sidewalks clean. He also dealt with the service people who came to make repairs when needed.

Within a month I was all settled in and finding a routine. About two months after that I got a call from Mrs. Steiner on a Friday morning as I was getting into bed. She seemed quite upset with me.

"It has come to my attention, Lewis, that you have a young girl living there with you. Your lease states that you are to be the only occupant of that suite unless you clear it with me," she told me. "Is this clear?"

"Yes, ma'am," I replied.

"So who is this girl who is there with you?"

"There's just me, Mrs. Steiner," I told her. "Who saw a girl in here?"

"Mr. Kowalski did," she replied. "Are you calling him a liar?"

"No, ma'am. He's merely mistaken. My hair is very long, so the girl he saw was probably me."

I had a lease and there wasn't anything in it that said I couldn't crossdress if I wanted to. It was time to take the bull by the horns.

"Several years ago, Mrs. Steiner, I discovered that I like to impersonate a female. It's now my favorite hobby to dress up, look and act like a girl whenever possible. Mr. Kowalski probably saw me wearing one of my dresses."

“...You don't have a girl staying with you then?”

“No, ma'am. I don't have many friends. I work, sleep and spend my spare time dressing up like a girl.”

“Okay, Lewis, I'll believe you. I can't imagine anyone would make up a story like that one...”

“It's the truth, Mrs. Steiner. If you like, I'll tell Mr. Kowalski so he doesn't keep calling you saying I have a girl living here with me.”

“If you want to tell him, go ahead. It doesn't matter to me.”

Mrs. Steiner fell silent. Since she didn't have anything else to say I told her I'd take care of things with Mr. Kowalski and hung up the phone. I think I heard her laughing as I got off the phone. I told myself I should invite her over for dinner some time, she seemed like a nice lady.

I slept most of the day, then left for work at seven o'clock. I saw Ron Kowalski as I walked out the front door of the building. He was picking up some trash that had blown into to the small yard in front. I went over to talk to him.

“Hi, Ron,” I said as I approached him. “How are you?”

“Fine, how are you?”

“Oh, I'm just fine. I spoke to Mrs. Steiner earlier and she told me you thought I have a girl living here with me. Did you tell her that?”

“Yeah, I saw a girl going into your place and I never saw her leave. She's living with you isn't she?”

“In a way, I guess she is,” I told him. “Can you keep a secret, Ron?”

He nodded his head as I kept on talking. I didn't care if he kept the secret or not.

“That girl you saw going into my place, that was me wearing girls' clothes. In my spare time I like to dress up like a girl.”

I took it from Ron's silence that he understood. I wished him a good day and headed to my car.

I got to work for an eight o'clock starting time. Everything went smoothly at work and I was all done by two in the morning. A half hour later I was home, and I was in bed by four. I stayed there until noon, then got up and had my bath, shaved and ate breakfast.

I dressed for the rest of my day as a girl. I put on pink panties, bra, garter belt and full slip. I wore sheer beige stockings on my freshly shaved legs. My dress was a fairly simple empire style with a round neckline, flared out from the bodice to the hem which came to down to my mid thigh. It had long sleeves and was a solid fuchsia color. I put on my fuchsia, four inch, high heeled pumps. I styled my hair and put on my makeup and jewelry.

I straightened up my apartment and ran the vacuum across the floor. These were the normal Saturday chores I've always done since I was a kid, and the ones I had helped Victoria do as well. I went down to the mailboxes to see if anything had been

put in there since the last time I had looked. I didn't get much mail, but people put flyers in there and I liked to keep mine as clear as possible.

Ron Kowalski watched me clean out my mailbox from down the hall, so I smiled and waved to him. I walked past him so he could see me up close before going up the back stairs to my apartment. He wasn't a very talkative man, I suppose.

CHAPTER 9

I'd met my next-door neighbor two or three times since I moved in. She was a cute little girl named Josie. She was only nineteen years old and lived alone, although her boyfriend came to stay the night with her once in a while. I saw when I met her that we were about the same height and size.

As I was about to go up the back stairs to my place, she entered the back door and headed my way. Josie was a friendly young woman, and I couldn't see being rude to her so I smiled and said hello. She said hello to me as well.

"Visiting someone?" she asked politely as we both headed up the stairs.

"No, I live here. Right next door to you, as a matter of fact."

"Lewis Wolfe lives there," she told me. "Are you staying with Lewis?"

"No, Josie, I'm Lewis. But I prefer to be called Louise when I dress up like this."

She squinted at me. I flashed her a smile as she looked me up and down. We walked the last few steps to our rooms, and gave her a wave.

"See you later, Josie."

"...Bye," she mumbled, backing into her apartment.

I strolled into the kitchen to put a kettle of tea on the stove. "The people sure are friendly here," I said to myself, "but they aren't so talkative." Maybe Josie had other things on her mind. Then I heard the knock at the door. When I opened it I saw Josie standing there with a big smile on her face.

"So, Louise," she said, "do you get dressed up often?"

"Sure, just as often as I can. If I thought I could get a job and work this way, I would. Then I could live as a girl all the time."

"Ha! You look great! Why can't you?" she asked.

This is more like it, I thought. I invited her in. "How many employers would knowingly hire a guy who prefers to dress as a girl?" I asked her. "I don't know of any, do you?"

"No, I guess not. I guess your only alternative then is to change your name and let them think you really are a girl."

"I've thought about that. I might even do it too. But I have some other things I have to do first. Would you like some tea?"

"Oh, yes please. So what else do you have to do?"

"I go for electrolysis once every other week to remove my facial hair. There isn't much left now, and soon it'll all be gone forever. I just started taking birth control pills last week. My doctor says they are the weakest form of female hormones he can prescribe for me. I want to see what they do for me, if anything at all."

Josie stayed and we talked and had tea for several hours. She hadn't any plans for the day and Chris, her boyfriend, was not due over until the evening. It turned out that she and I were the exact same height and weight. She liked girls clothes as much

as I did, though I doubted anyone could like them more than I did. I showed her my closet and she saw that I didn't have very many male clothes at all.

CHAPTER 10

The next day I realized I was short a few items and had to go shopping. The local store only knew me as my male self, Lewis, so I felt it was time they met Louise. I decided now was as good a time as any to see how I'd look in more understated feminine clothing. Instead of getting all dolled up in skirts and blouses, I tried something a little different.

I put on plain white panties and a white bra with a decent amount of padding in the cups. I pulled on a white, short sleeved tee shirt that had a cute little "V" neck. I slipped into a pair of bright green walking shorts that showed plenty of leg. I put on my pink and white sneakers, without any socks. The only things I took extra special care with was my hair and my makeup. These had to be perfect every time I went outside or let anyone inside. I was pleased that the outline of my bra could easily be seen right through the blouse. This added to the illusion of my femininity.

