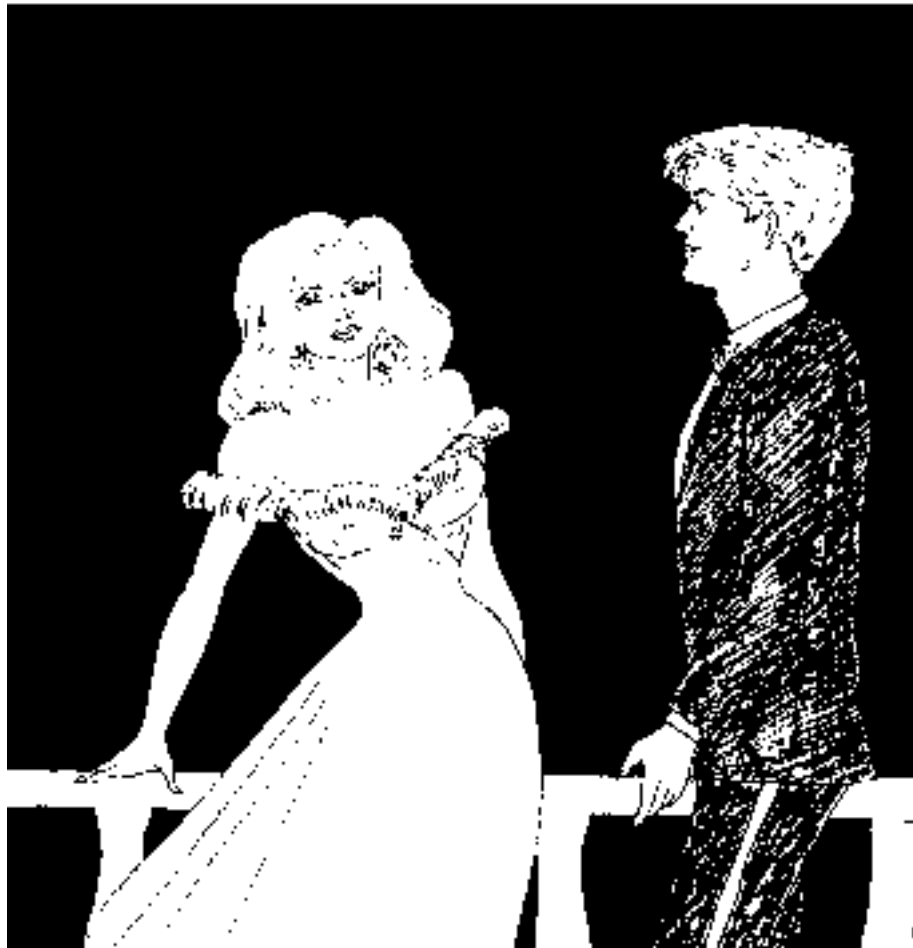


LOVE STORY

By Joanne Wilson



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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“LOVE STORY”

by Joanne Wilson

There were four of us in the group. We were all sixteen years old, in high school together, and I guess we came together because we were the so-called “nerds” of the class. That is, in fact, two of us were brains and two of us were what the other guys, the “footballers” called the “wimps.” So far as we were concerned, none of us was a wimp, but we didn't play basketball or football and didn't turn out for athletics, so that was how we were classified.

Of course, no one cared to take into consideration the fact that all four of us were smaller than average and not exactly built for sports. Well, Michael wasn't smaller all over; he was six three, but skinny as a rake. Three of us played a pretty good game of tennis, but tennis was not a school sport.

Now I'm not complaining about this because I think it's fair to say that all of us were above that sporty bullshit anyway. The point is, it brought us together, and for three years, we had been best buddies.

There was Michael, whom I've mentioned, a long streak of pure brain, but with a crazy sense of humor to match.

Then, there was Steve, a little round guy, another brain and sometimes a bit heavy on the corn, but he tried.

There was me, five feet nine of string and bone; not a great brain, but an organizer and sort of leader of the pack.

And, there was Bobby.

Bobby Young.

I think his greatest crime was that he was beautiful. No, I don't mean handsome, Bobby was beautiful. Five seven, slim, with a face like the Madonna.

No, not Madonna, The Madonna.

And, a sweet guy; everyone's best friend when it came to helping out. He'd do anything for anybody. Actually, it was this special characteristic that brought about the events I'm about to try to describe.

We'd spent a weekend just a few weeks earlier working with the local Lions Club, cleaning up the Doss house where our town zeros crashed at night.

The soup kitchen.

The four of us had met some of the guys, real down and outers, but nice enough when they were sober, and after all, we often felt a bit out of it as well, so we could emphasize.

One of these guys was Wally. Wally was about forty but looked sixty. In the course of a morning tea break conversation, we found out that Wally came from the other side of the country and had recently had news that his Mother was dying of cancer.

He was actually crying by the time he'd told us the story. He wanted to go home but he had no money, of course.

For a couple of days, this sad story haunted me and apparently, the other guys as well, because when I brought it up with them, they all said they had been thinking of poor Wally and a way we could raise the money to send him home. We sat around discussing the subject, but none of us could come up with an idea. We figured we needed to get him a bath, a new suit, an air fare and a few nights in a motel. Probably about \$3000 would do it.

But, we came up with no sane way of raising \$3000, although I can promise you, we came up with plenty of insane ways. At least.

Later, we were strolling along the boulevard heading to our respective homes when Michael suddenly stopped, staring upwards.

Within a few yards, we had realized he was no longer with us and we stopped as well. The "brain" was obviously hard at work. A huge smile came across his face and he called us together into a huddle.

"You're going to think this is totally crazy, but before you dismiss it out of hand, think about it. I remembered seeing in the paper yesterday that there's a competition coming up that pays \$5000 for first prize, \$3000 for second and \$1000 for third. We don't have to do better than second to raise the money for Wally."

"What competition?" I asked.

"That's the crazy part," Michael admitted. "The Rydel Cup is being run a week from next Saturday."

"So?" Bobby said, "That's a horse race."

"I know," Michael went on. "But in association with the Cup, there's a Fashion in the Field contest."

We looked at each other. It was apparent that Michael had flipped his wig.

"Listen," he said. "It's a snap. Who's the best dressed woman in town, by far?"

"Bobby's Mom, by far," Steve replied, "but so what?"

"So, we can enter the Fashion in the Field contest," Michael explained.

This was madness.

"How can we enter the Fashion in the Field contest?" I asked. "Bobby's Mom doesn't go to horse races, and besides, we can't ask her to raise the money for Wally."

"I'm not talking about Bobby's Mom entering. Who's the best-looking, prettiest guy in town?"

We all looked at Bobby.

“Bobby is,” Steve answered. “No question! But, what are you talking about, Michael? The contest is for women...”

“It's not a beauty contest,” Michael said, “it's a fashion contest. All Bobby has to be able to do is get his Mom to lend him her best outfit and we can, at least, win second prize, maybe even first!”

Bobby stared at him. “You mean... Michael, you're crazy! Do you really think I'd go to the races wearing an outfit of my Mother clothes? It's the silliest thing I've ever heard!”

“I agree,” Steve said, and made to walk on.

“No, wait!” I said, seeing some merit in the idea. “It's not so silly. Sure, Mrs. Young won't go. But she's a good sport and the cause is a good one. At least we can ask her.”

“But,” Bobby said, “I have to agree, don't I? It's all very well for you guys to talk, but you're asking me to go to the Rydal Cup dressed as a woman. You're kidding!”

“Think about it, Bobby. It would be a Hell of a lark, and I reckon you could win.”

“No deal,” Bobby snapped, and set off for home.

Michael and I looked at each other.

He shrugged. “Well, anyway, I thought it was a good idea.”

“It is, Mike. Let's think about it.”

We separated at this point and went off to our respective homes. By the time I got home, I'd had an idea on my own. I rang Mrs. Young, Bobby's Mom, and spent ten minutes explaining the whole story to her. By the time I'd finished, I had her on my side.

She thought it was a great idea and very amusing. And she agreed she would lend Bobby an outfit of hers, and she agreed she would talk to him about it.

Two hours later, I had a phone call from Bobby.

“I'll never forgive you, you little s.o.b.!” he said.

“Oh, come on, Bobby, it is a good idea, and you know it! Besides, it'll be terrific fun! Just think what it will do for old Wally when we win!”

“We? You got a mouse in your pocket? Who's we? I'm the one who has to make a fool of myself!”

“But, you won't, Bobby. You'll be anonymous, for a start, and who's to know? And, your Mom agrees! She can set you up with something that will be a winner. You're the exact same size, she says.”

“I know, Goddamn it! She's already measured me carefully and started planning what I can wear!”

“So, go for it, Bobby! We'll organize the entry. What should we call you?”

“How about call me next month?” he snarled.

“Be serious.”

“Hell, I don't know. For God's sake, that's your problem. I've got my own problems now!”

He hung up in my ear.

The next morning, I met with Michael and Steve before Bobby arrived at school and told them he had agreed to do it.

We got hold of a local newspaper and read the conditions for entry in the contest. It was simple enough.

All we had to do was be there — no official entry required.

At 1:00 P.M., all the ladies who were vying for the honor had to be in the parade ring in front of the main grandstand.

But, we needed tickets.

Bobby arrived, still grumbling, and we told him how it was to work. We would buy tickets for Bobby and me — I won the ballot for who was to accompany him — and we would turn up just before parade time and go straight to the judging area and, afterwards, we would collect the prize and go home.

And Wally would be off to see his Mother.

We were insanely confident.

We, that is, except for Bobby.

It should be mentioned here that Bobby's Mom owned and ran a local boutique — THE City's Fashion House. His Father had died when he was just seven and he and his Mom lived alone.

She had even told Bobby that she would borrow something from the store, if necessary. In that way, they wouldn't have to worry about buying something new and she would be able to judge what the other women were likely to be wearing from what they bought from her.

Apparently, she already had two outfits in mind, and was going to put them aside so that no one else could buy them.

“She's bringing the outfits home over the weekend,” Bobby said. “I have to try them on, for God's sake!” He looked miserable and I almost felt sorry for him.

Almost.

I had thought of Wally again.

We didn't see Bobby all day Saturday and I called him on Saturday night. He was fairly tight lipped about what had happened during the day, but I was able to glean that he had sore feet from wearing high heels almost all day. He said that his Mother had decided he needed more practice, so he'd be home all day Sunday as well.

When we caught up at school on Monday, he was much brighter.

“It's not so bad, I guess,” he admitted when we quizzed him. “The clothes look terrific, I must admit, and I'm getting used to the high heels.”

When we wanted to know what he would be wearing, he just smiled.

“Oh, you'll just have to wait and see, won't you?”

Well, at least we gathered that he was feeling better about it all.

On Wednesday, Bobby came to me.

“Alan, what're you going to wear on Saturday?” he asked.

“Gosh, I hadn't thought about that. I guess I'll just wear a suit.”

“Sure will. Do you have one?”

“No, but I can rent one.”

“Well, you'd better do it. If you're going to escort me, you're going to have to look the part.” He grinned sagely.

“That good, huh?” I grinned back.

But he would say no more.

I went to our local suit-for-hire store that afternoon and rented a smart gray business suit, buying a nice tie to wear with it.

By Friday night, none of us had seen Bobby in the things he would wear and neither would he tell us anything more about it. He was very secretive about it all.

He did say that it was OK for Michael and Steve to come around the next morning at the same time I was to pick him up though, so that they could estimate our chances of winning a prize.

So, in this way, the three of us, me in my suit, arrived at Bobby's house at eleven on the Saturday morning of the Rydal Cup.

We knocked on the door and Mrs. Young came to open it.

“Come in, boys,” she invited. “Sandra is ready to go.”

Sandra? We looked at each other.

“Well, she has to have a girl's name, doesn't she? We can't have the announcer saying that 'Bobby Young' has won the Fashion in the Field contest, now, can we?”

We trooped into the house and through to the living room where we were stopped dead in our tracks by one of the most glamorous, beautiful young women any of us had ever seen!

She was wearing a white linen suit. The jacket had a nipped in waist and the skirt was just above knee length. She was wearing black and white high heeled court shoes. Under the jacket, she wore a ruffle front, black blouse and on her head, a wide brimmed black hat with a huge rose in the center front. Under the hat, a profusion of soft blonde waves fell to her shoulders. She wore wrist length, lace gloves. Her make-up appeared to be flawless.

We knew, for sure, that this was still Bobby, but none of us could believe it! We just stood there for a moment, open mouthed and stunned.

Bobby just smiled. “What's wrong?” he asked. “Can't you guys talk any more? You didn't have any trouble running your mouths when you dreamed up this stunt!”

"I... I.. don't believe it!" Michael whispered. "We'll win for sure!"

"God, Bobby, you're beautiful," Steve added.

"It will be my distinct pleasure to escort you to the races, Sandra," I said, bowing politely.

"Thank you, Alan, that's sweet." Bobby smiled again.

I was astonished. Bobby had gone much further than I think any of us realized he would. He even sounded like a girl. His Mother was standing by, proudly.

"We are a little early," Bobby/Sandra said, "but I guess we could go now. We can take a look at the competition."

"Sure," I agreed, "why not?"

Bobby picked up a black handbag and slung it casually over his shoulder. He kissed his Mother.

"You look lovely, Darling," Mrs. Young said. "I'm very proud of you."

Bobby smiled at her. "Thanks for all your help, Mother," he said, as though he were really pleased with what she had achieved.

We walked out to my car and the other guys went to theirs, looking a little envious. Sandra — I'll call him, ER, her that for a while now — slid into the passenger's seat while I held the door for her. Then I went around to the driver's side, got in, and we drove off. Beside me, Sandra was actually smiling and enjoying herself.

"You don't feel so bad about this, now?" I asked.

"No." He continued to smile. "You said it, it's for a good cause."

"You look smashing," I said. "Like a model, or something."

"Thank you," he said, and he looked genuinely pleased.

"You seem as though you like it."

He shrugged. "If I have to look like a girl, I'd rather be a pretty one than an ugly one!"

He crossed his legs and it was impossible not to notice how smooth and sleek they looked. It was obvious that he had shaved them.

"What are you wearing underneath?"

He feigned shock. "Alan! You can't ask a girl that! It's impolite!"

"Sorry," I said, grinning myself now, at his convincing play acting.

"But, since you ask, I'm wearing what any girl would wear under her best outfit, of course."

"Is that outfit new, or is it one of your Mom's?"

"Yes."

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, it's new, and yes, it's from my Mom's store. She bought it for me."

“For you?”

“Oh, you know what I mean, from her store, but for me to wear.”

I was listening to the way he was talking. He hardly sounded like the Bobby I knew! His voice was softer. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see his fingers through the lace of his gloves and I noticed his nails were painted a vivid red. He smelled of a delicious perfume as well.

“You sure went to a lot of trouble,” I said.

“Mom said we had to do it right. This is my first public appearance, after all.”

We drove in silence for a ways. Bobby/Sandra seemed very relaxed to me, considering what we were doing. Soon, we arrived at the race track and parked the car in the parking area, some distance from the main grandstand.

We got out and walked across to the entrance point where I showed our tickets. Bobby was already attracting attention, but he seemed oblivious to it. We went into the main spectator area where hundreds of people were milling about, watching horses parading or getting their bets on with the bookmakers.

“What do you want to do?” I asked.

“Let's just wander around,” he replied.

We strolled around the parade and marshaling area. Neither of us had ever been to a horse race meeting before. We watched the horses in the next race preparing to go out onto the track.

“They are such divine animals,” Bobby remarked.

Divine! Divine? First time I'd ever heard Bobby Young use such a girlish expression! I found myself watching him and then comparing him with other smartly dressed women. He was the equal of any of them and much better than most.

And he looked so relaxed and he was smiling all the time. Bobby was usually a fairly uptight little guy, full of tensions of one sort or another.

In his high heels, he was almost equal in height to me. His pale blue eyes sparkled and his cheeks were flushed. His ruby red lips were full, plump, and sensuously kissable.

I saw that he was wearing large gold earrings with a black onyx insert.

The horses began to line up and we went to the fence to watch. There was no special interest for us because we didn't have a bet on anything. We watched the race and then continued our promenade. Bobby began to take an interest in the women and girls he thought might be his competition. From time to time, he would point out a particularly attractive outfit.

“She looks wonderful...” she'd say, or, “I adore that outfit!” Or, “I love that hat;” or, “what divine shoes.”

At one stage, he took my arm. It seemed so perfectly natural that I hardly noticed.

“Do you think we're in the right area?” he asked.

“I think so. It seems we're where all the other women are.”

I looked at my watch. It was five after one. Some ten minutes passed. Someone touched Bobby on the arm and both of us turned around. We were confronted by a smartly dressed woman of about fifty. She was smiling broadly.

“Excuse me, Dear,” she said. “May I ask your name?”

Bobby/Sandra smiled back, so sweetly. “My name is Sandra Young.”

“Are you from Rydal, Dear?”

“No. I'm staying with my Aunt, Mrs. Nancy Young. Does it matter?”

