



Reluctant Press presents:

Maid OJT

Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C PAGANI

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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Maid OJT

By Annie Warren

Fantasy and Science Fiction have their place,
And I have written stories in those genres.
But for me, I prefer to write stories that really “could be”.

—Annie Warren

I had just finished AIT in the army. If you do not know what that means, it’s “**A**dvanced **I**ndividual **T**raining”, or it’s giving a Military Occupation to the recruit who is fresh from being reshaped in basic training from a civilian into the army’s idea of a soldier. By the time I had graduated from this training into full soldierdom, I could drive a whole raft of vehicles, could drive along a razor and not blow a tire, could turn on a dime and give change, and could barrel like nobody’s business. I knew driving like *that* since I was an apt learner, always have been. And now, like all of the others in my class, I was on pins and needles to see my assignment. I was not to be disappointed. I was assigned to the 4th Armoured Division in Frankfurt. Armour! That meant vehicles: tanks, trucks, humvees, tank retrievers, and a whole collection of military wheels. I think I was packed two days before we left.

Frankfurt turned out to be a big city. We came in at night and went off to the Barracks. It took two days for them to get to me. I still thought, 4th Armored Division meant trucks, humvees, retrieval machines, and all kinds of other vehicles, even tanks though they had not been in my specific training. By the time I got to my final assignment interview, I had seen the base with all of its vehicles and was

ready and raring to go. Then, however, during my interview, I got *my* job assignment.

“Let’s see, Private Martins, you come to us at an awkward time. We just so happen to have an excess of drivers just now. I don’t know why they sent us still more. It appears that my requests apparently fell on deaf ears. What I really need now are cooks...” He looked up at me from my training records. “Can you cook?”

“Well, sir, as a bachelor I cooked for myself in college, had to as I could not afford to eat out.”

He looked at me and then at his duty roster. “All right, I’m going to assign you to Headquarters Company. You will have to go to quartermaster and draw out your whites. Also, you will have to learn on the job. Good.” He looked at my file and made some sort of notes or annotations in it. “Hmmm, I see that you are new to the army. This is called OJT; it stands for **o**n the **j**ob **t**raining. You learn it as you do it. Check in first with Sergeant Walker. He’ll give you your assignments, show you where you bunk and will tell you where the quartermaster is. He will also have a list of what to draw.

“Any questions?”

“No, Sir!”

He got up and extended his hand and we shook. “Sorry about this, private Martins. I see you were at the top of your class, but here you are sort of the ‘new kid on the block’, and cooks are what we need. Welcome to the 4th Armour...” And with that it was over and my tour of duty for the rest of my 3 year enlistment was set... since I had not enlisted for a specific job position, I was sort of stuck. I wondered if I’d like cooking...

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I reported to my new duty station. The only truck I drove those 3 years was a mess truck that took food to bivouacked troops or picked up or dropped off garbage (I won’t say which end of the road was which)... But in the interim with the OJT, I did learn how to cook for LOTS of men. As I said, I was adept at learning and thus also learned from some of the more chef inclined cooks how to do a lot of other things that were small scale and in many cases quite elegant. So, in the end, when my tour of duty was up, I was (patting myself on my back) a good cook and an up and coming chef, if I do say so myself.

Being an apt and relatively quick learner, often learning a lot more than the current exercise was supposed to teach me, I found that cooking was something (with no shame for saying it) that I could really sink my teeth into. As much as I had enjoyed the driving, I think I enjoyed cooking more and better, being a bit redundant in saying that. Above all, I loved specialty cooking or “cheffing” where I could apply those chef talents I was learning at every opportunity. I knew I was well above the boil potatoes and chop greens for salad type cooking. And too, by showing my interest and enthusiasm, I got the attention of some of the more

knowledgeable chef/cooks who showed me lots of tricks and techniques that the run of the mill army cooks would never even dream of. Headquarters was the largest company but it also fed the officers up to the top of the command, and they were catered to and I learned how...

But, time moves on and so did I. I cycled back to the states and found a very useful piece of paper there, my discharge. I was again a free agent who could drive truck or cook it, though the call for cooked truck wasn't too high. I was totally free, as I had no close relatives since I was an only child and my parents had died from an accident when I was at university. I also did not know of uncles or aunts either. On the other hand, being all alone with no strings did give me a certain sense of isolation.