I checked my purse before leaving to make sure I had everything I was going to need. I was short of money and knew I couldn't write a check as Louise, so I made sure I had my ATM card with me. Then I went out the door and locked it behind me. I headed for my car.

As luck would have it, Ron Kowalski came out of his suite just as I was leaving.

"No dress today, Lewis?" he asked me.

"I don't wear dresses *all* the time, Ron. And I prefer to be called Louise when I'm dressed as a girl."

"Sorry, Louise. Well, you make a very pretty little girl, if I do say so myself. I got no problems with how you dress, I just wanted you to know that."

"Thanks, Ron. I appreciate your saying so."

I skipped down the front stairs and out the front door. The apartment building had a little covered area for the tenants' cars. Though little more than a glorified driveway, everyone referred to it as the "garage". I made sure to park there whenever it had the room; I took very good care of the car ever since buying it from Victoria.

I backed it out and drove straight to the banking machine, where I withdrew one hundred dollars. I was humming to myself as I drove to the service station to get gas.

I pulled into the full service lane. In seconds a pair of young guys approached me. They filled the tank, checked the fluid levels and washed the windows for me. They were always bright and cheerful to me when I drove in there as Louise. They smiled at me through the windows when they washed them. I smiled back. They almost fell over themselves to please me, or rather to please Louise. Once I went in there as Lewis, and they weren't nearly so nice or polite. But then again, they might not have recognized me.

There weren't any parking spots close to the doors of the supermarket except for the handicapped parking spaces. I had to park the car quite a distance away. I found a shopping cart in the parking lot and pushed it back to the store since I was going that way. Cars belong in parking lots, not shopping carts.

I only needed a few things, and the shopping basket provided by the store was big enough for me. Milk, bread, buns, oregano, tomato soup and a jar of peanut butter. I strolled through the produce section looking over the fruits and vegetables when I bumped into Heather. She was one of the checkout clerks who doubled up on Sundays as the produce manager.

"Pardon me," I said stepping back from her. She was a few inches taller than me and quite a bit heavier.

"I'm sorry," she answered and moved aside to let me past. Then she half-shouted: "Hey!"

"Yes?"

"Are you related to Lewis Wolfe by any chance? He's a cute little guy who comes in here, and looks a lot like you."

"In a way, I guess we're related. My name is Louise Wells."

"Hi, Louise. I'm Heather."

I said hello and we shook hands. She had a much firmer grip than mine. We didn't have anything else to talk about, so she turned back to her work and I continued shopping. In my male role, Heather liked to flirt with me every time she saw me in the store. In my female role she was polite and nothing more. I didn't mind.

Catherine was working the checkout when I went through, and she was her pleasant and jolly self with every customer, including me. She also noticed the resemblance between me Louise and Lewis. I told her we were cousins, which seemed reasonable.

Coming out of the checkout next to the one I was in was my neighbor, Josie. She had a full shopping cart and was asking the manager if she could use the cart to get her purchases home. She was intent on her inquiries and didn't see me. I shouted out to her. She saw me and waved.

"Hey, Lew- uh, Louise."

"You bought more than you can carry, I see."

"Yeah, and they won't let me borrow a cart to get it home. I have to make two or three trips and carry it. Want to help?"

"Of course. My car's in the lot."

"Oh great! Thanks, Louise. Any time I can do you a favor, just let me know."

We loaded the car with both of our purchases, then I had her push the cart back to the store while I started the engine. It made both of us look good to the store management that we returned the cart, even though we could have left it in the lot like other people do. I hated to drive through a lot filled with shopping carts, and told Josie. She understood completely as she had a car too, only hers was in the shop.

CHAPTER 11

Even though I didn't get along with my family, I couldn't help but keep in touch with them. I called them up for every birthday, anniversary and special occasion that came along to wish them all a happy day. They always told me the same thing: start to payoff the "debt" I owed them, or leave them alone. Basically, I decided to leave them alone.

Things were beginning to happen at work, and no one's job was quite as secure as they thought it would be. Our little company got sold to a much larger one, so we knew that there would be changes happening soon. What they would be, no one was sure.

The little city I lived in was home to our company's head office. The company that bought us out had their head office in Chicago. We were told that we would remain a separate company with our own head office, but that some changes were coming. The mystery made everyone nervous, but at least we were promised nothing would happen for six months. We were all safe in our positions for at least that long.

Two months later half of the senior management people got laid off. They were given a severance package and one hour to clean out their offices. The building's locks were changed and new keys issued to those who needed them. The entire computer department worked overtime when all passwords had to be wiped out, then new ones created. If all they did was try to change them they might forget one or two. Wiping them out completely in a blanket program meant that all the old ones were gone. Then the new ones had to be inserted.

Our programmers got it done in one long day. I had a few problems that evening because they forgot to tell me that my password no longer worked. They had to give me a new one, then when I signed on I changed it to a different one than I had before. Nobody trusted anyone anymore.

The chairman was now gone, along with several vice presidents and department managers. My boss was gone too. His boss became my boss, the vice president in charge of administration. Together with the company president they were holding a general meeting for all staff. I had to come in during the day to be at this meeting and found several women who were off on maternity leave there as well. No one was excused.

It was felt by our new parent company that there was a lot of fat to be trimmed off the payroll around here. To cut out the "inefficiency", some people would be given their notices and others would be offered position changes, which amounted to demotions. Some people would be allowed to continue where they were. Since all of the people who worked here were white, it was felt that some minorities had to be worked into the mix as well. They were going to talk to us one at a time. Since some of us worked on our own time, such as myself, we were told not to read anything into the order that we were seen in. I was the third one they wanted to see. Two women on maternity leave were ahead of me.

I was going to be given my notice. They were going to give me a floating notice for now, in that until they could find and hire a minority to replace me, I still had my job. Then I could train my replacement before they got rid of me permanently.

“Reverse discrimination,” I told them. “I have to lose my job not because I'm no good at it but because I'm white. That's not very fair.”

“No, it's not,” Bill Garson, my new boss agreed. “I've been instructed to do this, but don't like it either. I can't afford to quit over it, though. I don't see any other options, Lewis.”

“There is one,” Don, the company president spoke up.

“I already told you, I don't consider that an option,” Bill replied testily.

“What is it?” I asked. Jobs were scarce with the economy the way it was, so I had to explore every option available.