“Oh, no, Dear, it's just that I need to know in case we need to make an announcement. You look absolutely smashing, my Dear.”

She turned and strolled off.

“Why did you say you were staying with your Aunt?” I asked.

“Mom said to tell them that I was from out of town, just in case, you know. They know her and she can cover that easily.”

“Sure, OK. Do you suppose she was a judge, or something?”

“I don't really know. I guess so.”

We continued strolling around, although with all the other beauties, it was more like promenading. Not ten minutes later, the same lady approached us again.

“Miss Young, I should have mentioned it earlier, but my name is Elvira Taylor, and I'm one of the judges here, the senior judge, in fact. My colleagues and I have chosen you as one of the three finalists in the Fashion in the Field quest.”

Bobby/Sandra actually squealed, shrieked, perhaps! I was startled.

“Oh, wonderful, thank you!” she croaked happily.

The woman took a long envelope from her handbag. “This is your invitation to tonight's Rydal Ball. We make the final decisions and presentations there. You can come, of course?”

Bobby was taken aback for only a few seconds.

“Oh, dear,” he said, “I was going home later this afternoon.” He paused. “But, of course I can come. I'd be delighted!”

“It will be so lovely to have you. We'll see you around eightish, then?”

The woman walked away. I looked at Bobby.

“God! What're we going to do about this?”

“Can you get a tux by tonight?”

“Well, sure, I guess so, but...”

“Oh, don't worry about me. Mother will have something stunning I can wear, so let's get going, we can't let Wally down now!”

He began walking briskly towards the exit gate and I hurried to keep up.

“You mean, you're actually going?”

“Of course! Why not?”

“Well, I mean... I don't really know why not... I guess...”

I drove Bobby home and left him at his front door. Then I took off to try to arrange to hire a tuxedo. This accomplished, I went home to my own house where my parents were interested in knowing what sort of day I'd had.

I'd told them that Bobby and I were going to the Rydal Cup and were taking part in a competition to win some money to help Wally. They thought it was very magnanimous of us.

I hadn't told them that Bobby was entering the Fashion in the Field competition. Now I had the job of telling them that I had to go to the Rydal Ball, and why.

Rather than cover it up further, I told them the whole story. They both thought it was all pretty weird and couldn't figure out how Bobby might have been selected as a finalist.

But then, they hadn't seen him, had they?

Soon after I'd finished all these explanations, Mike rang. He had Steve with him, and I had to tell them the story of the day. They were both rapt that Bobby had definitely won something, at least!

“God, I'm not surprised,” Mike said. “I still can't believe how he looked! He could have won the Miss World Title hands down!”

“Well, maybe, not quite,” I said. “But I admit he did look great! I'm wondering now what he and his Mom will cook up for tonight.”

“Ring us in the morning, huh?” Mike asked, excitedly. “Or even tonight, if you're not too late getting home.”

“OK, I will,” I promised. I checked my watch. I had arranged with Bobby that I would pick her, er, I mean, him, up at eight. I had plenty of time as it was not yet six. But, I went and took a shower and dressed in the tux, ate some food with my folks and asked to borrow the car again, which they agreed to on the proviso that I would not have anything... “not one drop!” to drink.

At seven thirty, I drove quietly over to Bobby's house and knocked on the front door. Mrs. Young opened it again.

“Hi, Alan,” she greeted. “This is a turn up for the books, isn't it? I think she's about ready. Come on in.”

I looked at her for a moment, startled by the fact that she had referred to Bobby as “she.” But, she seemed not to have even noticed that she'd done it. We went through to the living room. Bobby was not yet downstairs.

“Can I get you something to drink?” Mrs. Young asked.

“Just a Coke, Mrs. Young, thank you.”

She took a bottle from the bar fridge and poured the drink.

“She looks amazing,” Mrs. Young said. “I know tonight doesn't count in the competition, but we thought she should look her best.”

“She, Mrs. Young?” I raised my eyebrows. “You’re talking about your son, a boy, a he.”

“Oh, I know that,” she giggled. “But, well, I’ve always wanted a daughter, and now I’ve had one for a few days. But, it’s all just pretend, isn’t it?”

“I suppose so.”

A few days? I supposed that Bobby had been practicing.

I heard footsteps on the stairway, and a few moments later, Bobby entered the room and I nearly fell off the bar stool! If he had looked great at the races, he looked... ravishing... the only word for it — tonight! It took only a few seconds to take it all in. Bobby was dressed in a pink dress, sort of net stuff, strapless, with a top part which wrapped his arms just below the shoulders in a sort of fringe which lapped over a shiny top and nipped into his waist and then out again into a full skirt of the same net material. It was ankle length. The nearest thing I could liken it to was a long tutu.

He wore high heeled, matching shoes. His hair, without a hat, was a full mane of soft blonde waves. He seemed to have put on more make-up and changed the lipstick color to a soft pink. He had the same color on his nails and no gloves, this time. He wore a few items of gold jewelry — a bracelet and a ring. Around his slim neck was a black velvet choker necklace.

Huge hoop earrings hung from his earlobes.

He positively radiated feminine beauty when he flashed me a melting smile.

“Hello, Alan. You look great in your tux,” he greeted.

“Hello, Bobby,” I said. “You look... terrific!”

“Thank you, but you’d better get used to calling me ‘Sandra.’ We don’t want any wrong names tonight!”

“No, I guess not. OK, Sandra...”

Mrs. Young came around from the bar and gave ‘Sandra’ a cheek to cheek kiss. I thought she whispered something in ‘her’ ear as she did so, but I couldn’t hear what it was. Whatever it was, ‘Sandra’ smiled at her.

“Off you go then,” Mrs. Young said, “and you might just as well enjoy yourselves. Good luck, Sandra, and you take extra good care of my only daughter, Alan!”

“Yes, Mrs. Young,” I replied.

On the front walk, Bobby/Sandra took my arm. I thought I should feel some embarrassment, but she was doing these things so naturally that I couldn’t take offense with her. I just sort of fell into the game with her.

In the car, I said, “Your Mom’s certainly entering into the spirit of things, isn’t she?”

“How do you mean?”

“Oh, calling you ‘she’ and ‘her’ and all.”

“Oh, that,” Bobby smiled. “It’s OK, I don’t mind. You’ll have to do that too tonight,” she reminded casually.

“I meant to ask this afternoon, where'd you get your hair?”

“It's a wig, of course. Do you like it?”

“Sure, it's great, but where...”

“Mom bought it for me for the occasion.”

Bought it?

“How does it feel?” I asked.

“What?”

“Dressing as a girl.”

“It feels... all right...”

Bobby's voice, it was still that different, softer, rather girlish voice of the afternoon.

“How can you get used to high heels?” I asked. “They must feel funny.”

“I've been wearing them for a week now, Alan,” he admitted, “and it's not all that hard.”

“Every day?”

Bobby/Sandra was looking out the window of the car. He waited a moment before turning back towards me. “Sure. If I were going to do this thing, we thought I'd have to be exactly right.”

“Everything?”

“Of course, everything!”

We drove on in silence for a moment.

“Alan, have you thought? You might have to dance with me tonight.”

I groaned. “Oh, God! No, I hadn't thought about that!”

“It's just that I think it would help appearances if we did.”

“Sure. Will it be a problem for you?”

He laughed. “I don't know. I've never danced as a girl before. But I'm sure we can muddle through.”

We arrived at the City Hall where the ball was being held, entered the main lobby, and milled about with the crowd. Suddenly, and quite irrationally, I was proud of this “girl” on my arm! “She” was at least as good looking as any other woman there and much prettier than most! Elvira Taylor swooped across the room at us.

“My Dears,” she gushed. “I'm just delighted you could make it. You look wonderful. Come and meet our mayor.”

We trailed along behind her to a small group, among whom we recognized the Mayor of Rydal, Quincy Mosely. Mrs. Taylor caught his attention.

“Mr. Mayor, I'd like you to meet one of our finalists, Miss Sandra Young, and this is her escort, Mr., er, ah...”

“Alan Jones,” I volunteered. “I'm pleased to meet you, Sir.”

“Me too,” Sandra added, smiling winningly.

“My Dear, I am delighted,” Mosely answered, coming on strong as middle aged politicians do with pretty young ladies. “May I wish you the best of luck tonight?”

“Thank you, Sir,” Bobby/Sandra replied.

The mayor turned away to continue his conversation.

“We're going to keep everyone in suspense until eleven o'clock,” Mrs. Taylor confided. “So you two run along and have a lovely time.”

“Oh, Mrs. Taylor, how can you make us wait so long?” Bobby/Sandra batted his/her thick, long eyelashes.

Mrs. Taylor giggled and turned away. How good our Bobby is, I thought. How perfectly, adorably, delightfully, feminine! We strolled out to the dance area where the band was already playing and couples were taking to the floor. Bobby/Sandra looked at me and smiled that disarming smile of his.

“Shall we?”

“We might just as well make fools of ourselves now as later,” I quipped.

But we didn't make fools of ourselves at all. For a few moments, I was a little embarrassed to have my best friend, Bobby, in my arms, dressed as a girl, but well, he felt so relaxed and comfortable that I soon relaxed myself and began to enjoy the “girl” in my arms.

She followed me competently, her soft breasts, or whatever they were, pressed lightly against my chest, my hand in the small of her back. Her perfume was so heady and it was all so convincing that I felt, oddly, that I was dancing with a girl — and not just physically either! There was some intangible female presence. I drew her close and whispered in her ear.

“Your breasts feel so soft and real. What are they?”

He moved away a little and grinned. “Shhh! None of your business!”

We danced one full set together.

“Would you like a drink?” I asked when the band took a break.

“Yes, please.”

We walked across to the bar where I ordered two Cokes. Then we walked out onto the balcony into the balmy night air. We leaned up against the balustrade and sipped our drinks.

“I actually enjoyed dancing with you,” I remarked.

“Good,” 'Sandra' said. She sipped her drink, her eyes twinkling at me over the rim of her glass.

“For someone who was so adamantly against this a week ago, you've changed...”

“Have I?” softly.

“This afternoon, I got the distinct impression that you were enjoying it all.”

“And, tonight?”

"Tonight, I'm sure of it!"

"Am I?"

"You can't deny it!"

"I didn't. OK, so I'm enjoying it! It's... nice..."

"In what way?"

She shrugged and turned her eyes away, looking out over the adjoining park. She didn't answer. We finished our drinks and the band began playing again.

"I'd like to dance some more," I said.

"OK."

I took her glass and we began to walk back towards the bar.

"Hold my hand, Alan?" Bobby asked sweetly, quietly.

"Sure." I took her hand and she squeezed mine tight. Back on the dance floor, she moved closer to me.

"Alan?"

"Yes?"

"Whatever happens tonight... and tomorrow... and the next day... and the next day after that... I've enjoyed today and tonight, OK?"

"Sure, of course, but what's likely to happen?"

"I don't know. Just... something..."

I looked at her and she stared directly into my eyes. She looked so soft and vulnerable. I drew her close again and we danced. After the next break, when the band struck up again, Quincy Mosely appeared at my shoulder.

"May I?" he asked, and reached his hand out to Sandra's.

"Sandra" smiled and allowed him to lead "her" to the dance floor where I watched while they danced a set together. "Sandra" smiled and talked animatedly through the whole thing. The Mayor returned "her" to me.

"You're a very fortunate young man," he told me, then turned to "Sandra." "Thank you, my Dear, dancing with you has been a singular pleasure!"

"Sandra" smiled and he left us. "May I have another Coke, please?" "she" asked.

I collected two more Cokes and we went outside again.

"What did you talk about?" I asked, a little jealously.

"It was hard. I had to make it all up on the spot. Just about my so called home town. It's just as well I know Brideport reasonably well. Alan, I don't want to dance with anyone else. Can we stay out here awhile?"

"Sure."

"But, there's something I have to do. I'll be right back."

"She" handed me "her" glass and walked off. In five minutes, "she" was back.

“What was it?”

“I had to go to the loo.”

“Oh, Lord! What did you do?”

“I went into the ladies', of course. I would have caused quite a sensation in the men's!”

“True. Oh, shit! What was it like?”

“It was exactly what I thought. Mom told me what to expect.”

We sipped our drinks in silence for some moments.

“Sandra,” I said, “I think I was a little overcome when I first saw you tonight. I don't know whether I told you or not, but you look... beautiful!”

“You said I looked 'terrific,'” “she” reminded me with a shy smile, “but I think I much prefer being 'beautiful...’”

“You don't mind being called... beautiful?”

“No! Should I?”

I shrugged. “I don't know. I just thought...”

“Thought, what?”

“It's not quite appropriate for a... boy... to be called beautiful...”

“She” turned and looked out over the park again. “No, maybe not...”

“Can I ask you something?”

“Yes, sure...”

“What's happening? I mean...”

“It's all right, I know what you mean.” “She” turned back to me. “I'll answer that if you want to ask it again tomorrow or Monday or any other time, but not tonight, please?”

“She” lowered “her” eyes, suddenly very shy and serious.

“Tonight, just let me be 'Sandra,' contestant in the Fashion in the Field Quest. OK?”

“Sure, OK.”



Then, equally suddenly, “she” lifted “her” head and smiled widely. “Come on, let's dance, Big Boy!”

We returned to the dance floor and danced continuously, right up to eleven o'clock when Mrs. Taylor appeared on the stage and approached the microphone.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” her voice boomed through the hall, “may I have your attention, please?”

Everyone quieted down and turned to the stage. Bobby/Sandra took my hand and squeezed it tightly. I knew “she” was tense with anticipation.

“I have to tell you,” Mrs. Taylor said, “that this year's Rydal Cup and Rydal Ball have been an unprecedented success in every way! I want to thank you all for your continued support and say a special thank you to the ladies who decided to take part in our Fashion in the Field Quest. The women in this town and district have outdone themselves. I think we can safely say that we enjoy the presence of the best dressed women in the land right here in our home town!

“And now, I take great pleasure in announcing the winner of this year's Fashion in the Field Quest.

“Actually, I have the distinct pleasure of announcing the winners, because there are two of them. Our judge's panel was unable to decide between these two ladies, so what we did was add first and second prizes together and award each of them \$4000. It also pleases me to announce that our joint winners come from two quite different age groups, showing that our younger and older ladies have equally good taste in clothes. The winners are... Mrs. Janice Baldwin, and... Miss Sandra Young!”

The room burst into a huge round of applause. Sandra squeezed my hand harder.

“Oh, God!” “Sandra” said, almost inaudibly, and then I saw “her” take a deep breath and walk to the stage steps. Once there, “she” met another woman, clearly in her fifties, who also looked very smart and beautiful.

Together they mounted the stairs and walked to center stage where Elvira Taylor handed two envelopes to Quincy Mosely who had just joined her, and who, in turn, passed the envelopes over to the two women now standing beside him. He kissed them both on the cheek and turned to the microphone.

“I think I should add my congratulations to those of Elvira Taylor. These two ladies who represent two different generations, have done our town proud! But, you don't want to hear from me, you want to hear from them!”

He moved aside and Mrs. Baldwin stepped up to the microphone, making a short speech, the content of which was completely lost on me because I was watching Bobby so intently. It was obvious that he was nervous by the way he clutched the small pink bag he had been carrying all night. Otherwise, he continued smiling and appeared, at least outwardly, relaxed and at ease.

When the older woman stood aside, “Sandra” moved across to the microphone.

“I would like to thank the organizers,” “she” said softly, even with the aid of the microphone, “for making all this possible and the judges for choosing me along with Mrs. Baldwin, who is obviously a very gracious and charming woman. Thank you.”

He stepped aside and suddenly a couple of photographers appeared on the stage and began popping off picture after picture of the pair, arm in arm and smiling at one another. This went on for some ten minutes, after which Bobby and Mrs. Baldwin were allowed to leave the stage.

At the bottom of the stairs, two people, apparently reporters, began interviewing them both and I suddenly had a moment of panic. How could Bobby possibly handle questions from journalists?

I hurried across to where they were standing, talking, and got close enough to listen in. Bobby was speaking:

"I don't really want any publicity about this," he was saying. "Let's just say I'm happy to have won."

"What will you do with the money, Sandra?" one reporter asked.

Bobby caught my eye and sort of grimaced. "I don't know. It's not important, is it? Please, will you excuse me? My friend is waiting."

"She" moved aside and it was clear the reporters were disappointed.

"Quickly," "she" said to me, "let's get out of here. I hadn't thought all this publicity might happen."

"OK, follow me."

We pressed our way through the crowd as people called their congratulations, and finally escaped the building, going to the car. Inside, Bobby visibly relaxed.

"Don't go home yet, but let's get away from here. I have to think."

I drove away and along the riverside to a parking spot that looked across the city.

"Is there a real problem, do you think?" I asked.

"There could be. I just don't know. What happens if they decide to look up Sandra Young from Bridgeport?"

"Will they?"

"I don't know, Alan."

"But, even if they do and there is no such person, they can't trace you."