As I enjoyed cooking so much I figured that I would pursue it as a career, leaving truck driving to the larger, the stronger, and the heftier and more macho. In my short army career as a cook I had avoided putting on (much) weight. I was still around 63 kilos (140lb), a good weight for my 162cm (5' 4") frame. I was not macho in any sense of the word, but I could handle myself and, if needs be, wrestle 50-pound bags of flour as well.

Having made my career decision, I looked around. That is when I found the Shoulder Arms, a reasonably large hotel that was advertising for a cook. It was in a resort area that I found was also quite pleasant when I went there to check it out. It was spring and the flowers were blooming and the tourists were beginning to run and so I checked out the hotel itself. It looked reasonable, and so I applied and was hired on.

With summer coming on, the pace picked up and my experience of cooking large quantities came in real handy. Here again, I was also learning a lot from the other cooks. I was not really a chef, but I learned a lot of tricks that made things not only taste better but also look better. These were the chef's skills that I sought out at all turns. I also got to apply a lot of my chef talents I'd learned in the army, doing some really nice things. I was earning my keep and enjoying myself as autumn approached.

Then late autumn hit and with it the annual waning of the tourist season. When the clientele dropped again with the coming winter, I was approached by the hotel's chef, my boss. He told that, since I was the true low man on the totem pole (again?) and since the cooking load had dropped below minimum needs, I would not be needed until it picked up again next spring. He added, however, offering me an alternative option; I could work on the maintenance crew, if I wanted to stay with the hotel.

Having become rather fond of eating and keeping a roof over my head, to say nothing of my love of the country side I was living in, I decided that for the time being that that offer was my best bet. So I was going to try the transfer to maintenance. I did think of truck driving, but that was too itinerant and would mean being constantly on the road. I had grown quite content in having a home near my work and not having my work be my home or visa versa. Besides, I decided that I was too small and non-muscular for most of such activities like driving an 18-

wheeler, not that I couldn't; I was just diminutive in size. So, my first army career was tabled indefinitely. Nonetheless, I did regret hanging up my whites and pulling on coveralls in their stead.

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When I reported to Evan McLaughlin, the chief of maintenance, he was somewhat surprised to see me. Compared to my shortness he was tall and lanky with bushy eyebrows and an equally bushy moustache. When I showed up, coveralls and all, his eyebrows went up. When I explained why I was there, on the recommendation of the chief chef, he nodded his head but said that there would not be much work after the summer-autumn clean up was completed. I did not know what to say and so just started working. I noted that there was a steady, if reduced, number of guests that continued to come to the hotel. It was not like the hotel was closing down for winter. It was more like parts of it were going into a sort of winter hibernation as far as needs, especially cooking needs, were concerned. Unfortunately that also seemed to spread to maintenance after a while.

I had more or less seen the writing on the wall when I had talked to Evan that first time. I had thus continued perusing the papers for other jobs. Like I said earlier, it seems that the town was what you could call a resort town. It was not in, nor was anywhere near enough to any sizable hills, so it did not run a winter ski season, but was close enough to the ocean that there was a trade there, albeit a reduced one. Worse off, I had become very comfortable with the town. It was folksy and just plain comfortable to live there. I hadn't made any real friendships; however, on the other hand, I had no real friends elsewhere either. Those I had known in college had long since split to the four winds and I had not really gotten close to anyone when in the Army. I had pondered putting down roots and had decided that this looked like fertile ground.

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Well, friendly or no, when winter came, the town seemed to me to almost shut down. There were no other jobs in the offing and I did not have enough money saved up to quit and to then make it to the next tourist season, not without some sort of job. As I was pondering the end of my employment, Evan came by and confirmed my suspicions by almost setting a date to end on. But, in passing, he looked me up and down and then added that he got wind that there was a sudden shortage in the domestic staff caused by several members who had, without warning, suddenly just up and quit. They had even asked him for help and so he gave me the name of what he called their chief and said that it might be something to look into, though he doubted I'd really want the position. Well, I thanked him and said that since eating had become a long term, ingrained habit of mine, and that loss of employment could cut into it, that I'd check it out right away anyway.

The name he gave me was a Mrs. Higgins who was the chief housekeeper. I'm afraid I did not cut a very good figure when I went to see her. I was still wearing my coveralls; however, I figured I had best see her as soon as possible to test the waters and so went during a break at work. Oh, I was still relatively clean but just sort of highly non-polished, shall we say?