“It seems that someone quite high up in our new head office is gay. While we have never discriminated against gays, they want us to hire at least one gay person. We can't go and advertise for a gay person, and its against the law to ask for sexual orientation during an interview,” Bill explained.

“Since you are single,” Don added, “it would be easy for you to say you were gay and keep your job.”

Bill jumped in abruptly: “But you'd have to publicly admit to everyone that you're gay, even if you're not.”

“Okay,” I said to them. “I'm gay.”

“You're sure you want to do this, Lewis?” Bill asked me.

“What do I have to lose? My job? I've already lost that if I don't do this. My pride? What good is pride if you don't have a job, income or food?”

“Okay, Lewis. I'll run it past them and see what they say. They may want to meet your boyfriend, though. What do we say then?” he asked.

“How about that I'm between boyfriends right now.”

The two older gentlemen nodded and dismissed me.

I went home and tried to get some sleep, but it was useless. My job was in jeopardy and I didn't know what to do about it. I hoped that just saying I was gay was enough for them. After a fitful nap, I got in to work early that night.

As soon as I walked in the door, I ran into Bob, the current building caretaker.

Bob told me that he got a promotion to warehouse manager, which paid better than his salesman job had. He was going to keep the caretaking position too, so he could pay off his mortgage as soon as he could.

“How'd you do?” he asked.

“They may or may not get rid of me,” I told him. “They don't know yet. I had one chance to keep my job so I took it, but there isn't any guarantee.”

“What did they say?” he asked.

"I have to tell everyone I'm gay."

"...What?"

"That's one of the minority people they have to have here. So I told them I'm gay, but between boyfriends right now."

"You're gay?"

"No, but I need my job."

He laughed and said my secret was safe with him.

Two nights later Bill Garson arrived at the office just after I started my shift. Since I rarely saw him I knew he was there to see me. I took a deep breath as he entered the computer room.

"Bad news, Lewis." he said, dispensing with the cordial amenities. "They won't buy your gay story without a partner or some historical proof."

"Would they take another story?" I asked him.

"Like what?"

"How about it if you tell them I'm going to have my sex changed and become a girl? Would that work?"

"Geez, I don't know. But you'd have to start wearing girls clothes just to prove it. Can you do that?"

My heart skipped a beat. "I think so. My job is at night, and girls who work alone at night wear jeans and shirts. Only girls working during the day have a dress code to follow."

"I'll see what I can do for you Lewis." he said.

"Tell them I'll change my name to Louise if I stay."

"I'll let you know by Monday." he told me.

I could barely get any work done after he left. This was a surprising turn of events.

Monday morning Bill Garson called me at home and asked me to come in to the office as soon as I could. I was dressed as a girl when he called, so I took a shower and dressed as a boy to go in for this meeting.

Randi Toews was the receptionist. She told me to have a seat; Bill was in a meeting in the board room with the head office guys who came in that morning. Randi was a year older than me and at least six inches taller, but still a good looking woman. She usually ignored me and did so now, too. She was one of the ones who got to keep her job, but at a slightly reduced rate of pay.

All of the women who worked days had to dress according to the dress code. Women could wear slacks with a good blouse, but jeans were not allowed. Shorts were okay as long as they were dressy. Skirts or dresses were preferred. The guys had a dress code too. Men had to wear two piece suits with ties. I was the only exception since I worked nights.

Bill came out of the board room, saw me sitting there waiting for him, and motioned for me to follow him. In his office he motioned for me to sit while he took care of some paper work before he forgot about it. I just waited patiently for him to get around to talking to me. It was making me nervous.

“Your idea of changing your sex to keep your job just might work, Lewis,” he finally told me. He kept working on his papers. “The gentlemen said they would allow it if you dressed up every time you come anywhere near this building. That means that if you wear jeans to work, they have to be women’s jeans, not men’s. If you wear a shirt, it has to be a woman’s shirt. All of the clothes you wear have to be feminine.”

“That's great news, Bill.”

“Oh- and you can’t use the men’s room anymore, only the ladies room.”

“I think I can do it, Bill. All of it.”

“I’m not done yet, Lewis. There is one more thing they want in regards to this. I have to call a general meeting of all staff currently working and let them know that you are having a sex change and will be working as a female from now on. I also have to announce that you will be changing your name to Louise. They’ll be here tonight when you come in to work. If you look feminine to them, we’ll have a deal; if you don’t, I have to give you your notice.”

“I know who can help me, Bill. I’ll be very feminine when I come in tonight. I’ll even wear a dress, okay?”

“It’s up to you. You know where we stand on this. We all want you to stay because you’re good at your job. We won’t mind what you wear so long as you still do your job well.”

I felt pretty good going home, though as the time got closer and closer to my shift I began to feel a bit nervous. I used the afternoon to polish my finger and toe nails perfectly. I had no problem getting dressed for work: black bra and panties, beige pantyhose and black half slip. I put on a blue silk blouse with ruffles covering the buttons down the front, a scoop neckline and three quarter length sleeves trimmed with ruffles at the cuffs. I put on my plain black skirt and adjusted the hem to about mid thigh. I wore my black T strap sandals with the two inch heels.

I blow dried my hair, then used my curling iron to add the ringlets on each side of my face. The mousse held it pretty well, but I still used a little hair spray when I had finished the styling job. I took extra care to get my makeup on just right as well. I wasn’t leaving anything to chance. I filled my black, shoulder slung purse with the things I thought I might need and headed off for work. Being in those nice clothes helped calm my nerves somewhat.

Ron Kowalski saw me leaving for work, though he didn’t say anything. That was fortunate, because I didn’t want to have to explain to him why I was going to work as a girl. I just wanted to get it over and done with as soon as I could.

I got to the office a few minutes early. Bob was still doing the cleaning when I let myself in the front door. He became the first person at work to see me dressed as a fe-

male. I walked right past him and into the computer department, where I put my purse and sweater at my desk.

“Who are you?” he asked suspiciously.

“Hi, Bob,” I said.

“Lewis!!! Holy Shit!!”

“Louise, if you don't mind.”

“Oh, Louise. Pardon my French.”

“No problem,” I replied. “It seems being gay isn't enough for the bigwigs. Now I'm in the process of changing my sex.” need the job and this is the only way I can keep it.”

“You look great Lewis, uh, I mean Louise. You really do look like a girl.”

“Thanks, Bob. I just hope I pass inspection tonight. The big guys from Chicago are coming in to see me, that's what Bill told me this morning.”

I started my work early by checking the main printers to make sure they had lots of paper and shutting down the auxiliary printing classes. I deleted all the garbage output that was just sitting there taking up space. Then I got out the tapes I would need that night and stacked them next to the tape drives. I loaded the first two as I knew which ones they would be.