"Well, maybe not. But we forgot a few things, like my Mother is well-known in this town and her name is Young, and she sells exclusive dresses and I said I was staying with her and all..."

"When?"

"This afternoon. Don't you remember? When Mrs. Taylor asked me if I were local."

"Oh, yeah. OK."

"And, I have to cash the check!"

"Check? So?"

"So, Alan, think. How do I identify myself to cash a check?"

"I'm not sure, but there must be a way. Talk to your Mother."

"I'll have to. Oh, shit! I wish I hadn't done this, now!"

This was Bobby talking, not Sandra. The cool had disappeared and the anxious little Bobby was back.

"Bobby..."

"Sandra!"

"OK, Sandra! Dammit, there's no one around to hear me now!"

"No, OK. I'm sorry."

"I was just going to ask, what are you afraid of, exactly? I mean, being exposed? Is that it?"

"Not so much that," he answered. "But we've gone to so much trouble to try to get Wally together with his dying Mom. If they find out, they might take the money back from me."

"Yeah, OK. But what about you? I mean, you'll get ragged to Hell if the guys find out that you'd posed as a girl! 'Specially such a... such a..."

"Such a what?"

"Such a... pretty one... and convincing enough to win a beauty contest!"

"It wasn't a beauty contest, Alan," he objected.

"Stop splitting hairs! You know what I mean."

Bobby was silent for a moment. "I can handle that," he said at last. "Being ragged is nothing new. Besides, there're other things to think about."

"The money?"

"That... and the fact that if I'm identified, I won't..."

"Won't what?"

He looked at me and it seemed that he was close to tears.

"Nothing, Alan. Please take me home now. I want to talk with Mom and see what I should do."

We drove to the Young home in silence. When we arrived, I asked if he wanted me to go in with him or if there were anything I could do, or indeed, should do.

"No, but thanks anyway. I'll talk to Mom, but call me in the morning, please, and we can then decide how we might handle Monday."

He disappeared up the garden path, high heels clicking on the concrete, blonde hair bobbing. I watched until his Mother opened the door and he had entered the house. Then I drove home disconsolately.

It was stupid. We'd won the money for Wally fair and square, and we should have been feeling on top of the world. But something had gone wrong, or appeared to have, anyway.

My folks were in bed. From the den, I rang Michael and told him the whole story. He was aghast, not quite understanding. He said to leave Steve till morning and we'd all talk about it then.

I went off to bed, strangely worried about Bobby and seeing him constantly in my mind's eye, but not as Bobby, as Sandra!

In the morning, I had to endure some serious questioning from my folks. There was photograph of Bobby/Sandra in the morning newspaper, together with Mrs. Baldwin. The brief article talked about the win, described what both winners had worn to the races and what they wore to the Ball, finishing up by describing Sandra as "the mystery girl from Bridgeport."

THE CO-WINNER WAS RELUCTANT TO SPEAK
WITH THIS REPORTER AND LEFT THE BALL
SOON AFTER THE PRESENTATION WITH HER ESCORT
WHO ELVIRA TAYLOR IDENTIFIED ONLY AS "ALAN."

Mom and Dad were puzzled by the whole thing, but at least, had got the message that Sandra was Bobby. My Dad wasn't too happy about the idea that his son had escorted a pretty boy in a dress to a fancy ball. I spent some time explaining again about Wally and the money, and they finally agreed that so long as it was all for such a good cause, they didn't mind too much.

But, Mom, like Bobby, thought that if they found out, we might have to give the money back. I was suddenly pleased that neither Mrs. Taylor nor the Mayor had listened too closely when I had given them my name.

I had barely finished talking with my Mom and Dad when Steve rang. He had just read the paper, but at this point, he had not realized the possible ramifications of the whole affair and was just delighted that we had won!

I told him not to get too "up" about it and arranged to meet him at our favorite drug store downtown in twenty minutes.

Then I rang Michael and made the same arrangement.

Over a soda, I told them the whole story over again and we discussed it for some time. Finally, we decided there was nothing at all we could do, that it was up to Bobby, and that we really just had to wait to see whether he could cash the check and if we could get the money to Wally.

That, we decided, was our first priority. From a pay-phone, I called Bobby. He sounded bright enough, although not exactly excited. He said he and his Mom had talked and that I should come over.

Bobby opened the door. It was strange for a moment, seeing him in a shirt and jeans and with his own hair. I followed him into the living room where Mrs. Young was sitting.

"Hi, Alan," she smiled. "Nice to see you again."

"Thanks, Mrs. Young."

I flopped into a large lounge chair and Bobby did the same, only opposite me. Actually, I'm wrong. Bobby didn't flop, he sat, with some deliberation! Looking at him, I thought he might have some make-up left over that he hadn't cleaned off properly. He still looked rather girlish.

But then I realized that he had always looked like a girl, only I'd never been conscious of it before.

"Mom thinks we can get the check cashed if we write an authorization in Sandra's name, have her sign it, and I take it to the Bank on Monday."

"A fake signature?"

"Yes, it has to be, doesn't it? But in view of the publicity given, the Bank people will know it belongs to Sandra. I'm her cousin, so to speak, so they should give it to me if they understand that she went home to Bridgeport and that she didn't want any more publicity."

"Maybe," I mused, "it's worth a try. We didn't get it quite right, did we?"

"I don't see that you could have done it any other way," Mrs. Young said. "No matter what name you had given them, Sandra would have been a mystery girl, as the papers say. You haven't done anything illegal so far as I can see. And the money is for a good cause. Even if you are ultimately discovered, I don't think anyone would dare crucify you for it."

"I guess not. Our hope is to be able to get hold of the money before any pokey journalist gets to snooping."

"Exactly!" Bobby said. "Otherwise, it was all in vain."

"Not entirely, Dear," Mrs. Young replied, smiling at him.

Bobby actually blushed. I couldn't figure why.

"The photo is lovely, don't you think, Alan?"

"Yes, it is, Mrs. Young. I guess you'll be able to keep that as a memento no matter what?"

"I guess you'll be able to tell all this to Mike and Steve?" Bobby asked.

"Sure, but why don't you come with me and do it yourself?"

"I'm... not going anywhere today. I'll just hibernate a bit..."

"OK, suit yourself." I stood up. "Do you want some company to the Bank in the morning?"

"No, thanks. Mom will come with me. She can support my story if there's any question. The Bank people know her."

"OK. See you at school then?"

"Alan, if I get the money, we have to get it to Wally. I'll be at the Bank at nine and home here again by ten. How about you call me here then, and if it's all OK, the four of us can go and visit Wally at lunch time. I'll just skip school until the afternoon."

"Sounds fine to me."

At exactly ten the next morning, Mike, Steve and I went to the pay-phone in the school lobby and called Bobby. He had the money and there had been no problems. We arranged to meet at the school gates at 12:30, and bus downtown to “no man's land,” as we called the area, to meet Wally.

Wally was totally disbelieving when we handed him four thousand dollars! He hadn't read the paper which carried the story, but even if he had seen it, I doubt that it would have registered. We told him we had earned it over a few weeks doing chores for people.

He cried.

We brought in Mrs. Kouros, the lady who runs the soup kitchen and Doss house, and she agreed to make sure Wally spent it right on neat new clothes, a shave and a haircut, and his airfare.

Not that we really thought he'd blow it on booze because he was genuinely keen on seeing his Mother. Good deed over, we left him, still weepy and expressing his thanks. And so far as that was concerned, we had done what we had set out to do.

That, at least, had been achieved.

Now we simply had to wait and see what, if anything, developed if the reporters tried to follow up the “mystery girl.”

We should have known they would. I had only been home from school an hour on Tuesday afternoon, when there was a knock on my door. The guy standing there introduced himself as Fred Rogers of the Rydal Times. I froze.

“You're Alan Jones, aren't you?”

“Yes, I am, why?”

“Alan, I understand you were the escort of Miss Sandra Young who was the joint winner of the Fashion in the Field Quest last Saturday?”

I wasn't sure whether to admit it or deny it. But, I guess he really did know. Either Elvira had remembered, or Quincy, the mayor, had remembered.

“Yes, I was.”

“Can we talk?”

Reluctantly, I came out of our house and closed the door behind me. “Sure.”

“We can sit in my car.”

I followed him to his Chevy parked at the curb. He was about forty, well built, but a bit sleazy looking, as though he were just making ends meet. I slid into the passenger's seat and he went around behind the steering wheel.

“Alan,” he said when he was settled, “who's Sandra Young?”

“She's a friend of mine.”

“Not from Bridgeport, Alan, I've checked that very thoroughly.”

“Why?”

“Why check? I'm interested. Here's a very attractive young woman who wins four thousand dollars in a beauty contest and splits, no publicity. It just doesn't make sense.”

“It wasn't a beauty contest, it was...”

Where had I heard all this before?

“OK, fashion contest, the fact is, most young ladies would be delighted to win and get all the resulting publicity. Why not Sandra Young?”

I shrugged. “You'll have to ask her.”

“So where do I find her?”

“I'm not at liberty to answer that. It's her wish.”

Rogers sighed and shifted in the seat to be squared onto me.

“Alan,” he said, “Mrs. Taylor remembered your name. She also remembered that Sandra had told her she was staying in Rydal with her Aunt and she gave the name of her Aunt as Mrs. Nancy Young. Nancy Young has a highly exclusive ladies' boutique right here in Rydal. Nancy Young also has a son about your age whose name is Robert. Robert is a nice looking boy, smaller than average, about the size of Sandra Young who was so anxious to disappear after the presentation on Saturday night.”

He knew. He had worked it all out. I sat quietly for a minute. I wasn't sure that I would be doing the right thing, but I decided to tell him the whole story and see what happened. But, first...

“Why didn't you go straight to the Youngs'?”

“I considered that. But I thought it might be nicer if I tackled to you first, that maybe you could set up a meeting which wouldn't be so confrontational. I mean, I didn't really want to barge in on Nancy and Robert and straight out accuse them of false pretenses.”

I looked at him. “Is that what you think it is?”

He shrugged. “What else? The boy misrepresented himself for personal gain.”

“No, actually that's not true.”

I then spent some fifteen minutes telling him the entire story, concluding with our presentation of the money to Wally. Fred Rogers sat listening, his eyes widening from time to time.

“You gave all the money to Wally?” he asked.

“Every cent. Actually, we had Mrs. Kouros there. Do you know her?”

“The charity worker? Sure.”

“Well, we asked her to make sure Wally spent the money properly and kept some of it to tide him over in San Francisco while he stays with his Mom. I expect by now Wally is flying west...”

Rogers started to laugh. “Oh, boy!” he said, “is this ever going to get up the noses of stuffy dames around town! Beaten by a boy at their own game!”

“Do you have to write it? Can't you just let it die?”

“Absolutely not! Listen, from what you've told me, no one will have guts enough to press charges. What would they get out of it? They can't get the money back. God, the townsfolk would be in an uproar! You guys will be heroes, not criminals! The ladies are just going to have to grin and bear it. I'd like to meet Bobby and his Mother. Can you fix it up, or should I just go in cold?”

“No, please, let me talk to them. I'm going to have to explain that I've spilled the beans first. When do you want to do it?”

“Now.”

I paused a moment. “OK, if you'll wait here, I'll go call them and see if it's all right to go over. Is it OK if I come with you?”

“Sure.”

I went back into the house, called Bobby, and related the story to him. He didn't really sound surprised. He went away for a moment to talk to his Mom.

“Yes, OK, come on over,” he said after he came back to the phone.

Ten minutes later, we drove up outside their house. Bobby answered the door and I introduced Fred Rogers. We went through to the living room where I introduced the reporter to Nancy Young.

“I've just heard a pretty amazing story from Alan, Bobby,” Rogers said. “I guess you can confirm it for me?”

“Yes, it's all true, just as he told you.”

“To be truthful, I don't really think I need to know anymore. I have the story from Alan. I'm totally certain you have nothing to be concerned about. I said to Alan, it's my guess you guys will all be heroes.”

Bobby looked at him. “Mr. Rogers, what if we don't want to be heroes? What if we just did this because we wanted to help Wally without any credit, without any publicity, nothing?”

“Then you should have thought it through better. There was never going to be a way you could avoid publicity for winning the Quest. Once that was denied us by your escape act, it was inevitable one or another of us would chase you down.”

“So you plan to publish the story?” Nancy Young asked.

“Yes, Mrs. Young, it's my job.”

“All right then,” she said after a moment's reflection. “Robert, the man is right. He has no choice. We will just have to make the most of it.”

Bobby sort of flopped into a chair, except that it wasn't quite a flop as it was a graceful sit-down... “I guess,” he said dejectedly.

Rogers chuckled. “Elvira Taylor will be furious,” he said, “and there will be nothing she can do about it! And now, if you will excuse me, I have a story to write.”

He left the Young home.

I looked at my watch. It was a little after six P.M. I figured he'd make the morning deadline easily. The three of us sat in silence, an awkward silence, for some moments.

“Well, at least Wally has been taken care of,” I said at last.

Bobby smiled. “Yeah, at least.”

“Robert, it won't be a problem,” Mrs. Young said. “You've done a wonderful thing and people will see that.”

“Oh, I know that. It's just that... everyone will know...”

“You told me you don't care about that,” I remarked, “just as long as Wally got the money.”

“No, I didn't... not really. But, it's OK. Let's just see what happens, OK?”

The story broke the next morning as expected. The paper used one of the other photographs of “Sandra” taken at the Ball. This time they had cut Mrs. Baldwin out so that Sandra appeared alone, smiling and lovely.

I read the story over breakfast.

Fred Rogers had been fair and accurate, concentrating on the gesture designed to get Wally together with his dying Mother. There was a comment from Elvira Taylor in which she said it had been a most unusual occurrence, but that in the end, some benefit had come from it, and certainly, the Rydal Cup and Ball had got some well-deserved and favorable publicity out of it.

My parents read it.

My Mother said, “He looks very pretty.”

My Father snorted, but he agreed that what we had done was a good thing.

I met Steve and Mike at school, and soon after, Bobby arrived, putting on a brave face, expecting the worse.

But, oddly, the worst didn't happen. The other boys tended to steer clear of Bobby, but no one actually gave him a hard time at all. A few girls actually came up to congratulate him on what he'd done.

In class, our class captain, Sheena Murray, stood up and moved for a vote of confidence in Bobby, saying that she was sure we all felt, or should feel, very proud of him.

Everyone clapped.

Fred Rogers was right. We were heroes.

Or, at least, Bobby was.

During the lunch break, I saw Bobby talking with a group of six or seven girls. Later, I asked him what they had been talking about.

“They wanted to know about the things I'd worn to the Cup and the Ball after,” he explained, smiling.

The day passed without further incident. Mike, Steve, Bobby and I got together for a soda after school. Every time I found myself looking closely at “Bobby,” I kept seeing “Sandra” instead! In the smooth, creamy skin; the arched eyebrows; the high cheek-

bones; the Cupids bow lips; I kept imagining them in make-up and framed by soft bouncy waves of honey-blond hair around “her” beautiful face!

We sat around for an hour, congratulating ourselves on having pulled it off.

At least, three of us did.

Bobby just sat there said pretty well nothing at all!

When Mike and Steve finally left, I leaned across the table. “You OK?” I asked.

“Yeah, sure, I’m fine. Why?”

“You look kind of sad.”

He looked down at the table and then, moments later, he looked straight into my eyes. “It was fun, wasn’t it? Saturday, I mean.”

“God!” I laughed. “I was nervous as hell most of the day and night!”

“But did you enjoy yourself?”

“Yeah, sure, why?”

“Alan, I have to ask you something...”

“What?”

“I looked like a girl, didn’t I?”

“Hell, yes, very much so! But you know that already. Why ask?”

“Did I seem like a girl to you?”

“You didn’t seem like the Bobby guy I know, if that’s what you mean.”

His eyes had a dreamy look about them, as if he were really far, far away from Rydal.

“I felt like a girl,” he admitted at last, quietly.

“And you liked that?”

“Yes, I did, very much.” He looked at me pleadingly.

I reached my hand out and closed it over his. “It’s OK, Bobby, it’s really OK.”

“I have to go now,” he choked out, stood up and quickly walked from the store. I thought he was crying.

The business of the Fashion in the Field Quest died quickly. For a few days, people passed Bobby in the street, stopped, stared, and pointed, but more than a few came up to him to offer their congratulations. As Fred Rogers had predicted, there was nothing Elvira Taylor and the committee could do to reverse their decision, especially since it had been so popular.

The guys at school seemed, in some odd way, to hold Bobby in some awe. If anything, his relationships improved; certainly the girls liked him better.

After four days, it seemed the whole exercise was history.

Except that it wasn’t.

Although it had nothing to do with the Rydal Cup, there was more to come.

Lots more to come!

On Thursday, Bobby approached me in the school grounds. "Alan, can we talk after school? I've something to tell you."

"Sure. How about my place, about 4:30?"

Bobby arrived and we went into the back where we sat by the pool.

"Something really weird has happened," he began. "You know that Mom's boutique is one of a chain and that there're about eighty of them scattered around the country."

"Yeah, I know."

"Well, Mom had this really weird call last night from the fashion coordinator for the whole group. It seems that she caught up with the story of the Cup, put two and two together, and realized that I was the one wearing Mariana Boutique clothes. I don't know if you know it or not, but there was a photo of me at the Cup in the Bridgeport Gazette. I didn't even know it had been taken, but there it was!"

"So?"

"So, Tina Costigan, that's the name of the fashion coordinator, asked Mom if I'd do a fashion spread for them to go in their advertising for the next three months; you know, newspapers, magazines and catalogues."

"True?"

Bobby nodded.

"Shit! Will you do it?"

"Wait, they're offering \$10,000, half for me and half for any charity I care to designate."

"Holy cow, Bobby!"

"What I wanted to ask you was which charity you think I should choose."

"You're going to do it, then?"

"Yeah," he grinned, "I am. It'll be fun. They have this slogan, "IF OUR CLOTHES CAN WIN BOBBY YOUNG A BEAUTY QUEST, IMAGINE WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR YOU?"

"It wasn't a..."

He shrugged. "I know. Advertising license."

"You don't mind half the country knowing?"

"Half the country knows now," he pointed out logically. "I might just as well capitalize on it."

"And you get to be a girl again..."

He looked at me. He was blushing a mile a minute. "Yes."

"OK, where would you like the money to go?"

"Five thousand isn't very much if I pass it over to some national charity, but it would be a lot for Mrs. Kouros and her soup kitchen."

“Right, it would be a lot! And it keeps it right here in town too.”

“So, do you think that would be OK?”

“Sure, it's a great idea.”

“I do have an ulterior motive, Alan,” he added sheepishly.

“What's that?”

“I want the city to like me.”

“They already do, Silly.”

“But more. I want to rack up a lot of brownie points.”

“OK, fine,” I said, not quite following him. “Bobby, how does your Mom react to all this girl stuff?”

“May I tell you a secret? You're my only confidante, but it's only fair that you know.”

“I'm all ears.”

“There are some things about me that you don't know.”

“So? There's a lot about me that you don't know either.”

“Will you shut up and let me tell my story? This is hard enough as it is.”

“I'm sorry, Bobby.”

“Yeah, well, you don't know, for example, that my Mom, over the years, has taught me to sew and knit and do embroidery and do laundry and iron her clothes and cook and clean and keep house and all that.”

“So?”

“I always thought she was doing it because there were just the two of us and I had to do my share because she worked and all. Still, I enjoyed learning all those things anyway. I've never been what you would call a boy's boy anyhow. When I was eight years old, Mom got me to go to a friend's Halloween party dressed as a little girl. I didn't object, but it was her suggestion. She made such a fuss over my costume and called me her little girl, her daughter, And it was lots of fun being a girl for her for a day.

“So, for the next three years, I always went to Halloween parties dressed as a little girl. Then, when we moved here, I didn't know anybody at all for the first year, so I didn't go to any Halloween party at all and the custom sort of stopped cold. So, I hadn't worn any girls' things for over four years. Then, when I came home and told Mom what we were planning, she was so enthusiastic! She borrowed some things from the store, brought them home, and insisted on try-ons and make-up experiments, and wanted me to wear high heels so I'd get used to them, and the result was that I wore girls' things for some time every single day, right up to the Saturday of the Rydal Cup.

“Mother was in seventh Heaven, fussing over me, and I realized that she really liked having me around as a girl!

“But, that wasn't all. It only took one full dress-up for something to happen to me too. At first, when I saw myself in the mirror, I realized that I was pretty. No, more than pretty, I was beautiful! That came as a bit of a shock, but it had occurred to me that it was a pleasant shock, not an unpleasant one!”

Bobby leaned forward in the canvas chair.

“Alan, I liked what I saw. And I liked how it made me feel. Don't ask me to describe how that was, because I don't think I can. But, I was standing there in a dress and a bra and panties and pantyhose and high heels and make-up and I loved it!

“When we added the wig the next evening, I liked it even better! A couple of days dressing as a girl, and I was rushing home from school, looking forward to becoming a girl for Mom! I needed no persuasion from her, either, I just went right up to my room and dressed myself! And I felt so good about it, I can't even begin to describe it.”

He leaned back again.

“In a way, I'm not surprised. You looked too good to be true, Bobby. Do you want to be a girl for real?”

“I don't know. I honestly don't know. I've never been unhappy or discontented being a male, but now, well, I just don't know. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to dressing as a girl again.”

“What does your Mother say?”

He laughed a little laugh. “Mom's not much help, actually. She's been enjoying having Sandra around and when she told me what Tina Costigan had called for, I sensed straight away that she was hoping I would agree.”

“Bobby, can I ask you something?”

“Yeah, I guess...”

“The, excuse me, the tits?”

“Oh, the tits are what're called mastectomy inserts, for ladies who have had a breast removed as a result of cancer.” He grinned. “The ultimate falsies, I guess.”

“Where did they come from?”

“Mom bought them. At first, I didn't know what they were either nor where she got them, so I asked too. She was always on about being as convincing as possible. I'm sure she likes me being a girl, Alan. She enjoyed dressing me up and that might be wrong, except that I liked it too. So, maybe she senses something, I don't know.”

“So the fact is, you're going to do it again?”

“Yeah.”

“OK, so you have a reason, an excuse, now, but what about after that?”

“I don't know and I'm not exactly sure that I even care right now.”

“I suppose you want me to keep this just between the two of us?”

“Well, yes. I would prefer it, so far as all the details are concerned. But Bridgeport is only a hundred miles away, so there's no way people here in Rydal are not going to find out. But, so be it. As I said before, I don't really care!”

“When is all this going to happen?”

“This coming weekend. Mom and I are driving up there tomorrow night after school. Marianna is supplying all the clothes, except for underwear. We're staying in a motel in town at their expense. They have a studio and a photographer arranged already. I've already decided to make the most of it. I'm going to spend the whole weekend as Sandra Young.”

“But why are you telling me all this, Bobby? You could have just gone off and done it.”

“Yeah, I know. But you're my best friend, Alan, and you went through the first stages of this with me, so I wanted to tell you... and...”

“And, what?”

“Well, I want to ask you if you'd come with me...”

“Me? Go with you? But, why, Bobby?”

Bobby looked awkward. “This is going to sound strange. Please don't take it all wrong, but I'd feel better if I had someone other than Mom with me, someone my own age, someone who could... escort me, I guess.”

I stared at him for some moments. I knew what my answer would be. “Will I need a tux?”

He laughed. “No, we won't be going anywhere formal! Marianna will pick up the tab.”

“Sure, I'll come. In fact, I wouldn't miss it for anything!”

Right at that moment, Bobby might have been wearing jeans and a T-shirt, but there was no way he was the Bobby I had known so well. He was the Sandra I knew less well! He looked at me from under lowered, silken lashes.

“Thank you,” she said softly.

We made arrangements to meet at his place at six and he left. I went inside and told my parents that I was going away for the weekend with Bobby and Mrs. Young.. There were no objections.

The next night, carrying a valise with enough clothes for a weekend away, I turned up at Bobby's home at a few minutes after six.

Bobby, sorry, Sandra, opened the door to my knock. He was wearing a typical teenage girl's casual outfit. Compared with the way he had dressed the weekend before, he was drastically dressed down, but he looked no less a girl!

He was wearing a white, short, navy skirt and flat white shoes. The hair was in place and his face was made-up, although less heavily than the last time I had seen him. He looked quite naturally pretty.

“Hi,” he grinned.

I followed him into the house to the living room where Mrs. Young was gathering together some travel bags.

“Hello, Alan, nice to see you again, as always,” she greeted. “Could you give me a hand out to the car with these?”

The three of us transported the bags out to the car and put them in the trunk. Mrs. Young returned to the house, locked it, came back, and handed the keys to the car to me!

“You drive, Alan and you two young ones can sit together up front.”

It was about an hour and a half drive to Brideport. Mrs. Young dozed in the back seat of the car most of the way, and Bobby and I talked very little.

He was wearing perfume and it drifted across the car to assail my nostrils all the way. This and my constant awareness of his pretty legs in the short skirt, were a steady reminder of his feminine presence.

When we arrived, we were checked into two twin rooms, one for Bobby-Sandra and one for me. Soon after I had unpacked, there was a knock at my door. Naturally, it was Sandra.

“Are you hungry?” “she” asked.

“Sure am!”

“Mom's not. She says we can take the car, if we want. I thought we might go up-town and grab a Mickey Dee's or something.”

We drove the short distance to the first MacDonal'd's we came to and went in. People took little notice of us, just a boy and his girlfriend, there are millions of them, although not quite like us.

We ordered, collected and paid for our food, taking our tray to a booth.

“You OK?” Sandra asked.

“Yeah, you?”

“Oh, yes. There's a cab calling for us at nine in the morning. OK?”



“Sure.”

We ate and returned to the motel. At the door to his unit, Sandra leaned across and kissed me on the cheek. It took me completely by surprise!

“Thanks for doing this for me, Alan,” “she” said, entering her room and closing the door in my face. I stood there for a moment, my cheeks burning like crazy. My best friend had just kissed me!

I took out my key, unlocked my door, went into the room and sat on the bed, trying to figure out how I felt about all this.

I decided it was OK because this simply was not Bobby, this was Sandra, a girl, and a different person altogether!

I went to sleep with her perfume and her legs invading my consciousness. In those final moments before I drifted off, I realized that I was greatly attracted to her!

“Oh, God!” I thought out loud.

In my dreams, I was on the dance floor at Rydal City Hall, holding this vision in pink in my arms, holding her close, smelling her perfume, feeling her body against mine. At one point, she lifted her face to mine, and at that moment our lips met, I woke up, sweating and shivering. I was hard! It took me some time to get back to sleep.

In the morning, we ate breakfast together in the dining room. Sandra was wearing a straight, white, shift sort of dress with white high heels. Mrs. Young prattled on about the upcoming day. I barely heard a word she said.

I couldn't look Bobby — Sandra — in the eye!

The cab collected us at nine and we drove about ten minutes to a building with a shop front at a side door with the name of a photographer — Ralph Mateo — on the door. We rang the bell and an attractive woman of about thirty-five answered the knock. Mrs. Young knew her.

“Tina, hello,” she greeted. “Sandra, Alan, this is Tina Costigan.”

Tina Costigan looked a little taken aback.

“Hi,” she said. “Gosh, Bob... er, Sandra, I didn't expect you to be ready to shoot. But come on in anyway.”

Sandra just smiled and we followed her up a flight of stairs to a large studio where she introduced us to Ralph Mateo, a large, bluff, red-faced man of about forty.

“Sandra, Honey, we have a lot to get through. There's a change room out the back and all the outfits are hanging there, with shoes for each.”

Sandra and “her” Mother went off to the change room while I took up a seat near the edge of the sky blue mat that Mateo had set up for the shoot.

I won't go through the day other than to say that Sandra changed eight times in the next six hours — with a half hour break for lunch — and in each outfit, she looked, to me, just perfect!

It seemed that Tina and Ralph were happy too, since they kept saying really nice things all day.

Under Mateo's direction, Sandra fell into the photo pose routine quite quickly. We left the studio around 4:30 with a call for 9:15 the next morning.

Back at the motel, we made an arrangement to meet for dinner at 6:30, so I took a shower and changed into a sports jacket and slacks. Sandra appeared for dinner wearing a short, full skirted, black dress with a bolero jacket. "She" looked, well, beautiful!

We three ate together, but following the meal, Mrs. Young excused herself with a smile, and "trotted" off to bed. She had barely left the room when Sandra asked me, "Is something wrong?"

"No... no, not at all," I replied quickly, probably too quickly.

"You've hardly said a word all day," she chided.

"Sorry. I've been... thinking..."

"Is it because I kissed you last night?"

"Well, it did come as a bit of a surprise!"

"I'm sorry, Alan, but I just... felt like it!"

"You've never felt like that before, have you?"

"Yes, I have..."

"With me?" I asked incredulously.

She nodded. "Yes."

"When?"

"Last Saturday night, and again when you agreed to come with me this weekend, there by your pool."

"Oh, my God!" We sat there in silence for a moment.

"Will you take me dancing?" Sandra asked.

"Now? Tonight?"

"Yes."

Are you putting me on, Bo... er, Sandra?"

"In what way?"

"Does it make you feel more like a girl to have a... a boyfriend?"

"I couldn't feel more like a girl than I do right now, than I've felt all day!"

"But you're not..."

"I'm not? No, don't answer that. It's OK. If you don't want to go dancing with me, you can just walk me back to my room."

"It's not that... it's just... just..."

"It's OK, Alan. You don't have to explain yourself to me."

“She” got up from the table and I joined “her.” We walked slowly back to “her” room. At “her” door, “she” turned towards me. “She” was very close and “her” eyes met mine shyly.

And even while every fiber of my body yelled at me not to do it, my arms were encircling “her” body!

“Sandra” just melted into my arms.

We kissed.

Long and hard!

“She” was trembling.

I took my key from my pocket, opened my door, took “her” hand, and led “her” inside my room.

“She” followed me willingly!

I closed the door behind us, took “her” into my arms, and we kissed again.

And again.

And again.

And yet again!

“She” moved her face away from mine just a little.

“Alan... I wanted to know...”

“And?”

“Now I know!”

“She” kissed me quickly and moved away from me before I could think. “She” opened the door, stepped outside and closed it softly behind “her.”

It was a month before the various stuff Bobby had done for Marianna was published and became public.

After we had returned from Bridgeport, Bobby changed. Oh, not dramatically, but subtly. And he became sort of reclusive.

We still saw him from time to time for a soda or a Big Mac, but generally, he went straight home after school and we saw very little of him on weekends.

He was a different Bobby too. No longer was he uptight or fidgety or nervous about things. He was much quieter and more relaxed. In fact, an even more pleasant person altogether.

We never talked about the incident at Bridgeport, nor in fact, did I ever discuss anything about Bridgeport with anyone. Something had happened as a result of the Rydal Cup incident which made Bobby more popular than ever with the girls. Oh, not in the dating sense, because he never dated any of them, but he was often seen in conversation with groups of girls in school and out. What they talked about, I had no idea. But I, at least, understood why he might have something in common with them.

And something happened to me too, after Bridgeport. I had always been totally certain that there was not a gay bone in my body, but Bridgeport had disturbed me.

I had enjoyed kissing Bobby, and I had been aroused by the experience. Over time, I managed to convince myself that I hadn't been kissing a boy, and that therefore, there was nothing unnatural about it.

But, I found that in his keeping his distance from me, I missed him! Except that I had this nagging, recurring thought that I was really missing Sandra!

When the advertising catalog which featured Sandra was released, inevitably, Mrs. Young had stock of it in her Marianna Boutique. It took no time at all for the whole town to realize who the model was. The pictures were excellent. Some people "cluck-clucked" and shook their heads, but most seemed to accept Bobby, the girl, especially women and girls.

I anticipated some negative reactions from the "footballers," but none came. They kept their distance from him, but there was no ragging. It was like they sensed "something..."

A couple of days after the catalog was released, Bobby called me at home. "What do you think?" he asked.

"About the catalog? I think that's great!"

"No, about the reaction..."

"I think it was fairly positive from where I stand. It seems to me that you have come out of the whole thing pretty well."

"Mother says there has been a big jump in sales..."

"Good. That was the whole idea, wasn't it?"

"She says people are being very sweet and complimentary."

"They could hardly be otherwise. You look terrific."

"Some people have told her that I should wear girls' things all the time."

"Have they?"

"They say I'm much too pretty to be a boy and that I'm wasting my life. Some of the girls at school say the same thing."

"What does Nancy say?"

"She agrees."

"And you?"

"I'm still a little confused, but I know which I'd rather be."

"You don't have to tell me because I know what you would choose. Why don't you just do it? I think people have been pampered enough now. I expect they'll handle it easily enough, most of them anyway. The others don't count!"

"Do you really think that, Alan?"

"Yes, I do."

"May I ask you something?"

"Of course."

"It's personal."

"OK."

"Would you and Mike and Steve still want to be seen with me, be my friend?"

"I can't speak for Mike nor Steve, although I doubt there would be any problem. But, I would!"

"It's just that I'd like some support during the transition period."

"You'll get it! Not just from me, you've already said that the girls will back you."

"Not all of them."

"Not all of anyone ever supports everything."

"Alan?"

"Yes?"

"It's been lovely talking to you. You're a very important part of all this, you know."

"I am?"

"You know you are. I'll see you tomorrow."

He rang off. There was no doubt at all in my mind what he was going to do. Soon after, I got together with Mike and Steve and told them of our conversation.

"Holy shit!" Mike said. "You mean he intends to come out as a girl?"

I nodded. "The problem is, he's afraid we will... reject him, I guess. I've already told him that I won't."

Steve shrugged. "It's gonna be pretty funny."

"Why?"

"I don't mean 'ha ha' funny, I just mean getting used to it all."

"He's still my friend," Mike said. "I can handle it."

"You'd better get used to 'she' and 'Sandra.'"