Bob also continued with his cleaning chores, but every now and then I caught him looking at me. Just like any other guy I had ever encountered as Louise, he was looking at my legs and judging my overall appearance as a female. I just smiled.

I knew Bob was watching me as I went to the cafeteria and bought a coffee from the machine, taking it back to my desk. There I booted the PC and signed onto the main frame. This way I could check my messages and send some on E-mail to anyone on our system.

I made up a message which informed the recipient that Lewis Wolfe was choosing to have a sex change and from now on would be known as Louise Wells. The message had several implications. First, my boss and the head office guys could read a copy before I sent it and know just how serious I was. Second, it allowed me to control what was said to the general company population. Third, replies would come back to my user I.D. and I could answer them as I saw fit. Before sending it I was waiting for acceptance from the head office people.

I didn't have long to wait. Bill arrived at 7:45 PM, just after I printed out a copy of my message. He spoke to Bob first, so he was prepared when he saw me. He looked me over from head to toe and couldn't find fault with my feminine image.

“You look really good, Lewis.”

“Louise, remember?”

“Right, sorry. You didn't have to wear a skirt, you know.”

“I know. But I thought it would be best to make a good impression to begin with, then wear slacks or jeans the rest of the time. I can work in the skirt, too.”

I showed Bill my message and told him I was ready to send it to every head office user. They would print on the mail printers and it was my job to take all messages and put them onto the proper desks so they were there for them in the mornings. I only waited for my acceptance by the Chicago people.

That morning there had been three Chicago people, all men. Now there were five of them, and one was a woman. They arrived together. After letting them in, Bill took them to the board room. Then he called me at my desk and invited me up to join them.

They were expecting to see me en femme, though they weren't prepared for just how feminine I looked. They were surprised at how pretty I was, even though they had never seen me as a male. They all thought I was just dressing like this to keep my job and weren't convinced that I wanted to be female. Then the one woman with them asked me to follow her. I followed her into the ladies room.

I was surprised to be a little jealous of her when I saw what she was wearing. A gray skirt fell snugly to her knees, showing a hint of her womanly hips. I caught myself staring at her behind as we walked to the rest room; I couldn't walk with that alluring female sway quite yet. "One day..." I mumbled to myself.

"What was that?" she suddenly asked.

"Oh! Nothing, sorry- I was just talking to myself. That's a lovely outfit you have on."

"Thank you. We can talk privately in here, Louise," she told me as she sat on the couch. The ladies room had an anteroom with couches, an end table and a lamp. "Come sit here," she said, patting the couch beside her. "Tell me how long you've wanted to be a girl."

I sat beside her as gracefully as Victoria had taught me.

"I've always wanted to be a girl." That was a lie, since I'd only wanted to live as a girl since meeting Victoria. "I've spent all of my spare time dressed as a girl for over seven years now. Electrolysis has removed my beard, and my doctor is prescribing birth control pills for me. They contain female hor-



mones in a weaker strength. I'm using the situation to come out of the closet."

"No one else knows about this?"

"Well, my landlady, the building caretaker where I live and my next door neighbor all know of my change. They've seen me as a female."

"How does Bill Garson see you?" she asked.

"I think he sees me as a competent computer operator who will do anything to keep... *her* job. I've been here for four years and am quite good at my job. It will take a long time to train someone else to do it, and I'm sure he doesn't want to be bothered with it. I think this is the easy way out for him so he'll accept me working as a she-male."

"I think you're right, Louise. The others will take my word for keeping you on or not; I think we should keep you on. Can I do anything to help?"

"You can make my transformation official for me."

"What do you mean?"

"As Bill put it to me, I can wear jeans and a shirt and come to work basically bisexual in my dress. You can make official my transformation by stating that I can keep my job but I have to adhere to the dress code that all the other women who work here have to. That way the bisexual look is done away with."

"I see what you mean. If you're going to do it, you should go all the way."

"Right. No one likes to have a job half done around here, why should I be encouraged to do this half way?"

"Very good, Louise, it's all or nothing. Bill says you'll change your name, too."

"That's right. I plan to change it to Louise Diane Wells."

"What was it before?"

"Lewis Ralph Wolfe."

"How does your family feel about this?"

"Well... I don't really have a family. I left home when my parents told me they were going to charge me room and board all the way back to when I was born."

"Oh, my goodness."

"Yes, that's right. My brothers and sisters refuse to talk to me since I won't pay our parents. I've never been married and have no dependents. I don't have a family. I have a friend who used to be my landlady. She prefers to see me dressed as a girl, too."

"So you can travel to and from work as a girl, then?"

"If I can be accepted at work as a female, I will live as a female twenty-four hours a day. Employment as a female is my last hurdle to total femininity."

"When will you get the operation?"

"My doctor tells me I have to live as my chosen sex for at least two full years before they will consider making it permanent for me. I also have to save up the money, since

insurance won't pay for it. I'll need about twenty-five hundred dollars and three months recovery time.”

“Very well.”

CHAPTER 12

Her name is Carole Bell, and I truly believed she was on my side. She had lovely black hair that fell straight down to her chin, almost like an old fashioned “bob”. How beautiful she looked made me consider cutting my own hair, but I decided against it. Until I get a more womanly figure, like Carole's, I thought I should keep my long hair.

After our talk in the ladies' room I took her on a guided tour of the workings of our computer system. She asked detailed questions which showed me she knew a great deal to begin with, so I gave her every detail I could in my answers.

I took down the system, ran a set of backups to tapes, then began my main batch processing. We pulled a couple of chairs around my desk, got coffee from the cafeteria and talked about our jobs, the pros and cons. She was an observant and intelligent woman who saw more than she let on. But then again, so was I.

I had seen the other women in the company at work and noticed the little things they did to be comfortable. Like them, I removed my shoes when I was at my desk, curled my legs under me to sit on my chair, and kept my desktop free of unnecessary papers while there was coffee there. I had my PC set up to monitor the activities of the main frame.

My concentration was split between making sure I acted purely feminine without seeming to, playing tour guide to a woman who probably knew more about the system than I did, and running the system. Carole was talking to me when I saw the problems starting to hatch on my screen. I let her continue talking as I put my shoes on and led her back to the main console.

“What's up?” she asked.

“It looks like someone made some program modifications during the day. I didn't see any reference to it on the charts, but these guys don't always make the proper notations until after their changes work.”