"I don't think that will be hard since he looks so much like a girl anyway," Steve said. "But, well, I mean, it's always been just us four guys, no girls..."

"Don't you like girls, Steve?"

"I... haven't had much to do with them... I'm not very attractive to girls..."

"I like girls," Mike affirmed. "But Bobby's not a girl, is he?"

"I think he is," I replied.

"Do you? Really, I mean?"

"Yes, I do. Even that first time at the Cup, Sandra was very different from Bobby. I had the feeling even then that I was with a girl."

"When's it going to happen?" Steve asked.

"I don't know."

"Is he going to turn up at school dressed as a girl?"

"I don't know that either."

"I guess we'll just have to wait and see," Mike said.

We didn't have to wait long.

It was our habit to meet on Saturday mornings at the local drug store. The three of us had been there for about half an hour and were beginning to wonder what had happened to Bobby when he arrived.

Or, rather, "Sandra" did... in a white, short skirt, flats and a pale green sleeveless blouse, hair in place, make-up done, "she" looked every inch the pretty young teenage girl!

"She" came to our booth and slid into the bench. I was proud of Mike and Steve. They both greeted "her" as though they had known "her" all their lives. We talked for a while about this and that, avoiding any specific reference to his decision and the subsequent transformation.

There was a group of six local girls from school in another booth. One of them, Marcy Hunt, got up from their table and came over to us.

"Hi, guys," she said to all of us, then addressed Sandra directly, "Sandra, isn't it? The girls wondered if you'd come and have a soda with us."

Sandra glanced at me, then turned back to Marcy. "I'd love to. Thank you."

"She" got up and went to the girls' booth with Marcy. I watched the way they greeted "her" and how quickly they were talking and laughing together. And I realized in that moment that we had lost "her." "She" was no longer one of the boys. "She" now had breasts and pretty hair and wore lipstick and nail polish.

I figured that in a couple of months, maybe six, people would forget "she" had ever been "Bobby" Young. I wondered also, in the same moment, how people would take it if I had a once male girlfriend. I wondered how my own folks would react. Right or wrong, though, I still wanted "her."

Mike and Steve left half an hour later to do something else. I waited around until Sandra had finished yacking with the girls. When she returned to me, I suggested we go for a walk. We left the drug store and walked along the river track which meandered through the town.

"What happened with the girls?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing, really, we just talked. Why?"

"I thought it was a nice thing for them to do."

"Me too, lovely. They were very sweet."

"How do you feel?"

"Wonderful. I've made the decision, Alan. I'm a girl, not a boy. I'm sure I always have been despite what my body says. It just took the trigger of seeing myself in a real light to realize it."

"Will you go to school as a girl?"

“Yes. Mother spent some time with the principal last Friday. He wants a week to talk to the staff members and some senior kids, but he reckons it'll be OK.”

“She” laughed. “I'll have to use the staff toilets. I won't be able to use the boys' or girls'!”

“But, they're locked.”

“They're arranging to give me a key.”

“Wow! You're causing a bit of a revolution.”

“Oh, I don't think so. It's funny though. I could be picked up for indecent exposure if I use the girls' and for offensive behavior if I use the boys'!”

“Holy hell, Sandra, isn't that a big pain in the tit?”

“It's a small compromise, I think. I don't know what I'm expected to do if I need to go when I'm not in school.”

“Carry a plastic jug. At least you don't have to squat to use the loo.”

“She” laughed again. “And what do I do with the plastic bag?”

“Drop it in the nearest trash can, I suppose.”

“She” made a face. “Ugh! It's OK, Alan. Thanks for your advice, but I can work it out. How're the guys?”

“Fine, but I think they both think we're down to three members. They're not evicting you, but your transfer of allegiance today seemed to send a definite message. You'll want to hang out with the girls now, I suppose...”

“I'm not sure that I'll hang out with anyone. I think I may have to be somewhat of a loner for a while.”

“What about me?”

“You're different!” “She” smiled at me. “I'll hang out with you, if you want me to, that is. But, I think we should be a bit cool about it. I mean, people will jump to all sorts of conclusions.”

“I don't much care. If you can take the stand you're taking, I can do my bit for the cause!”

“She” took my hand and squeezed it hard. “I can't tell you how much your standing by me has meant.”

“You're my friend, Bob.. er, Sandra. In fact, you're more than a friend. I've never had a girlfriend, but I'm quite sure I'm not gay, but... well... I'd like it if I could think of you as my girlfriend!”

“She” leaned over and kissed my cheek tenderly. “Her” lips were warm and soft.

“You can. But I don't know how to handle this yet either. Let's take our time, OK?”

Bobby — I guess I'll have to call “him” — “her” and “she” and “Sandra” from now on — took the following week off from school. It was supposed to be a “readiness” period. Everyone was in high expectations for the “new girl” at school, and it was the main topic of discussion for groups who were “for” and those who were “against.”

Fortunately, there were far more of the former.

I saw her once or twice during that week, but only at her home. She was restricting herself a little while people got used to the idea. Mrs. Young had some nasty phone calls during the week — not exactly “hate calls,” but not pleasant ones either. Most of them were blaming her for turning her son into a “little fairy.” But, to be fair, she had a few from some old friends who were supportive as well. So, there was a balance.

They had no other family members to contend with. so there were no traumas there.

Each time I saw Sandra, I wondered how Bobby ever could have existed. She was so much more comfortable and relaxed, funny, insightful, outgoing, laughing — lovable! And she always looked just exactly right. It was obvious Nancy Young was taking advantage of her knowledge of female fashion and style, and Sandra was using her share of the \$5000 to great effect.

Old Mrs. Kouros was a fan for life with Sandra's \$5000 contribution to the soup kitchen. She told us when we called on her to pass over the check that she had heard from Wally and that his Mother was as well as could be expected, and better for having Wally around. He would not be coming back, he had told her. He would come into some money when his Mother died and Sandra's generosity had caused him to think about his own life. He figured he'd been taking long enough, it was time to give something back...

There was a ripple of excitement running through the school on the Monday morning Sandra was expected. When she finally turned up though, everyone was amazingly cool and things appeared to go on just as before.

She was just Miss Sandra Young rather than ex-Mister Bobby Young. It seemed to me that it was as well Bobby had always kept a pretty low profile at school. Far more people were aware of his as Sandra than there ever had been as Bobby!

Younger kids who would not have recognized Bobby in the street, seemed to know Sandra quite well. Oh, a few of them sniggered behind their hands on that first day, and indeed, during the first week, but they got used to her and bored with being silly soon enough. Teachers who had been calling her by her male name for three years, never made a slip of the tongue thereafter.

But, how could they with such a pretty young woman sitting in their classes?

A number of things transpired in that first month or so. Sandra was permitted, at the request of the girls, to join their gym class, although she had to use her key to the staff toilets to change into her gym uniform. She eased out of her semi-reclusive state and was often seen shopping with her Mother. She also took up a position as sales assistant in the Marianna Boutique on Saturday mornings.

Sales didn't suffer in the least. She was asked, but refused, to do a fashion spread for a national magazine. As she explained it to me, she had had enough publicity for the time being...

And, another odd little thing happened. A couple of the senior boys and two teachers apparently found her attractive enough to want to date her!...though not publicly.

She was invited to their homes for dinner, but she politely refused all of them.

So far as her personal development was concerned, in two months she was able to give up the wig. She had her now quite long hair styled at a local salon, the same salon she had been attending for weeks to have the small amount of facial hair removed by electrolysis.

She grew her fingernails quite long. A few weeks short of her seventeenth birthday, she was genuinely quite beautiful. Five feet seven inches tall, she weighed about a hundred and twenty pounds, and was lithe and sleek, with deep blue eyes, olive skin and high cheekbones.

Throughout these first months, she steadfastly refused to go out with me, despite my repeated requests. But, I visited her home often and we sat and talked and worked over school assignments together. Mrs. Young doted on her, clearly proud and delighted with her daughter.

Nancy had arranged through her lawyer to have her name changed, legally, to Sandra Elizabeth. She acquired her driving license.

And she acquired something else too. About five months after Sandra's coming out, I was visiting her one weekend. It was a hot day and she was wearing just a pale green T-shirt and white short shorts. I could not help noticing that her breasts were smaller than those she had been creating with her mastectomy inserts. I also noticed, through their prominence, that she had small but definite nipples. It dawned on me that she was not wearing a bra either!

"Sandy," I said in some awe, "are you growing breasts?":"

She smiled. "Yes," she said proudly, "I'm already a 34-A and I'm not wearing the inserts anymore."

"But, how?"

She took some time to explain to me a hormone program her doctor had arranged for her.

"My hips have filled out a little too," she said.

"Can I... see... them?"

She looked shocked. "Alan! You ask the most impertinent things!"

Nevertheless, she pulled the T-shirt out from her shorts and raised the front enough for me to see the most perfect pair of small up-tilted breasts I had ever seen! Actually, to tell the truth, the only pair of breasts I had ever seen, other than in some skin magazines!

I had only a second or so to view them before she tucked her shirt in again.

"There, that's all for now!" she quipped.

I wondered if I should hope for something more since she had said, "for now."

The Rydal Cup came around again.. Sandy was seventeen years and three months old and I was a month older than she. A week before the big event, I was visiting.

Thus far, Sandy and I had never been a twosome, although there had been occasions when we had joined Mike and Steve and their girlfriends — Sandy's influence again. She had managed to convince the girls that they were really quite sweet guys.

Anyway, during the course of my visit, Sandy asked, “Alan, as last year's co-winner, I have an invitation to go to the Rydal Cup and Ball. Will you be my partner?”

At last!

I was knocked out to be asked!

Sandra didn't win this year, although in my eyes, she was the most exquisite woman present! We went to the Ball that night. Sandy looking superb in sophisticated black. We danced all night and I held her tightly, closely, intimately!

“I'm leaving school,” she told me during the evening.

“What are you going to do?”

“I'm going to work for Mom full time at Marianna. I have made application to them to manage a store. I can't do that until I'm nineteen, but if I get eighteen months experience with Mom and it all works out all right, they'll give me my own store then.”

I was aghast. “In another town?”

“Yes.”

“You'll be leaving Rydal?”

“Yes, but it's a long time yet.”

“It'll be too soon, whenever it is!”

She snuggled close. “Alan, it's been long enough now. I think it'll be OK if we see each other publicly!”

“Just when you're going away!”

“Not for another eighteen months, at least. You leave school next year.”

I was specializing in computer technologies. I would graduate in a little under a year before going to college and joining the work force.

“But you'll still be leaving.”

“Do you think you'll get work as a computer tech in Rydal?”

I looked at her. “What are you saying?”

“Perhaps... I don't know if you will still want to... but... well, maybe you could come with me...”

We stopped dancing, or at least I stopped dancing, and Sandy stopped with me. I just started at her for a moment, then took her hand.

“Come outside a minute.”

We stood on the balcony overlooking the park, on a clear, balmy night. We didn't say a word. I slid my arm around her waist and pulled her gently to me. We kissed, intensely, passionately.

After a long moment, Sandra sighed deeply and gazed steadily into my eyes.

“Oh, Alan, you've no idea how long I've waited for you to do that! I've wanted it so long!”

“Me too,” I whispered fervently.

Her slim arms went around my neck and she kissed me back.

“There's something else,” she whispered.

“What?”

“I'm not going straight to work for Mom. Next Tuesday, I'm going away for a month.”

I started to protest, but she put a finger up to my lips.

“Shhh, it'll only be a month. Don't ask me where I'm going. I'll make you a promise, I'll tell you in due time. OK?”

I nodded. “OK.”

“You won't find another girl while I'm away?”

“I won't find another girl ever. I love you, Sandy.”

“I love you too, Alan.” Her eyes were shining bright. “Let's go back inside and dance some more. I want to be held tight in your arms...”

Sandy went away six days later. She called me to say only that she'd be back in a little over four weeks. Nancy went with her. Marianna put a manager in for the duration. I heard nothing from her while she was away, got no letter, no call, nothing! I agonized, but I knew she'd be back.

The time passed so slowly.

Then, one evening, as the leaves had begun to yellow and the nights were becoming chillier, I got a phone call. I knew her voice immediately.

“Alan?”

“Sandy! Oh, thank God, you're back!”

“Unh hunh. Alan, could you come over? I'd love to see you...”

I was in the car and at the Youngs' home in ten minutes. Sandy greeted me at the door.

She positively glowed with happiness.

Her hair was longer and styled a little differently.

We embraced and kissed.

Then I followed her into the living room, expecting to see Mrs. Young.

She wasn't there.

“Where's your Mom?”

“She's at the store doing a stock check. We're all alone, Alan!”

She wrapped her arms around my neck and we kissed again.

“Miss me?” she teased, smiling brilliantly.

“Oh, God! Yes!”

We sat on the sofa and just held each other for the longest time. Then:

“Alan, would you like to see my breasts again?” she asked softly.

I didn't have to answer that! I just nodded. She stood, took my hand and led me into her bedroom.

It had changed dramatically. Gone was any evidence of Bobby, leaving the girl Sandra completely in charge! The boy's bedroom I had seen for three years was gone and in its place was a frilly, pink, white and pastel girl's bedroom.

I felt honored to be admitted to such a beautifully feminine place.

Inside, she kissed me quickly and turned around.

“Unzip me, Alan, please.”

I unzipped the long rear zipper on her dress. She faced me again, looking directly into my eyes, smiling enigmatically. She shrugged out of the dress and it fell to the floor at our feet.

Sandy was naked under the dress. My eyes lowered to her breasts which were the same perfect mounds atop her chest, although a little larger.



I allowed my eyes to drop further, and, thinking I was seeing things, gasped for breath!

I fell back a step and stared unashamedly, openmouthed, for a long few minutes.

There was no trace of “Bobby” anymore, none whatsoever! The boy sex had disappeared completely, being replaced by a girl's sweet anatomy!

Smiling at my surprise, Sandra stepped out of the dress, took a step towards me and we embraced again, but this time, for the “first” time, as man and woman!

She started unbuttoning my shirt.

“Alan, there's only one thing left to do to make me a whole woman, and you have to do it.”

She undressed me swiftly, efficiently. After all, she had been undressing a boy for her years... her former self!

I was shaking like a leaf in a whirlwind!

She pulled me down atop her on her bed, her arms holding me tightly, her legs wrapping around, ankles locking behind mine!

She whispered in my ear, "Be very gentle with me, Darling, my pussy's still very tender..."

“SWAP WEEK”

By Joanne Wilson

David Morrow considered himself one of the most privileged of boys. His parents were seriously moneyed and he was afforded, all his life, the very best that was available. When he was granted the additional privilege of attending The Banks High School after his thirteenth birthday, he was delighted.

This was indeed a special school. The six senior grades were so exclusive that only ten pupils were enrolled in each class. The teaching staff were selected from among the best in the land and with such relatively small numbers to contend with, were able to give a very personalized form of tuition.

The school was coed, in line with the philosophy that once into their teens, young people should be encouraged to mix and learn to come to terms with the opposite sex, to understand them and to have greater respect for them.

There was a very elitist atmosphere within the school, even to the point that pupils were selected to a certain extent according to their appearance, as well as to academic qualifications. The school was run like a very tight ship by a female principal, a fearsome woman when crossed, but otherwise a pleasant, although strict, disciplinarian.

Thus, David Morrow soon learned certain points of behavior and habit.

Miss Sanders, the principal, had a number of tricks up her sleeve to ensure the balance of understanding between the sexes. A number of these were outlined to parents at the first meeting between the two parties, and it was necessary for parents to agree to these terms before signing their children over to the school, and parting with the very high fees demanded for this specialized form of education.

No sport was played by the school other than tennis and this only at an intra-school level. Thus, the school discouraged the macho football and baseball heroes. Physical education was otherwise provided within the school gymnasium where regular weekly sessions were arranged to encourage healthy physical development.

One of the strangest of Miss Sander's unique concepts was one that she was always at great pains to explain to parents. In the second semester of their first year, one week was set aside during which time the boys were to take over the girls' roles; swapping carpentry for cooking, metalwork for sewing, and other more normally male oriented activities for more feminine pursuits.

Naturally, the reversal was complete when the girls spent the week learning to use woodworking tools and a drill, wrench and hacksaw.

But this was not all that was required. During this same week's period, the boys and girls were also required to swap uniforms. The older boys and girls, all of whom

had gone through this gender conditioning process, were under threat of expulsion from the school if, during this period, they made fun of or even sniggered at their junior colleagues. They were to be completely accepted for what they appeared to be; the girls, boys, and the boys, girls.

It was Miss Sanders firm belief that this quaint custom served a most useful purpose in making boys and girls understand one another better.

It was always interesting to Miss Sanders that as this week approached, the boys became more and more nervous about relinquishing their masculinity, while the girls were quite unmoved by the thought of having to attend school as boys.

To add a further dimension to the exercise, Miss Sanders and other teachers arranged a dance party for the final night of the “swap week” where, once again, the boys came as girls and the girls as boys.

In the weeks leading up to swap week, the boys discussed the subject among themselves with some apprehension and even a little fear. Most did anyway. Others seemed less concerned. At home, some Mothers were looking forward to dressing their sons up prettily — to have them learn some of the lessons of femininity.

Neither the boys nor their parents were in a position to complain about swap week. They had all agreed to it as a condition of entry into the school.

David Morrow was uncertain as to how he felt about it all. He was an only child. His Father was a high flier businessman who spent a great deal of time away from the family home. He and his son had never been close, there having never been time for the usual father/son bonding to take place. David was therefore much closer to his Mother and tended to identify with her in many ways.

They were similar in appearance, finely built and slim, and David was good looking in a rather delicate sort of way. Of the five boys in his grade, David was probably the best looking, although none of them were unattractive.

Likewise, the girls were all quite pretty as well. David and his friends wondered how the girls could possibly be made to look like boys. On the other hand, David and at least two others were a little concerned that they might actually make quite pretty girls themselves!

Alan Smithson already had an idea how he might look. A year earlier, he had actually attended a Halloween night party dressed as a girl, his pretty red hair piled up on top of his head, at his Mother's suggestion, and had been most convincing! David had an idea that Alan was really looking forward to swap week.

Some arrangements had to be made with respect to outfits for the two groups to wear. Two of the boys had older sisters at the school and no provisions needed to be made for them. The others pooled various items of their outerwear and borrowed various items from one another.

David acquired a school regulation dress, and shoes from Gina Martin who was nearest to his size. During the week before swap week, Gina's Mother rang David's Mother and had offered a party dress for him to wear to the dance party. David's Mother returned from the Martin household carrying a small parcel which contained a

few additional personal items. She did not, at this stage, bother to tell David what they were.

By a convenient quirk of coincidence, David's Father took off on one of his extended business trips midweek before the allotted week of the role swaps. David had not been looking forward to his Father seeing him in a dress. He had the feeling that his Father already considered him a bit of a sissy. On the Sunday of the fateful week, David's Mother insisted he had to try on Gina's uniform. He was a little dismayed when he discovered how thorough she intended to be. On the bed beside the laid out dress were a padded bra, some pretty panties, pantyhose, a chemise top and a frilly lace half-slip.

“Mother! I don't have to wear all these things, do I?” he asked.

Mary Morrow looked at him with surprise. “Of course you do! Miss Sanders said we have to be as realistic as possible.”

“But, Mother, a padded bra?”

“Do the girls in your class all wear bras?”

“Well, yes, I suppose...”

“Well, then???”

“And, pantyhose? We can wear socks, you know.”

“Pantyhose are much nicer and much more feminine.”

“But, Mother...”

“No 'buts,' David, get your clothes off right now and put on these panties! I'll turn my back to preserve your modesty.”

David sighed deeply, stripped, and stepped into the sheer, pink, nylon panties with the delicate lace hems. His Mother then fitted the bra to him and adjusted the straps. He realized, once it was in place, that the light padding gave him a most realistic bust line!

“Where did you get this thing?” he asked dubiously.

“I borrowed it from Gina's Mother.”

“Gina wears a padded bra?”

“It's a training bra, Honey. She's grown out of it. Now, let me show you how to put on pantyhose.”

His Mother helped him into a pair of regulation school pantyhose, not quite sheer, but not unattractive either. This was followed by the chemise and half-slip, and then the school uniform dress, a pretty, plaid patterned, short sleeved, belted dress with a skirt a few inches above the knee. The school shoes were black flats, but quite feminine in looks. Despite his qualms about having to dress in this fashion, David was impressed by the comfort of the clothing. The only item still to be put on was the wide-brimmed straw school hat. When this was placed on his head with the locks of his moderately long, blonde hair showing from beneath it, David's Mother stood back to examine him, and smiled.

“You look wonderful!” she enthused. “I think Miss Sanders will be most pleased.”

Not two miles away, Alan Smithson was experiencing none of the misgivings which plagued David. Wearing a similar outfit of clothes borrowed from Peggy Ryan, Alan had already suggested to his Mother that he should wear the clothes all day, “to get used to them.” Mary Smithson was perfectly comfortable with the idea, and in her own way, quite delighted with the idea of swap week.

Once before she had taken great pleasure in the process of transforming her pretty son into a cute young lady. She had not bothered to borrow anything for her son to wear to the dinner dance, having altogether different ideas, ideas she would reveal to Alan later in the week.

David spent just enough time in Gina's clothes to satisfy his Mother that they all fitted properly. But even after he had removed them, the memory lingered on.

A mile in another direction from Alan's home, John Zacarias was experiencing some gentle ribbing from his Father. John was dressed in his older sister's school outfit and standing beside his sister who had helped him dress in these things, as his Father smiled at them.

“You look cute, Johnny,” he said.

“If the kids at school aren't allowed to make fun of us, you're not either!”

“I'm not making fun of you, Johnny,” his Father protested. “You do look cute.”

“He doesn't want to look cute, Dad,” Ann Zacarias commented. “He thinks that looking cute is sissy.”

“Better cute than silly. At least you don't look silly! Besides, I happen to be one of those who agrees with Miss Sanders. I think the experience will be good for you. You should try to enjoy it.”

“I agree,” Ann said. “You have a whole week of this ahead of you, so you might just as well do the best you can.”

“I guess so,” John agreed dejectedly.

“And, Johnny, you should wear one of Annie's padded training bras. Your dress looks all wrong with a flat chest.”

John hung his head. “OK, Dad,” he agreed resignedly.

The next morning, David Morrow dressed in Gina's uniform and underwear. He slipped on the shoes and went down to eat his breakfast.

“You look lovely,” his Mother commented cheerfully.

David blushed rosily. “I'm glad Dad's not here to see me!”

Alan dressed with his Mother's help. The only items she had borrowed from Penny were the uniform, shoes and hat. Alan wore a bra, panties, slip and pantyhose of his Mother's.

“What a pity you can't wear higher heels to school,” his Mother said. “You have lovely legs, just made for high heels.”

John and Ann sat down to breakfast together, identically dressed.

“That looks much better with the bra,” Charles Zacarias said. “And the lipstick is a nice touch. You look like sisters.”

“I just hope the other guys wear lipstick too,” John said.

David had his Mother drive him to school. He could not bring himself on this first day to take the school bus. Alan happily walked to the bus stop and took the regular bus to school. He was wearing lipstick and just enough mascara which he hoped would not be noticed because lipstick was the only cosmetic allowed girls at school. He wondered if they would notice that he had shaved his legs under the heavier pantyhose.

John also took the bus with his sister for company and support. On the bus, John met George Bailey, also in company with his older sister. Despite his efforts to play down the feminine role, George had refused point blank to wear a bra or lipstick. George looked exactly like so many other young school girls.

“You look nice,” George said to John.

“So do you. Why aren't you wearing a bra?”

“I tried to talk him into it,” Patty Bailey said, “but he simply refused!”

At school, David caught up with Paul Roberts, the fifth member of the group. Paul was taller than the others at five feet five, and had had some trouble in finding a uniform to fit. Finally, he had borrowed one from one of the senior girls, seventeen year old Junie Bradshaw. He was wearing a bra, obviously, but no lipstick. His longish hair was tied in a pony tail under the school hat. He looked older, David thought, and quite attractive to boot.

The bus carrying Alan arrived. David and Paul stared at him. He walked towards them through the school grounds, proud and erect and smiling.

“God, look at Alan!” David said. “He looks perfect!”

“Hi, girls,” Alan said breezily as he walked up. “Isn't this fun?”

“Fun?” said Paul. “I've never been so embarrassed in all my life!”

“Me neither,” David added.

“Oh, it's OK,” Alan said. He looked around. “Have you seen any of the boys?”

“Which boys?” David asked.

“You know, OUR boys.”

“Oh. No, but I haven't looked for them either.”

Alan strolled off. The second bus arrived with John and George on board. They separated from their sisters and looking equally sheepish, joined David and Paul.

“Well, here we go, I guess,” George said with a shrug.

Not much later in the day, our “girls” caught up with some “boys,” Gina and Sandra.

Gina and Sandra, wearing long pants and jackets over their shirts, looked no less like girls than they normally did. For a start, both had long, pretty hair, but neither of them had managed to cover up their prominent breastworks very successfully.

Diane Dodds, who had very tiny breasts and short brown hair, could have easily passed for a boy in a pinch.

As could Jean Merryvale who was tall for her age and very angular.

Susan Jacobs could not have been a boy in a million years! Susan was just too well built and much too pretty, but she wore her suit with style just the same.

In class, Miss Sanders came by before formal lessons began to welcome the “girls” and “boys” to class, and to congratulate them all on their efforts and good spirits. Then, over the course of the day, everyone got involved in their work and into the spirit of the exercise and began to forget that they had swapped roles. It was all just taken for granted and accepted.

That night at home, David stayed in his school dress until it was bedtime. He felt no need to change.

Paul and George returned to boys' clothes the minute they arrived through the door.

John remained in Ann's uniform, but resisted her playful suggestion that he should try something more casual.

Alan remained in the dress and asked his Mother if he could, maybe, try a pair of her high heels... “just for fun.” Of course, she agreed.

The next day, David took the bus, feeling more relaxed in his temporary girl's role. George bowed to pressure from the others and wore a bra. Paul did likewise and wore lipstick too. Alan added a further dimension to his effeminization and arrived at school with pink nail lacquer.

David was puzzled to discover that he wished he had done the same!

All five boys, however, were more relaxed than on the first day.

During the lunch break, they engaged in an extraordinary discussion regarding what each was wearing underneath.

“I'm wearing my sister's things,” John volunteered. “They're actually quite pretty and comfortable too.”

“So am I,” George said.

“I'm wearing Gina Martin's undies,” David grinned.

Paul pretended to swoon. “Gina Martin! God, I'd love to be wearing Gina Martin's undies next to my skin!”

“So, what are you wearing then, Paula?” David asked.

“Oh, I just borrowed some things from my Mom.”

“So did I,” Alan said. “She wears lovely things. I'm wearing a pale pink, silk, slip and panties set and a matching lace bra. They're really pretty. Mother said I could borrow them anytime I want.”

The other four stared at Alan. Alan blushed beet red, realizing what he had just said.

“And, will you?” Paul asked.

“Oh, no... I mean... just this week, I mean...”

“Listen,” George said, “I want to know what we're all going to wear on Saturday night, to the dance party.”

“I don't know yet,” David said. “I think Mom's borrowed something from Gina's Mom.”

“I don't think we should tell, even if we do know,” Alan said. “Let it be a surprise.”

“OK,” John said. “But are we going to be serious about it? I mean, dress up properly like real girls?”

“I think we're expected to, aren't we?” Paul asked.

“I think so,” David said. “I guess we have to.”

“High heels and make-up and everything,” John said, looking pained.

“I'm wearing high heels,” Alan said. “I tried some last night.”

The others stared at him once more.

“You're weird, Alan,” Paul said.

At home that night, David asked his Mother if he could wear nail polish the next day. She agreed, and did his nails for him before bedtime. John was invited, once again, by Ann to wear something more casual.

“Go on,” his Father said. “You might as well try it.”

John succumbed to the pressure and soon enough, was clad in a pretty print dress and white shoes with little heels. He was surprised by how pretty he looked.

Alan's Mother suggested that if he were going to wear high heels on Saturday night, he should get more practice in them. It took no persuading.

George and Paul got out of their dresses and into jeans. But Paul did a funny thing and left the lipstick and the pony tail on. His parents thought he had just forgotten.

On the third day, Alan came to school wearing a pair of little gold earrings. David had his pink nails and had borrowed a little bracelet from his Mother. Paul wore a bluebird ring his Mother had loaned him. The boys, except for George, were becoming more adventuresome each day.

That night, a few strange things took place in the various boy's homes.

David's Mother suggested he should rinse out the uniform and put it in the clothes dryer. David agreed.

“You don't have to take off everything, though. Here, I'll get you something to wear.”

She took out a pale green summer dress. David removed the uniform and put on the dress without a murmur.

“Are you going to wear high heels on Saturday night?” his Mother asked.

“I don't know, I hadn't thought about it. Alan is though.”

“I think you should too. The girls would. Try these.” She handed him a pair of white high heeled courts and he slipped his feet into them while she gave him instructions on how to walk in them. Then he went to rinse out Gina's uniform.

John asked his sister if he could borrow something else of hers and happily dressed in a white skirt, yellow blouse and white high heels. Ann insisted she should do something with his face and did a full make-up job for him. When he came out looking like a Princess, his Father looked up from his evening paper.

“You look lovely, Darling,” he said.

John was surprised that his Father would call him “Darling”!

Tall Paul's Mother asked what he was going to wear to the dance party. Paul had no idea.

“You could wear something of mine, if you like,” she said. “Let's go and choose something.”

Paul was a little uncomfortable rummaging through his Mother's wardrobe with her. She picked out a red knee length dress made of Thai silk.

“This will fit,” she said. “We should try it.”

“Can't we do that on Saturday?” he asked.

“Oh, I guess so,” she said. “You shouldn't be embarrassed about it though. I'll bet the other boys aren't.”

“Well, I am!” Paul said.

Alan enjoyed a wonderful surprise. After they had eaten, his Mother took him to her room and showed him a new dress. It was black cotton jersey, above the knee, with a fullish skirt and a fitted bodice with thin spaghetti straps.

“I bought it for you today,” Mary Smithson said. “I want you to be the best looking girl at the party.”

“Oh, Mother, it's beautiful!” Alan gushed. “Can I try it on?”

“Yes, of course. You'll have to wear it with a strapless bra. The skirt's short, so you will have to wear pantyhose too. I have some ultra sheers in black and you can wear those. I have a bra that will suit as well. I bought you some shoes too.”

She showed him a pair of black patent courts with a very high stiletto heel.

Alan stripped to his panties and spent the next hour trying on the dress and various accessories.

“You look beautiful!” his Mother said when they finally called it a night. “By the way, I rang Pam Johnson today. She's my beautician and she's coming over late on Saturday afternoon to do your hair and make-up for you. Let's do your nails again before you go to bed. I think you could use a darker shade.”

At school the next day, all the boys, except for George, had secrets. David still didn't know what he would be wearing on Saturday night, but he knew that he would be wearing high heels and he also knew that if he wore something of Gina's, it would be pretty and sexy.

Alan knew exactly what he would be wearing and he was on cloud nine.

John had not yet made a decision, but Ann had offered to let him wear any one of her three party dresses and he knew that he would be wearing high heels with whatever dress he chose. He knew how he looked in make-up and there were still traces of shadow around his eyes this morning at school, and the boys figured he had been wearing it.

Paul knew he would be wearing a pretty red dress of his Mother's. He was regretting that he had not tried it on. Maybe tonight...

On this day, Thursday, all the boys, except for George, had added further items of feminine adornment. Alan had his red tipped finger nails, a different pair of earrings, a darker shade of lipstick and a couple of pretty rings.

John was wearing red polish and a couple of Ann's bracelets.

Paul had changed his lipstick and added earrings.

Taking the lead from Alan, David had added earrings as well and also a thin gold chain around his pretty neck..

Only George stuck rigidly to the original uniform, pale lipstick and a bra.

The "boys" in their class were impressed with the trouble the "girls" were taking and a little envious that they had done nothing to enhance their own appearances! Much more than the "girls," they wanted to get back into their own clothes!

That night, all the boys stayed dressed as girls once they arrived home. Paul approached his Mother and tried on the red dress. His Father was impressed, but not too keen on the effeminization of his only son. For his part, Paul was enjoying the game but he knew he would be happy to get back to his own things.

Alan was completely hooked and spent the evening with his Mother learning how to apply his own make-up and looking forward to seeing what a job Pam Johnson would make of it when she came over on Saturday.

A slightly confused David wondered why he so contentedly sought out another dress and high heels of his Mother's to wear at home that night, but reconciled himself to the thought that it was all for the swap week that he was doing it.

John had given up fighting his sister and allowed her to dress him fully and give him a lesson in deportment.

George, for the first time, agreed with Penny and his Mother and allowed them to experiment with his appearance. When his Mother brought out a pretty, cropped blonde wig she had once worn, he winced but permitted them to fit it. The next day the others were surprised to discover him wearing earrings and painted nails, just as they were.

On the Saturday morning of the party, Alan arose at eight, and without asking, dressed in pretty feminine underwear, a dress and flat shoes and went to make breakfast for his Mother.

David dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, but sat at the dressing table mirror, trying to figure out what he could do with his hair to make it look pretty for the night.

Paul dressed similarly, after breakfast, when his Mother suggested his hair was long enough to set. He allowed her to shampoo and style-set his hair in rollers, and spent a good part of the day with the rollers in place, while his hair dried.

George finally agreed to wear high heels that night and spend most of the day in them, under his jeans, getting used to them.