Three programs aborted on me, so I printed up a copy of each program. Another was using up all available space for its backup so I removed the backup and let it go alone. I took my printed programs to my desk and went through them looking for the trouble. The problem was the same with all of them, the “debug” command had been removed. I reinserted the “debug” command, recompiled the programs and reran the jobs. They worked and continued on spawning other programs, some of which worked, some of which did not. The big one without the backup completed properly and I checked the output before allowing the system to continue.

“Very nicely done,” Carole told me when the crisis had passed. “On our system in Chicago we have five people who work nights and none of them could have solved the problems you just solved. They would have had to call for help.”

“They do this to me every once in a while to keep me on my toes, but I think they have different reasons for doing it tonight.”

“Like what?”

“From the programs they altered and the way they did it I would have to say they want me here in the morning when they come in to work. I told Bill Garson I would

wear a dress to work tonight, and he may have mentioned it to one of them. Word gets around, you know.”

“Just so everyone could see you wearing a dress?”

“Yes. Some of the people here are very petty, I must admit. Some have never liked me from day one. But some of them are really wonderful, too.”

Carole went back to the board room to see her friends and to ask Bill Garson if he knew anything about the problems I had just had with the system. Bill admitted telling the programmers about my choice of clothing, but claimed to have no knowledge of the attempted sabotage. I had gone to the offices to deliver a load of reports when I overheard most of the conversation, confirming my suspicions

Clearly, Carole was in charge of her delegation. She sent the four men back to their hotel rooms with instructions to return by eight AM. Bill was also dismissed and was expected back with the others. Carole was staying with me to find out as much as she could about how our system worked and the problems that were recurring so frequently.

She caught up to me as I finished delivering the reports and filing the E-mail messages. Then she followed me back down to the computer room where we found that six more programs had aborted and two others were waiting for allocation of more space.

Carole was good with computers and she helped me get through the mess someone had created for me. She found out on her own that the programs had been altered by Cary Polson. I had tried to keep that information from her. I didn't know what Cary was up to but it was his user I.D. that showed up on the latest compilation of every altered program, along with the date of the alteration, earlier that day.

“Why would this person do this?” Carole asked.

“I can't think of any reason,” I told her. “Cary is the only other person here trained to do my job. When I have problems too serious for me to handle, I call him first. Usually he can solve the problem right over the phone. The only explanation I can come up with is that Cary didn't do it.”

“Of course he did it, Louise. His name is printed on every last one of the compiles.”

“What if someone learned his password and signed on as him to do the damage? Or maybe he left his terminal on to go to the washroom or to have lunch or a meeting? Anything is possible.”

“That's true, but he has to come up with the answers. This is sabotage, Louise. The lost time the system is down for, the overtime the company has to pay you to be here to fix it, all the people who would have been paid to sit and do nothing until the system came back up. That's a lot of money for a prank.”

“You're right. But please consider that only Cary and I can do my job. Don Masters is a good programmer but he is Systems orientated. He knows very little about the batch programs. And Roberta is so new to this department, she has problems doing a backup on Saturdays by herself.”

We continued working and got the system back up by six in the morning. That was right on time for our eastern users to sign on and get to work without any losses. I cleaned everything up and was ready to leave by 6:30.

Carole wanted to stay to confront the computer department staff on the problems we just had, but I talked her into going out for breakfast with me. I took her back to her hotel where she went for a quick shower and change of clothes while I ordered coffee and breakfast for both of us. We got back to the office by 7:50.

"Ten minutes to spare," I told her as we walked up to the front door. "Bill Garson should be here any second now. He usually arrives for work a few minutes early."

"What about the others?"

"Roberta, I'll bet, is here already. Probably arrived ten minutes ago. Cary will walk in the back door within one minute give or take of 8:00. Don never gets in before ten after."

I was right. Roberta was in and surprised to see me there. She had been informed of my decision to dress for work as a female but was still shocked by how good I looked, even after working all night long. I introduced her to Carole and excused myself. I wanted to check my makeup before the rush of employees arrived for work, so I headed for the ladies' room. Roberta and Carole wanted to watch so they followed me there.

"You look really good, Louise," Roberta told me. She put extra emphasis on my feminine name when she said it. "How long have you been dressing up?"

"Most of my life," I replied. "How long have you been dressing up?"

"I'm a girl, Louise. I have been all of my life."

"And I've wanted to be a girl all of my life," I lied as I continued trying to impress Carole. "I was just unlucky enough to have been born the wrong sex."

I finished my makeup and the three of us went for a cup of coffee. Only Bill Garson knew who Carole and I were when he saw us, all others thought it best to stay away until they knew for sure. That's the way they were.

When Carole's associates arrived, I left her to talk to them and sent my message through the E-mail system. Since it arrived as a confidential message to every head of-office employee, they had to look at it on their consoles first, then send it to the printer if they wanted a hard copy. With all I had to do before, I had forgotten to send it earlier.

Randi Toews was at her desk when I entered the main office. She didn't recognize me, though I did see a copy of my message to her on her desk. She had read it and had printed it out already.

"I have to talk to Bill Garson," I told her.

"Who may I say is here?" she asked, picking up the receiver.

"Louise Wells," I answered, pointing to the message on her desk.

"Louise? Lewis? What's going on?"

“The truth of the matter is this,” I told her, “I can work here as a female or I can get laid off. I prefer to work. Also, I like being a girl, so why not work as one?”

Randi got Bill on the phone and I was sent in to see him. I laid it out for him the best I could. I felt he had to know as much as he could about what was going to happen before it happened so he could react in a positive way. After all, he was my boss and the vice president in charge of administration. I was there with Carole's permission, so I wasn't hurting myself in any way.

Carole had filled in her cohorts, then the five of them and Bill met with the entire computer department staff, including me. When I was presented to Don and Cary as Louise, they broke out in open laughter until they realized they were the only ones doing any laughing.

When told every one of the problems we had the night before, Cary was mad at me for not calling him in to help fix things. Likewise, Don made a show of being upset over being left out. But I was well covered and they knew it. My boss knew of the problems and okayed my methods of dealing with it.

Don had what he thought was the perfect explanation for what had happened: a power bump. But power surges don't change programs, and Carole knew it. It was Don Masters who put forth this absurd idea. As the systems programmer he had access to everyone's password. So too did Roberta and Cary. Carole played dumb and seemed to accept his story.

Don, Cary and Roberta got back to work. Carole asked me to wait for her and give her a ride as I got ready to leave. The other men had their own work to do and could get by without her. She needed some sleep after our long night.

Before we left, though, Carole stopped by the computer room and cautioned the three of them that should any more problems arise on the night shift like the ones that happened the night before, they could look forward to a real short future with the company.