John was in for a major surprise. His sixteen year old sister came into his room when he was barely awake with a full outfit of pretty clothes, heels and underwear and laid them out for him. Beside the clothes was a shoulder length light brown wig. Ann left him to it. He staggered out of bed, took a shower and got dressed in those lovely things; a garter belt, sheer stockings, lacy panties, bra, slip, and a pale pink summery dress. He picked up the wig, examined it, then sat at his dressing table and fitted it to his head.

Satisfied, he used the various items of make-up that Ann had left on his dressing table from two nights ago. He stood up and slipped his feet into the white high heels and stood at his long mirror. Giving in to his feelings, he realized he was enjoying what he was seeing. He actually liked looking like a girl. He left the room and went out to the living room. He was surprised to find a woman sitting there; an attractive woman in her mid-forties. It took him some time to realize it was his own Father!

“Dad!”

His Father smiled. “Hi, Darling.”

“Dad! What are you doing?”

“I decided to join you and Ann,” the woman who was his Father said.

“But... why? I don't understand...”

Ann came in from the kitchen carrying a tray of breakfast items.

“Hi, Johnny. Gosh, your hair looks nice.”

“Ann! You know about this?”

“Sure, I've known for about three years. We figured it was about time to let you in on our little secret. 'Specially now that you look so pretty yourself.”

“You mean...”

“I've been doing this for some years now, Johnny, ever since your Mother died. I kept a lot of her clothes and after a time, I found that I enjoyed wearing them, sort of bringing her back to life, as it were.”

“Gosh, Dad, I'm amazed! Why didn't you tell me before?”

“I didn't want you to disapprove of me. When this swap week thing came up, I wanted to see how you'd take to it. Ann and I decided that you seemed to enjoy dressing as a girl, like I do, so we decided it was time.”

His Father stood up. He was every inch a woman, nicely dressed in a pale blue dress with smoke gray nylons and black high heels. His hair was rather like John's new wig and his make-up was flawless.

“You look terrific,” John said.

“So do you.” Charles Zacarias approached his son and they embraced warmly.

“The food's going to get cold, girls,” Ann grinned.

Late in the afternoon, Paul went to the bathroom and showered. His Mother had suggested he shave his legs, but he had refused, saying this was going too far. As a compromise, his Mother found a pair of support hose which would cover up the hair and still look quite attractive. Out of the shower and dried, he went to his room where his Mother had laid out certain items for him.

Accordingly, he dressed in pretty white panties, pantyhose, bra — which he filled with cotton balls — and slip. He went to his Mother's room where she sat him down and spent a good hour making up his face and brushing his hair into its pony tail and tying it with a red ribbon.

He shrugged into the dress. It was sleeveless with a demure high neckline and just knee length. His Mother closed the rear zipper. On his feet, he slipped a pair of matching red flat shoes. His Mother decorated him with some items of jewelry and earrings. She put his lipstick into a small bag with a gold shoulder strap. A little self-consciously, Paul went out into the living room.

“How do I look?” he asked his Father.

The heavy set man relaxing on the sofa looked up. “Too good, if you ask me! What have you done to him, Sarah?”

“It's just for tonight, Ben. It's all over tomorrow.”

“Just as well too. Silly business.”

“Don't be such a spoil sport, Dad,” Paul grinned. “If I can put up with it, you should be able to.”

“OK, all right, well, you certainly look like a girl, I'll give you that.”

John, Ann and Charleen — his Father's preferred name when he was dressed — chose an emerald green, dance dress of Penny's for John to wear. It was a fitted dress in a shimmery satin material with a scoop neck and elbow length sleeves. John showered and shaved his legs while Ann and Charleen prepared everything for him. Together they dressed him in jet black satin underwear — garter belt and stockings, panties, camisole-top, half-slip and bra. They filled the bra cups with a pair of Charleen's realistic breast forms.

John sat patiently while Ann made-up his face with some side advice from Charleen. He got into the dress before they patiently fitted the wig which he now knew his

Father had bought for him specially for the occasion. Ann brushed out the style and fitted various items of jewelry. He stepped into high, black calf, strapped sandals.

“I think you look sensational,” Ann said.

“I do too,” Charleen agreed.

John took himself across to the mirror. He could not help but agree. There was not a sign of boy in the lovely feminine image in the mirror. To put it mildly, he was thrilled.

With mixed feelings, David went to the bathroom around five o'clock. He was looking forward to the coming experience but he didn't think he should be. He showered and shaved his legs as his Mother had instructed. He still had no idea what he would be wearing except that they would be Gina's clothes. That alone excited him.

He joined his Mother in her bedroom where she had laid out some things. And what things! Gina's underwear was exquisite, all in pale pink and it was so delightfully feminine. He put on the bikini panties and a pair of the palest pink ultra sheer pantyhose. Then the bra — not the bra he had been wearing to school, but another, also softly, roundly, padded. He thrilled to the touch of the silken slip which slid down over his body. It was short, barely covering his fanny.

He looked around, but could see no sign of the dress. On the floor were a pair of pale pink, satin evening slippers with a three inch heel. At his Mother's direction, he stepped into them.

“Oh, God, Darling, you look so... so... lovely,” Mrs. Morrow said.

David could see himself in the mirror. His hair was wrong and he wore no make-up, but he certainly looked like a girl! He was fascinated by his slim, smooth-shaven legs, of which he could see every inch, their shape enhanced by the high heels. He could not help the smile that came to his lips.

He sat at the dressing table while his Mother made-up his face with a light foundation, a combination of brown and dark pink eye shadows, a pink blusher, brown mascara and a rich pink lipstick. He was still wondering about his hair when his Mother revealed an amazing wig. It was pale blonde in color, with lengths of silky strands which, he realized, would fall well down his back. Carefully, his Mother placed it on his head. It needed no brushing; just this wonderful fall of lustrous real hair all the way to his waist.

His Mother fitted a pair of gold drop earrings to his ears and a gold necklace around his neck. She added rings, watch and bracelets. His nails were already colored to match the lipstick.

“Stand up, Honey,” Mrs. Morrow instructed.

He did so and his eyes were attracted again to the mirror. He realized with a start that he was beautiful. He was exactly the image of the young girl his youthful heart had seen in his mind's eye. His attention was distracted by his Mother coming towards him, holding up a dress.

David blinked in disbelief.

She held the dress out near the floor and he stepped into it carefully. She drew it up across his fanny and lifted the thin spaghetti straps over his shoulders. She went in back of him and closed the rear zipper snugly about his waist. His eyes returned to the mirror. The bodice was square cut across the front and back. The material was pink satin with embroidered, rich white lace. The narrow straps were lace. The pink satin skirt was fitted and over layered with tiers of pink tulle, giving it fullness. It was very short, displaying about eight inches of slim, feminine thigh.

David had cause to take in a sharp inhale of breath!

“Well, what do you think?” his Mother asked.

“Oh, Mother! I don't believe it. It's... it's... just beautiful! I can't believe how I look!”

“You're very beautiful, Darling, and I love you!”

“I never dreamed Gina would have such a wonderful dress!”

“I think she'll be envious of you.”

“Oh, Mother!”

David blushed with pleasure.

Alan sat quietly in his Mother's bedroom. Pam Johnson had his thick, red hair set in rollers and was applying a foundation to cover the most prominent of his rather cute freckles. He was already wearing his set of black underwear, his bra filled with a pair of inserts his Mother had found for him at a specialty store in the city.

Alan was just a little plump and rounded. His Mother's long line bra was tight and, with the inserts, pushed his flesh up and in to give him the appearance of a very realistic cleavage. His waist was pulled in tightly with another item recently acquired, a black nylon net waspie. His fullish hips were the more realistic for it. His legs were clad in twelve denier, nylon and lycra pantyhose. He had his legs crossed so that he could enjoy the thrill of the slinky material with just the slightest movement. He was wearing the tight panties with his male symbol tucked tightly back between his legs.

Pam had already plucked his eyebrows quite dramatically to a fine arch. She now began to add blusher, dark gray and pale mauve eye shadow and black mascara in a number of layers of applications. She then outlined his lips in a rich red and filled in the color, thickly.

Nearby, Mrs. Smithson sat watching the transformation of her son into a young woman. She realized that what she had provided for him was not quite appropriate for a fourteen year old, but she didn't care. She wanted him to look dazzling. She watched as Pam fastened a rhinestone choker necklace around his neck and noticed his slim fingers reach up to touch it. His acrylic nails, fitted earlier, were rich with four coats of vivid red enamel.

Pam spun the dressing table stool around so that Alan was now facing the mirror. His Mother heard his sharp intake of breath and saw the smile spread across his face and his green eyes sparkled. She knew he was loving being transformed into a beautiful girl, but she had known since he was ten and had joyfully allowed her to dress him as a pretty girl for the Halloween party. She had so much wanted to do it again since,

but had elected to wait until he entered Banks High School to see how he reacted to the swap week.

Pam freed the jumbo rollers and Alan's hair tumbled out in a cascade of huge curls. Working deftly, Pam converted the curls into overlapping waves in a delightfully feminine style. It took her about twenty minutes. Finally, she attached a pair of rhinestone drop earrings to his ears.

"That's about it, Mrs. Smithson," Pam announced. "I hope you're both happy with it."

"Oh, I am!" Alan said.

"Yes, thank you so much, Pam. She looks divine! Time for the dress, Helen."

Alan heard the new name and smiled at his Mother. He stood on the four inch heels and while Pam watched this time, stepped into the black dress he had tried on earlier in the week. When it was in place, he went to the mirror.

He figured he looked at least sixteen, maybe seventeen. He also figured he looked startling. He just couldn't imagine anyone looking better.

George was startled. While he still had reservations about what was taking place, he couldn't help but admit he looked every inch a pretty young girl. He was now wearing Penny's first prom dress, all white and frothy and young teen. On his feet were white patent high heeled courts. On his legs, white sheer stockings. Holding them up was a delicate satin and lace garter belt, and beneath that, white flared, satin panties. His bra and slip matched perfectly. The dress had a sweetheart neckline, puffy short sleeves and a tight waist held in with a wide belt. The skirt was raw silk over three layered petticoats.

His Mother had hired a lovely wig, blonde and short and curly. His make-up was light and subdued.

As the youngest of the five boys, it was probably appropriate that George looked his age.

But, he looked something else as well. George had delicate features and soft white skin. He realized that he made over perfectly into a girl, a girl with a fresh, natural look, dewy and appealing. It bothered him, but he knew it was just for tonight.

Penny was fussing around him, putting the finishing touches to his hair. His Mother hovered in the background. She had been greatly concerned that he would react badly to the more complete transformation, or worse, refuse to go to the party at all!

But she was hopeful, now that he looked so convincing, that he would feel better about it. Penny was sure he would go. She took his hand and stood up.

"Shoes feel OK?" she asked.

"I guess so. It's just as well I wore them a couple of times."

He went to the mirror. "I do look like a girl, don't I?"

"Yes, you look very pretty," Penny praised.

His Mother held her breath. If he was going to cause a fuss, it would be over a remark just like that one.

"I guess so," George said. "Well, at least I don't look stupid!"

His Mother breathed a sigh of relief. In the living room, George's Father did a double take.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "You look... really nice!"

"Thanks, Dad," George smiled. "I'll be glad when I can stop all this nonsense, but if I have to do it, I'd rather look pretty than stupid!"

"Well, you certainly don't look stupid! I like your spirit, son. I wonder how the other guys will look."

"Oh, they'll look great. They were getting right into it by the end of the week, 'specially Alan. I think he likes being a girl."

"Well, I suggest you just go right ahead and have a good time." He raised his eyebrow. "Kiss the boys for me, if you know what I mean!" He laughed raucously.

George blushed.

All five "girls" were driven to the dance party by their Mothers. It was being held in the school hall. There would only be the ten of them plus a number of teachers and Miss Sanders. They would dance to disco music rather than a live band.

In proper female fashion, the fabulous five were all a little late, meaning that their partners were present and waiting before they arrived. It was perhaps fitting that they should be permitted to make an entrance.

All five "boys" had hired tuxedos, some blue, some white, and wore them with black trousers and bow ties in assorted colors. The five looked extraordinarily "handsome" but hardly "male."

Alan and George arrived first, the cars drawing up out front at the same moment. They alighted from the cars and stood for a moment, staring at each other.

"Holy shit!" George exclaimed. "Alan?"

"George?"

"I can't believe it, you look amazing!"

Alan smiled broadly. "Thank you, so do you."

"You look... older."

They each turned to their Mothers, waved good-bye and began to walk towards the hall.

"I can't believe I'm doing this," George said.

"I can," Alan replied.

They had barely made it to the front door when another car drew up and then another and from them, David and Paul alighted.

The first two paused at the front door. Paul and David said their good-byes and joined them. Alan looked at David with some dismay. He was stunning. Alan realized he had some competition.

They greeted each other with similar complimentary remarks all around. They entered the hall.

There was music playing, but no one was yet dancing. A sea of faces turned their way.

Miss Sanders was standing just inside the entrance to greet them. Before they left, each “girl” had had last minute instructions in curtsyng. The first four curtsied to Miss Sanders just as John appeared at the front door. He joined them and paid his compliments to Miss Sanders, who commented that they all looked, “quite lovely.”

She was right, of course. The “girls” were aware that the “boys” were examining them closely as they entered, feeling scrutinized.

There was a standoff for a few minutes while the “boys” plucked up the courage to ask for a dance. In that time, the “girls” made some comparisons.

Only Paul was not wearing high heels, but he looked tall and pretty anyway. He had taken the least trouble, but if he were the “plainest,” the other four realized they must have looked pretty special!

George was admired for his youthful prettiness and Alan for his sophisticated style. It was patently obvious that Alan was radiantly happy. He positively glowed! And despite his four inch heels, he was elegant and graceful to watch.

David stood out for his sheer beauty. And John too, in his sister's stylish dress, looked most attractive and content. He had been driven to the hall by Charleen playing “Mother” for the night. Charleen and Ann were then going off for dinner somewhere. It was the first time Charleen had elected to go to a restaurant and “she” was as excited as Jan — which was the name they had given him at home — had been about the party.

Gina was the first to break the ice, crossing the floor to ask David to dance. As they moved onto the floor, they both made the initial mistake of taking up their normal male and female positions, until Gina, laughingly, took the lead and corrected their natural mistake.

“You look divine,” she said to David. “I don't think I'll ever wear that dress again after seeing it on you!”

“Oh, but you must!” David replied. “I want to see you in it!”

Gina leaned forward and whispered in his ear. “I'd rather see you out of it! I know what you're wearing underneath, remember?”

David blushed rosily. “They are beautiful things to wear,” he admitted shyly. “For a girl...”

“Yummy, yummy, soft and sexy, Beautiful Lady!” Gina murmured in his ear, her breath tickling pleasantly.

Again, David blushed with pleasure. He glanced around the hall. All the “girls” were dancing now. John with Sandra; Alan with Susan; Paul with Diane; and George with Jean.

Across the room, Sandra, her hair slicked back in a fair semblance of boy style, was talking with John as they danced. In his high heels, John was a little taller than she.

“Why do you look as if you'd swallowed a cat? Are you enjoying this?”

“Shouldn't I be?”

“I don't know. You all look as if you are to me. The girls can't wait to get back into their own clothes.”

“I don't blame you,” John agreed.

“You like wearing girls' things?”

“It's... not... unpleasant...”

Alan and Susan danced by.

“God!” Sandra exclaimed. “Alan's got boobs even!”

“Yes,” John remarked. He was a little envious.

“Where did you get them?” Susan asked Alan.

“Where did I get what?”

“Your tits. They sure look real to me.”

“Good. They're meant to look real.”

“But, it's all you, isn't it?”

“Sure it is. Don't you like them?”

“I think you look... a little tarty... but you certainly make a pretty girl.”

“Thank you,” Alan beamed.

Susan shook her head in puzzlement.

“You look very nice,” Diane said to Paul.

“Do I? It's my Mom's dress. I'm not really comfortable in it,” he admitted shyly.

“Well, you look good anyway, a little conservative, perhaps, but very attractive.”



“Thank you.”

“Where on earth did you get that dress?” Jean asked George.

“It belongs to my sister.”

“It's beautiful,” Jean said, “but it's not quite what girls would wear today. No one wants to look like a doll.”

“Do I look like a doll?”

“Yes, a little, but you look like a beautiful doll!”

“Yes, I noticed that. I didn't really want to look all that pretty. I'm supposed to be a boy, remember?”

“Sure, a boy doll, and I just adore playing with dolls!”

George blushed helplessly.

“And, I'm not much into being a boy either,” Jean admitted. That made George feel better about himself.

The “boys” and “girls” swapped partners throughout the evening, except that a few kept gravitating back to certain people. Gina was constantly waiting for David to be available. Jean, the sophisticate, grabbed every opportunity to dance with John. George was alarmed that Susan wanted to hold him very close every time they danced!

Refreshments were served in the courtyard adjoining the hall. Now and then, various couples moved out into the balmy night air to sip a Coke or a fruit punch.

Three of the “girls” were enjoying the experience of being girls.

Alan was rapt in the fact that the clothes he was wearing were his to keep. He was hoping that his Mother would allow him the opportunity to expand his feminine wardrobe over the next few months. He was already certain she would have no objections to him dressing as a girl again.

John, whose recent discovery had thrilled him, now that he knew how much he enjoyed dressing as a girl, knew that he would be permitted to wear anything of Ann's anytime he wanted to. And, he thought, that might be often.

David was worried. Although nothing had been said, he felt sure his Mother had enjoyed dressing him as a girl and he, in turn, had come to find it a pleasant experience, especially when he had seen himself in the mirror, ready to head off for the party, in Gina's wonderful gown. But he knew that his Father would object most strenuously if he knew, and he consoled himself with the fact that his Father was often away. How would he ask his Mother if he could wear a dress again?

Paul and George were different.

Paul was certain he would never wear female clothes again.

George was unsure. Early in the week, he had resisted. He knew that he looked pretty tonight; too pretty! There was a persistent nagging in his mind that he would be interested to see himself in something more conventional, perhaps one of Penny's day dresses. But each time he had this thought, he rejected it as fast as it came into his head.

The night progressed.

John got sore feet.

So did Alan in his four inch heels, but he would suffer without complaining. His tight strapless bra rubbed too, but this was also something he would gladly put up with.

Paul was most comfortable in flats and his Mother's loose fitting dress.

George perspired a little and discovered he was embarrassed by it.

David spent most of the night in a state of mild arousal. Gina's sexy clothes caressed his body most deliciously and her attentions to him only heightened these sensations. He was gratified to discover that although he was taking great pleasure in dressing as, and in looking like, a girl, he was still very much a boy when it came to his as yet unexplored sexuality!

Late in the night, Miss Sanders took the stage. She tapped the microphone to ensure it was working and cleared her throat a couple of times to gain attention. The "boys" and "girls" stopped dancing or came in from the courtyard and gathered around her.

"I have a few things I want to say," Miss Sanders began. "As you know, we perform this little exercise in gender identification each year. It's an unusual experience for all of you, I know, but I think, an important one. In some years, we have had some of our boys take to swap week with great enthusiasm and some panache. It pleases me no end to see that this year's intake of new boys have excelled themselves. I can't remember a year in which the boys, and the girls, for that matter, have applied themselves so diligently. Tonight we have with us a group of temporary girls who are, to say the least, quite stunning."

The "boys" all clapped enthusiastically in support of this statement.

"In my experience it has always been much more difficult for the girls to look like boys." Miss Sanders smiled at this. "They have certain attributes which make it more difficult. On the other hand, boys can make over into quite attractive young ladies. I want to congratulate John, David, Alan, Paul and George for their highly successful efforts in this regard."

More applause.

"It's the custom of the school to make a presentation to the, forgive me, prettiest temporary girl, and another for the handsomest temporary boy, something they may either treasure or hate, but something which, nevertheless, will act as a reminder of the time they learned, first hand, what it's like to be a member of the opposite sex. I'd like to make the presentation to the boy first. The Staff has judged this on the performance during the week and tonight. Would Sandra Nelson please come forward?"

A riot of clapping hands broke out as Sandra, hair slicked back, boobs strapped down, tall and elegant, walked up onto the stage and accepted the inscribed plaque offered her by Miss Sanders. She bowed politely and left the stage amid great applause.

"And now for the girl. This was a most difficult decision." She laughed again. "I trust that you girls will not be as competitive in the beauty stakes as 'real' girls would

be otherwise. We may have some cat fighting going on after the party if we do! I want to repeat that you all look quite delightful, but the award goes to..."

Three "girls" held their breath. But there was never any real doubt. It had to be between David and Alan.

"... David Morrow!"

In incredibly girlish fashion, David actually squealed and held his hand over his mouth. He walked up onto the stage, a picture of feminine pulchritude, smiling broadly. He took his plaque from Miss Sanders and curtsied most decorously.

On the floor, Alan was actually fighting back tears, but when David returned to the floor, he took him by the hand and kissed him on the cheek with good grace. The small crowd erupted. It was such an in-character thing to do. David blushed wildly.

The music resumed and Gina grabbed David's hand as the couples resumed dancing.

"I just knew you'd win!" she gushed. "You're perfect in that dress!"

"It was your dress that did it!" he objected mildly.

"Nonsense! My dress is nothing hanging in a closet. It needs a body and a head to give it its real beauty."

She drew him close so they were dancing cheek to cheek. With her lips beside his ear, she whispered, "I'd love to see you wearing something else of mine..."

"What?"

"My pink baby dolls and the negligee that goes with it..."

"Oh, Gina!"

David shivered involuntarily. He didn't dare admit to Gina that her idea appealed to him, and yet, he was thrilled to pieces by it!

"I think you'd like that, wouldn't you?" Gina persisted.

"I... I.. don't know..."

"Ssshhh," Gina whispered, "It'll just be our little secret, and it'll be A-OK by me whatever you do!"

Alan was not entirely looking forward to going home to his Mother. She had so wanted him to win and he had no good news for her. For the last half hour of the party, he was preoccupied with this thought.

John was thinking of the gift Ann had given him in his room just before he left. It was lying there now, waiting for him to get home. The gift was a set of wonderful sleek, nylon-satin nightgown and negligee in pure, lustrous white. He was thinking not only of sleeping in it, but of coming to breakfast in it the next morning, believing his Father would be similarly attired. He wondered also what he might be permitted to wear for the rest of the day.

The evening ended at eleven. The group milled about for a few minutes, saying their good-byes. Out front, a line of cars waited for both "boys" and "girls" to take them home. They filed out individually.

John found his car nearest the front entrance and slid into the rear seat behind Ann and Charleen. He was impressed that his Father would have the courage to wait for him out front, stylishly dressed, made-up and bewigged. On the way home, he excitedly described the evening for them, dwelling particularly on what each “girl” had worn.

“Do you think any of the other girls are like us, Jan?” Charleen asked.

“Oh, I'm quite sure Alan is,” he replied. “He's such a total girl. And I think that David may be, but I'm not sure.”

“You must follow that up. It would be nice to have them visit sometime.”

John thought this was a nice idea.

Alan slipped into the front seat beside his Mother and she drove away.

“Well?” she asked expectantly.

“Oh, Mother, it was such a wonderful night,” Alan said, “but...” He was about to cry.

“What, Honey?”

“I didn't win!” and he promptly burst into tears.

“Darling Girl,” his Mother said, “it's not important. You mustn't cry about it. We know you were the prettiest young lady there!”

“But it was so important to you,” Alan sobbed.

“No, it wasn't. Come on now, dry your eyes, Sweetheart. The important thing was that you enjoyed yourself.”

Alan reached into his clutch purse, took out a tissue and dabbed at his eyes.

“Oh, God! My mascara's running! I'll look a mess!”

“No you won't. You look absolutely beautiful. Who did win, by the way?”

“David. I must admit he looked lovely in Gina's gown.”

“But it was Gina's gown, wasn't it? Not his own, like yours is?”

“I was disappointed, though,” Alan said, taking a deep breath.

“There'll be other occasions, Darling,” his Mother said.

Mary Morrow saw the plaque even as David entered the car.

“Oh, my God,” she exclaimed. “You won?”

“Yes! Oh, Mother, it was such a divine night. The other girls looked so lovely. Alan was absolutely gorgeous, and George wore his sister's prom dress and looked like a little doll, and John had on this marvelous dress of Ann's. Paul was the odd one and even he looked lovely. Gina said she didn't think she could ever wear this dress again. She was so sweet!”

His Mother listened to these gushing and was delighted that her son sounded so “girlish” in his enthusiasm and language.

She laughed. “How like a girl you are, Darling, maybe you should have been born one?”

David blushed. “Mother, if I were born a girl, what would you have named me?”

“I had a name in mind. I would have called you 'Linda.'”

David rolled the name around in his mind for a moment. He kept combining it with Gina — Gina and Linda, Linda and Gina. He sat quietly for some minutes.

“Would you have liked to be a 'Linda,' Darling?” his Mother asked.

He thought for a moment. “No, I think I'm happy enough being a 'David.'”

His Mother was mildly disappointed.

“Most of the time,” he amended thoughtfully.

His Mother glanced at him and smiled. David smiled back.

At home, John slowly undressed in his room. He left the wig in place and his make-up on and put on the nightgown and negligee. He stood in front of his mirror for a few minutes. He was a little disappointed that his breasts had disappeared. While he stood there, Charleen came into the room, also still bewigged and made-up and wearing a rich burgundy nightgown and negligee. John noticed that he still had the appearance of breasts, even in his nightgown.

John turned from the mirror and Charleen reached his arms out to him and enfolded him. They embraced closely.

“I'm very proud of you, Darling,” Charleen whispered. “You make a lovely girl.” He moved back slightly until they were face to face and kissed him lightly on the lips. John could feel his Father's breasts against his chest. They felt soft and real.

“I haven't asked you,” he said. “What should I call you?”

“Times like this,” Charleen said softly, “I feel like your adoptive Mother.”

John smiled. “Hi, Mom,” he said and kissed his Father back. He noticed that the man was slightly misty eyed.

“Mother,” he said, “I... please... I notice you still have breasts...”

“They're all mine, Honey,” Charleen said.

“Yours? You mean...”

“I mean they're mine. I've always worn loose shirts and sweaters so you've never noticed. I've had them for about three years now.”

“But, how...”

“I'll tell you in the morning. We must get our beauty sleep now.”

Just then, Ann entered the room.

“Hi, girls,” she said brightly.

She was similarly clad in night attire, but without a negligee. John could clearly see the color and outline of her nipples beneath the sheer material. He realized that she would never have displayed herself in this way while he remained a boy!

“May I hug my little sister?” she asked.

John and Ann hugged closely. “It's so nice to have a Mother and a baby sister,” Ann said.

“I'm going to bed,” Charleen said. “Make sure you get all that make-up off before you retire, Jan. Use a cleanser and then some moisturizer.”

John grinned. “Yes, Mother,” he said happily.

Charleen and Ann left the room. John sat at the dressing table, unscrewed the cap on the jar of cleanser and dipped his fingers into the cream.

He looked into the mirror and smiled at himself.

Across town, Alan was similarly engaged. He was sitting at his dressing table still clothed in the bra and panties, his feet still shod in the stilettos. His Mother entered the room carrying a flat cardboard box.

“I have something for you,” she announced and proceeded to unwrap a black, shortie nightie with a pink ribbon around the neckline. “I thought you might like something pretty to wear to bed.”

“Oh, yes, Mother, thank you!” Alan gushed.

“There will be other things too, Helen. We'll buy you some lovely clothes suitable to the lovely girl you are.”

“You're so sweet, Mother. It's so wonderful to have someone as caring as you!”

Mrs. Smithson kissed the boy/girl. “Good night, Darling. I hope you have sweet dreams.”

David snuggled into bed in his pajamas. Hanging on the back of his bedroom door, within his line of sight, was Gina's dress. He lay on his back staring at it before turning out the light. When he finally did so and dozed off, he had visions in which he and Gina were dancing together again, only this time they wore identical dresses.

EIGHT YEARS LATER:

On the catwalk above their heads, Helen Smithson strutted her stuff. Statuesque and shapely, she was one of the city's top fashion models. Her long, thick, blonde hair cascaded about her slim, creamy shoulders. Her firm breasts stood proud, concealed by the thin white silk of the bodice of the short cocktail dress she now displayed for the customers.

She paused in her stride to execute a pirouette directly above a table of women watching her every move. The pirouette revealed long, shapely legs and a glimpse of white bikini panties barely containing a full, firm bottom! The women followed her with their eyes back along the catwalk to the curtains and then picked up on another stunning model in yet another stunning creation.

At the table, Linda Morrow turned to Gina Morrow. “God, she's beautiful, isn't she?”

“No more than you, my Darling,” Gina smiled in reply.

Linda smiled. “Flatterer!” she cooed happily.

Next to them, Jan, Ann and Charleen Zacarias gazed intently at the new model.

“That dress is just divine,” Jan said.

“Don't make any decisions yet,” her sister replied. “You haven't seen all the range.”

“Makes me wish I were young again,” Charleen whispered.

“You can wear some of these things, Mother,” Jan said.

“Perhaps a few, but you can wear them all.”

“I only wish I could afford them,” Jan said.

“Soon enough, Honey,” Charleen smiled.

The parade continued. A few minutes later, Helen was back in a long, slim, clinging gown with a deep neckline and high slit skirt. On the other side of the catwalk, Helen's Mother watched proudly. At one point, she caught Linda's eye and waved her fingers. Linda waved back.

“God, is it only eight years since these beautiful creatures were attending their swap week party?” she thought, almost aloud.

Helen Smithson had left school as soon as she was legally of age. She had long since given up wearing male clothes after her Mother had convinced the principal, Miss Sanders, that she was far more a girl than a boy. This was not, in fact, the first time Miss Sanders had had this experience as a direct result of the swap week exercise. She had fond memories of five other beautiful young boys who had been seduced into full time womanhood by their experience. It was her opinion that this was partly the reason for swap week in the first place. Although she did wonder, from time to time, why only one girl had chosen to adopt masculinity as her course in life compared with the numbers of boys who chose, if not full time womanhood, at least part time femininity.

It was Helen's avowed intention to become a model and she joined a modeling school immediately upon quitting Banks High. During her year at the school, she undertook an intensive course of hormone treatment, made regular visits to her Mother's beauty salon for facials and depilation, and grew and styled her hair into the glorious mane she now displayed.

In her second year out of modeling school, she studied fashion and modeled part time. On her eighteenth birthday, she entered a clinic for an operation, but only her closest friends knew what the operation was intended to achieve...

Within three months of her recuperation, she had signed a contract with the city's leading agency and had never looked back. This was her fourth straight year as the highest paid fashion and photographic model in town. Those closest to her, apart from her Mother, were two boys she had met at Banks High School, who had also shown a predilection for things feminine.

David Morrow had, with his Mother's blessing, begun to make regular visits to the home of Gina Martin, where in secret, until Mrs. Josie Martin had discovered and then endorsed their games, he became Linda. He so enjoyed these experiences that his Mother invested some funds on his behalf and bought him various outfits of girls'

clothes which he also began to wear at home, on those many occasions when his Father was away on business.

By the time they were fifteen, Gina and Linda had become sexually intimate, while vowing that they would spend the rest of their lives together. It was a condition of Gina's that David had to be Linda during those special times they spent together.

A major drama occurred within the Morrow household when Jack Morrow arrived home unannounced from a business trip and discovered his son, dressed entirely and convincingly as a girl, doing housework alongside his Mother.

The row which ensued caused such a rift in the family that Jack quit, and he and Mary were subsequently divorced. With her substantial settlement, Mary bought a city fashion boutique — one which would eventually provide much work for Helen Smithson.

David and Gina both concluded their high school educations. Gina took a job as a beautician and hairdresser. David wandered around in the wilderness for a while, trying to make up his mind what he might do for a living. Under pressure from his Mother and Gina, he elected to become Linda full time and took a job as assistant manager of his Mother's fashion boutique.

Two years later, Gina and Linda were married in a quiet ceremony. The celebration was rather confused when the two beautiful brides appeared together, both dressed in high fashion bridal gowns!

John Zacarias also completed his high school and went on to college. Taking a leaf from his Father's book, he elected to keep his penchant for female clothes confined to his home and to occasional visits to quiet restaurants or a movie with his sister or "Mother."

He was keen to study law and did so with considerable success. On the occasion of the fashion parade where the friends came together on one of their regular get-together, he had only a week earlier received his law degree. He would continue to wear female clothes, mostly privately, for the rest of his life, never marrying and preferring the company of his sister and pseudo-Mother.

Banks High School continued with their annual swap week. From time to time, as a favorite daughter of the school and certainly the most famous, Helen was asked to act as a guest speaker during the swap week or at the swap week party. On these occasions, she was thrilled to see many pretty boys in lovely gowns and dresses and to take a continuing interest in the development of some of them, often in ways their parents might not have entirely approved.

Helen retired from catwalk modeling at the age of thirty. She was moderately wealthy and bought a boutique which, in a joint venture with Mary and Linda Morrow, she made into the second of what would ultimately become a chain of six stores. A year later, she adopted a fifteen year old boy who had been orphaned as the result of a car accident which took the life of his sole parent, his Mother. Helen knew the boy quite well. Two years earlier he had been awarded the prettiest "girl" award at Banks High's swap week party.

Naturally, she continued where the boy's Mother had left off and raised the boy as a girl, encouraging "her" to follow in the footsteps of "her" adoptive Mother.

Which "she" did with equal success.

When Miss Sanders, through age and ill health, eventually was forced to retire as principal of Banks High, her successor was horrified at the very idea of swap week and the traditional exercise was discontinued immediately.

Nobody was able to explain entirely satisfactorily why the school's popularity took a nose dive after that. Certainly a large number of Mothers and some Fathers were unhappy that the practice of cross gender education had ceased.

Perhaps there is an opening for a school just like it.

Perhaps swap week could be extended to swap month, or even swap year.

It seems from past experience that there are a large number of boys, if not girls, who would enjoy it very much.

THE END