CHAPTER 13

Carole was pretty well miffed with Don and his explanation of the problems we had worked through. But having such a dumb excuse laid on her made her realize how stupid Don thought she was. She had plans for him, she had new plans for the entire computer department.

Fortunately Carole had taken a liking to me for some reason. She was going to set them up for a fall and gave me the option of not falling with them.

“How would you like to work in Chicago, Louise?” she asked.

“I don't know, I've never been there.”

“I can get you transferred there, find you a nice apartment, get you anything you need You can work for us there.”

“I'd have to think about it,” I told her.

“Okay. But think about this, too: I came here with the power to make or break this company. The attempt at sabotage and Don's damn excuse has made up my mind for me. This company will be merged with our company. Jobs will be lost and this computer department of yours will be merged with ours. Your job will no longer exist here. Neither will the programmers' jobs. You can come to Chicago to work, or be laid off. Your choice.”

“How long do I have to decide?” I asked her. “The only decision is whether or not I want to move.”

“I can give you a month. After that you'll have to take what you get with everyone else. Bill is letting everyone else know that you have to dress according to the ladies' dress code in order to continue working here, for now.”

I dropped Carole off at her hotel, then went home, parked my car and walked into my apartment building where I immediately ran into Ron Kowalski.

“Just getting home from work?” he commented with a smile.

“Yes,” I replied. “It was a long night.”

“I guess everyone you work with saw you today?”

“I guess so.”

I walked past him and up to my apartment. I was tired and wanted a long, hot bubble bath and sleep. The bath felt good and eased my mind enough that I could think clearly again.

Obviously, Don Masters had been the one to screw up the programs on me. Why? I had no idea. Cary had looked pretty well stunned when told his name had been on all the screwed up compiles. Both Don and Cary had a discernible dislike for me now that I was dressing en femme for work.

Roberta's reaction to me had been a positive one, as had been the reaction of most of the other women in the company. Most of the men seemed to be able to work with me as a female, too. There were very few who showed negative reactions, and I could work around them for now.

The whole company was going down the tubes, according to what Carole had told me. She was in a position to know. She had offered me a chance to keep on working, and as a female, full-time in Chicago. If I stayed I would be unemployed sometime in a month. If I left, what would I have to leave behind? What could I look forward to?

I finished my bath, put on a night gown and climbed into my bed. I slept restlessly for several hours, then got up and made a list of things I would have to leave behind if I moved to the Windy City.

I called Victoria and was lucky to find her at home. I gave her the sketchiest details over the phone and told her of the choices I had. She said she would dwell on it and talk to me later on in the day. I knew I could count on her for sensible advice.

I had to know for sure if I had any family left at all. I called my mother first. As soon as she knew it was me on the phone she asked, "Are you ready to start paying us back now?"

"Maybe," I replied. "What is it you think I owe?"

"At the time you left here you still owed us for nine years of room and board. We figured that with clothing and other expenses it would average out to about two hundred dollars per month. It's been a little over eight years since you've paid anything on this bill, so we've added interest at a rate of seventeen percent compounded annually for a grand total of \$75,847.39. We expect at least half of every pay check you get until this is paid off."

"I can't afford to pay you half of every check. I need to live," I told her.

"That's your problem, not ours. Either you start paying us on your own or we may have to take you to court. I doubt a judge would be so lenient with you."

These were my mother's exact words. Then I called my siblings to get their reactions. My two older sisters had finished paying off their debt to our parents and expected me to do the same. My younger brothers were all still paying them and had no use for me until I paid, too. Even then they might not want much to do with me. My youngest sister was still in school and hadn't begun to pay yet.

So much for family. I had a lease for my apartment, though I guessed I could sublet it if I were moving. I had just made friends with Josie, next door, but there wasn't anything really close there yet. Victoria was my only real friend and the closest thing to family I had.

I dressed for work that evening for my own comfort. White underwear, panties, bra and full slip. I had a matching blouse and skirt set made of sheer, light weight polyester with a light pink floral pattern in it. The blouse pulled over my head with four buttons up to the small collar and long puffed sleeves. I stepped into the skirt, tucked in the blouse and did up the button and zipper behind my back. The hem of the slip was down to below the middle of my calves, the hem of the skirt just barely covered that. I put on off-white, low heeled sandals. I could use my white shawl over my shoulders and carry my oversized straw purse.

When I finished dressing, my hair and my makeup, I sat down by the phone and called Victoria again. "How are you this evening, dear?" she asked me.

“Much better now,” I said. I told her what my family had to say when I called them, and I could see her smiling back at me in my mind's eye.

“What else did you expect from them?” she asked.

“I didn't expect anything. I was hoping they could put the money aside for once and act like a family. I guess they can't.”

“It's not your fault, Louise. Do you think you could like living and working in Chicago?”

“I don't know,” I replied honestly. “You're the only person I would regret leaving behind. I'm sure I can find a doctor there who can prescribe the hormones for me. No one else in this town means enough to me that I would want to stay.”

“Then go! Don't worry about me. My daughter informed me last week that she and her family will be going to Detroit within the next few months. I can sell this place and go with her. It's a lot closer to Detroit from Chicago than it is from here.”

“Okay, Victoria. I'll contact Carole as soon as I can and let her know. Thank you. Now I can't wait to get out of here.”

“One more thing, dear. It might be easier for you to have a complete change of identity before you go. You were born and grew up here, your records are all here. What other names are you changing other than Lewis to Louise?”

“I'm going to be Louise Diane Wells,” I told her. “And you're right about changing my identity here. I hadn't thought about it.”

CHAPTER 14

Ron Kowalski and Josie were standing by the mailboxes talking when I came down the stairs. I said hello to them as I checked my mailbox. It was empty, as usual.

“What are you all dressed up for?” Josie asked me.

“Just going to work.”

“You're wearing dresses to work now?” she asked and gave me a big, all-knowing smile with a wink.

“Yes. They were going to lay me off so they could hire either a gay person or a minority race person to work in my place. I told them I was gay and changing my sex so they're letting me stay for now, but I have to dress according to their feminine dress codes to go to work.”

“It's against the law for them to get rid of you just because you're white,” she told me.

“I know. But if I fight it in court I end up with lousy working conditions and a boss looking for any reason to get rid of me. I prefer to dress femininely anyway, so this way I'm a winner all the way around. I can live as a girl all the time!”

Ron walked me out to my car. He waved to me as I drove off to work. Josie came out and waved to me too.

The office was still buzzing with people when I arrived for work. A lot of programs had been screwed up by Don's power surge, and the “debug” lines I had inserted were only a temporary solution. All three programmers were hard at work making more permanent corrections.

The warehouse was busy too, which was rare for this time of night. Probably doing a stock count. No one ever let me know these things in advance. Some head office people were there helping get the count done as quickly as possible.

I was in early as usual, and after checking the printers for paper I got myself a coffee from the machine and sat down at my desk to look through my E-mail. Roberta came over and gave me a compliment on my outfit. She was the same height I was but about twenty pounds heavier. She always wore shoes with at least four inch heels. I estimated she wore at least a DD cup bra and she always showed a good amount of cleavage. Her skirt lengths varied, though, and I never saw her wear a mini to work. But then I worked mostly nights and she worked mostly days, and it was seldom that our paths ever crossed. She was getting ready to go home and wanted to tell me that she liked the idea of having another woman working in the computer department.

There were a few snide remarks coming back to me on the E-mail system about my new role in the company, but nothing to get all worked up about. It was less than I expected, actually. Roberta waved to me as she headed for the back door of the building and the employee parking lot. Cary and Don gave me what I took as dirty looks as they followed her out.

Bill Garson came down just as I was about to start my shift. He asked me to leave the system up for another half hour because he had some work happening and he didn't want to lose it. I told him that would be no problem.

The other employees were leaving as well. The count always stopped when I came in to work. Either they were done or they couldn't do it with the system down. But as they left they all had to take the long way out and walk past me again. Every one of them had to look me over one more time just to be sure. I felt like a freak in a side show, but not for too much longer. One of the guys I had spoken to before stopped as he passed and told me I looked very pretty as a girl. He said I should have been born a girl.

With the extra time I had I called Carole's hotel and got her in her room. "When can I find out more about moving to Chicago?" I asked her.

"I can be at the office in about an hour. Will you be there?" she asked.

"Yes. Bill Garson is still here and wants the system up an extra half hour. The others should pretty well be gone by then."

When Carole arrived I was the only person left in the entire building. I let her in when she rang the door bell and we went to my desk to talk.

"I like your outfit," she told me. "It looks comfortable while being dressy enough, too."

"Thank," I told her. She was wearing jeans with a man's shirt so I couldn't honestly return the compliment. I got us each a coffee as I told her of the reactions everyone had given me tonight and the way they made me feel.

"Is it worse than you thought it would be?" she asked.

"Yes. I thought I would be the only one here at night and could get used to being here in a dress privately. So far there's a crowd most of the time. It wouldn't be so bad if they didn't know I was really a male. I can handle guys who think I'm a real girl, but guys who know differently are a different story. If I go to Chicago, do they have to know I'm still male legally?"

"If you go, there will be only five other people besides myself who will know you weren't born a female. The four men who are here with me now and my uncle, who is the chairman of the board and has to okay the transfer."

"What kind of deal do I get, Carole?"

"I'll find you a nice, affordable apartment fairly close to the office, though you may still have to drive to work. I'll arrange for the company to pay your moving expenses and we'll help you sublet your apartment here. The cost of living is much higher in Chicago, so we will adjust your salary up by twenty two percent. That will give you take-home pay roughly the equivalent of what you get now, taking into account the differences in location. Also, I get a bonus. You'll get two weeks with pay to make the move once everything is set up. I get to help you move, get settled in, show you around Chicago and take you out shopping for more clothes. Shopping is my one real vice, and I love to do it when I can help girls like you."

"Girls like me? Have you helped lots of girls like me?"

“I helped my little brother become a girl. I found a few other girls like you around town and helped them too. But none of them work for our company or have abilities we could use. All of them are in my personal life only.”

“Well, I would be very happy to have your help me,” I told her. “I can leave any time you want me to. Do I have to give some kind of notice here or do you take care of that, too?”

“No, I'll take care of letting everyone know what it is they need to know. My uncle will approve any suggestion I make, when I make it. I have already suggested this company be merged with ours so our people in Chicago have already started laying out the ground work. It's a good thing you called when you did, I'll be home in two days and can start looking for a place for you to live in. Don't worry about this place; when you leave, Cary will work your shift. I noticed he and Don Masters are pretty tight with each other and have lousy attitudes.”

“I think their problem is the altitude. They have their noses in the clouds and can't see anything but up. I really hate to say things against anyone, but these two have really changed in their attitudes towards me since yesterday. I can't get out of here soon enough to suit me now, all because of them. I can live with the others, but I have to work with these two.”

“My thoughts exactly, Louise. Their prejudices border on outright hatred. W.A.S.P. or nothing is what I see in them. What about Roberta?”

“She's okay. From what I've seen, she's good at her job and more than fair with me. She seems to accept me as an equal right off and appears to be happy to have another woman here.”

“Yes, I see that too. I have the advantage in that I hear what they say behind your back. Most are supportive of your situation and can accept you. Some are backstabbers who'll try to use all of this against you if they can. Roberta, Randi and Lorraine are good ones from what I can see.”

“I thought so. Randi has always been pretty cool as far as I was concerned. You say she's now supportive?”

“She seems to be. You're the only topic of conversation right now, as far as the gossip goes.”

“I thought that would happen.”

Carole stayed a couple of hours to talk and watch me work. I was quickly coming to enjoy her company. A pretty face really brightens up the office; hopefully one day my face will do that too. The heaviest thing I had to do was to lift a box of paper to put it onto the printer, and I managed to wrestle a full one into position without breaking my nails. I had put on my false nails and filed them down so that I could still use the keyboard. Most of my work just required thinking and typing instructions to the computer.

I did a little more than was required by checking the output for the appearance of proper totals. Everything could work perfectly yet still produce wrong totals if there was an unforeseen glitch in a program. One glitch in one program could throw off the

totals in every following program. It didn't take too much time to check as programs progressed. Cary had taught me that when he trained me for the job.

CHAPTER 15

Carole and I stayed in touch from then on. She gave me her phone numbers in Chicago and told me I could call her collect at any time of the day or night, weekends too. She got my home number and address from me and came to visit one day before leaving.



half dressed.

“Of course I have plans,” I replied, “but you can come along if you want. You may even like what I’m going to do.” I wouldn’t tell her more than that, as I took my coffee to my room so I could sip on it while doing my hair and makeup. Then I put on my dress, shoes and jewelry and I was done.

She didn’t call before coming over and caught me in bed asleep. I woke up when she rang my doorbell. I was wearing my night gown and slippers and was putting on my dressing gown when I opened the door. I never would have expected the feelings I had when I saw her at the door, unannounced. My heart skipped a beat, and I thanked my lucky stars that I was wearing my nice nightgown.

The surprise visit may have been more of a surprise inspection on her part. I wouldn’t put it past her to think I might have been conning her, and so she decided to drop by to see how I lived my life away from work. I think I passed.

It was a little after noon and I had been planning to get up soon anyway. I had no sooner made coffee for us when my alarm clock starting ringing. I went and shut it off, leaving Carole to finish getting the coffee herself. I took my shower and got my dress in a light blue floral print, summer style, laid out.

“You must have had plans for this afternoon,” Carole said when I came out of my bedroom

Leaving my apartment we ran right into Ron Kowalski again. As the caretaker and tenant right across the hall from me, I guess running into him so often wasn't too out of the ordinary. He said, "Hi, Louise. You're not going to work now, are you?"

"Of course not, Ron. I have a few errands to run, and my friend Carole here is going with me to help." Then I turned to Carole and added, "Ron is the caretaker of this place."

They said hello to each other, and I made the introductions very brief and casual. As we were leaving, I heard him speak up.

"You sure are a couple of lovely ladies today."

I couldn't help but agree with him. Then we were out the door and on our way downtown in my car. Parking was easy at City Hall, and there were very few people inside.

Carole understood why I was there when I asked the lady behind the counter for a change of name form. She gave it to me, and Carole looked over my shoulder as I filled it in. Since we were planning for me to be in Chicago so soon I put down Carole's home address as my mailing address. It could take over a month for the legal change of name certificate to be mailed out.

My old name went down as Lewis Ralph Wolfe. I filled in my new name as being Louise Diane Wells. For the reason for change I put down that I was undergoing a sex-change and required a more feminine identity. In the area for sexual identity I put an "X" in the box for female even though I hadn't gotten that far yet.

The lady came back when I motioned for her, read over my application to make sure I had filled in all of the necessary information, then charged me eighty dollars for the name change. I paid with cash and got a receipt.

Then Carole and I found a nice little restaurant where we went for coffee and a sandwich. She hadn't had lunch yet and I hadn't had breakfast. It was a kind of celebration for us.

We were seated near the back of the room in a U shaped booth looking out into the rest of the room. Our waitress came over to get our drink orders while we looked at our menus, and she turned out to be Josie!

"Hi, Josie. I didn't know you worked here."

"Louise! Yes, I've been here a few months now. Actually, I work two jobs to pay the bills while I go to school part time. What brings you down here?"

"I was just at City Hall where I applied for a change of name. This is my friend Carole," I said by way of introduction. "Josie lives next door to me."

The two girls exchanged greetings, then Josie went to get our coffee. I never drank alcohol and Carole never drank before dinner time.

"Bill Garson told me you were only dressing femininely to save your job," she told me. My heart stopped.

"Naturally this made me somewhat skeptical," she continued, "since I've only seen you in women's clothing, never in men's clothes. I had to find out more, Louise."

“Did you find out what you need to know?” I asked.

“Yes. Bill was wrong.”

“Bill only knows what I thought he needed to know. If this little company is filled with W.A.S.P.'s as I suspected it was, how would they have reacted to finding out I was a crossdresser earlier on? I doubt I would have been around when you came to town had they known any sooner.”

“You're probably right. I'm fully convinced of your sincerity with me now. To make up for any misgivings I may have had, I would appreciate it if you let me take you shopping for a new dress this afternoon.”

“I do have one more appointment to keep at five o'clock. I'll be meeting a friend of mine for dinner. Would you care to join us?”

“Oh, I don't think I can make it. I'm leaving for Chicago tonight and have a few things to do before then. Who is this friend you're meeting anyway?”

“Her name is Victoria, and she was my landlady where I lived before I moved into this apartment. She sold me my car, too. The only reason I moved out of her house was that her daughter came back to town and she needed me out. I started living with her when I was eighteen, just before I turned nineteen. I was there for a while. She helped me perfect my feminine image.”

“How did she help you do that?”

“She taught me how to do my hair, how to put on makeup, how to choose clothes and jewelry, how to walk in high heels and how to move and act femininely. She also taught me to use office equipment, including computers. If not for her I never would have gotten this job.”

“She sounds like quite a lady. How old is she anyway?”

“I guess by now she's sixty-seven or so. Why?”

“No reason, just curious. You seem to speak quite fondly of her, so I was wondering.”

“She's like an aunt to me, only closer. Definitely not like my mother or my sisters. I'd hate to think of her like a grandmother, even though she's old enough. She's a true friend and I talked to her before deciding to make the move to Chicago.”

“She helped you to decide?”

“Yes, she told me to go. And knowing I'm going to be there, she's going to move to Detroit with her daughter. We won't be all that far apart then.”

“Then maybe I'll get to meet her when you move to Chicago. I really don't have the time tonight, though I do want to buy you an outfit or two this afternoon.”

We continued our conversation right through our meals and out the door to the nearby dress shops. Carole preferred to purchase from specialty stores rather than from the department stores. At least when it came to women's clothing.

She found two mini dresses that fit me perfectly and looked fabulous on me. One was in red and the other in black. They were styled differently, and she loved the way I

looked in them. She bought both of them for me, along with a pant suit that also looked so darned good on me. She bought me a pair of red pumps with four inch heels to go with the red dress and a pair of beige pumps with three inch heels to go with the pant suit.

Carole loved to shop and it showed. She almost didn't make it back to our offices in time for the meeting. But I drove her and she barely made it even with me running a few yellow lights. Then I went home and put away the things she had bought.

I met Victoria for dinner at five o'clock and we had a great parting meal together. I expected to leave for Chicago within two or three weeks. She had her house up for sale but was leaving for Detroit within a few days.

I told Victoria all about Carole and what to expect from her should the two of them ever meet. I told her all about my day with Carole and the shopping we had done together. I told her all about the expectations I had regarding my move to Chicago and starting my new life there. And I told her how much I was going to miss not seeing her for so long at one time.

I drove Victoria home after dinner, then went straight to work. All I had to do now was put in time until Carole got things set for me to move. It was a very lonely night of work without the Carole's company. Why is it that Carole is so often in my thoughts, I wondered. Though I had no strong feelings about the city of Chicago, I couldn't wait to get there. Was Carole the kind of woman I wanted to be, or was it more than that...?

"I can't wait to find out," I murmured to myself.

I was living as a girl full time now. No, I *was* a girl now! The change of name would come through on my birth certificate in Chicago and then I could use it to change everything else, like my Social Security card and driver's license. Or I could just apply for a new card and re-test for a new license, whichever I felt like. It was up to me. Life was definitely worth living as a girl, and for the first time since I left Victoria I was really and truly happy with myself. And excited about the future!

THE END

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