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When I entered her office, Mrs. Higgins turned out to be a sort of middle aged woman who stood apparently a meter sixty-five or so, around three cm taller than I was. She was even more wiry than even Evan had been and had a quick mind and penetrating grey eyes. Her saving grace, if that is the proper term, is that she had a warm manner with an equally warm smile. She looked like she could throw around a hundredweight with ease and, of course, with a smile.

After I introduced myself, she eyed me up and down, not unlike Evan had done, before she spoke to me, "So, Mr. McLaughlin has sent you to me, eh? Well, you might look the part, but did he say what it was that I was looking for?"

"No, Ma'am, he just said that you were shorted on your crew when some of them up and left without warning. So, just what exactly is it that you are looking for?"

"As it is, Mr. Martins, I am the Head Housekeeper. While Mr. McLaughlin does maintenance on the physical facilities and such, I run the housekeeping staff. In short, I am in charge of the maid services. Three of my maids left suddenly, leaving me with a gaping hole in my staff roster. Do you have any experience in that line?"

I'm afraid that I must have looked at her blankly; so, she continued, "I didn't suppose so, but I *am* required to ask."

"My experiences run from truck driver training in the army to becoming a cook. I was on the cooking staff when the winter cutback hit, and I went into maintenance rather than be laid off. So, I hardly have any experience there either."

"Sounds like you are somewhat itinerant, but at the same time, with a wide range of experiences. I guess you could learn on the job, if you are interested."

"I don't seem to have much choice, Mrs. Higgins. The cooking has closed down for the winter as far my position was concerned. Evan, Mr. McLaughlin, indicated that my maintenance career is also likely to come to an end in a week or less. I have played the job market and found it wanting. If I want to stay in this town, I'll have to find a job and soon."

"All right, but I don't want you to feel that you are working for me under duress. I am not looking for short-term employment. I would like some sort of commitment."

"That does put a different light on it. I don't know if I could do your job nor even if I would like it... Like in the army, it would be what we would call OJT."

“OJT, what is that?”

“It’s a term that you had just alluded to; it means ‘On the Job Training’. It was how I originally became a cook. I thoroughly enjoyed cooking once I got into it, but I had to learn it from the ground up, so to say, while doing it.”

“Sounds like an apt description.”

“To be honest, Mrs. Higgins, how long I worked for you would depend on two major factors. First is if I like the work, and second is if *you* like *my* work. What exactly does it entail?”

“Mister Martins, this is not a military establishment and I find ‘Mrs. Higgins’ a bit stuffy... Just call me ‘Megan’ and you’ll be ‘Joe’ if you join us.

With that she launched into what my basic duties would be, none of which was too trying. She also explained that I would work with another maid as a team of two, which was the hotel’s standard set-up. As I listened, I evaluated the job and felt that I could do it, although I also felt that the detail of setting up rooms “just so” could be a bit daunting. It was, however, what was expected not only by Mrs. Higgins but also by the guests. As I was evaluating in my mind the tasks to be accomplished, the connotation of “maid” did not enter into my thoughts, which were centred more on eating and having a roof over my head. This was an opportunity to continue in this town and, from my searches, most likely my only opportunity, and so my thoughts were on the positive side. By the time she had concluded her overview of the position, I had more or less made up my mind to take it.

“The job does not appear to be above my talents and has enough challenges to probably be interesting,” I said with a smile. “What sort of a commitment would you be looking for?”

“At this time I am not looking for a ten year contract, but at least into the middle of summer. By then I would be able to fill the other positions; however, I would need you to fill this one so that I can concentrate on the other replacements. Who knows, you might like the work and want to stay on longer than that.” At this point it was her turn to smile at me. Then, with that same smile, she added, looking me over, “I suppose we can overcome the problem of a uniform without any great difficulties.”

“I still have some of my army uniforms, if that would help,” I said with more of a grin.

“Somehow, I don’t really think so,” she replied with as much of a grin in return. “We have a dress code that includes a uniform for the maids that identifies them immediately to staff and guests alike as maids. It includes a black dress with white trim, dark hose and three-inch or higher high-heeled black pumps. I guess we can get by with black slacks and a white shirt for you. We haven’t had a man in one of these positions since I took over.”

I sort of heard behind that the “and wouldn’t now if we weren’t strapped for staff.” But we both had a need that the other could fulfill and we both knew it. Neither of us had a choice either, and so I told her that I was applying for the job,

if and when Evan would okay my release from the maintenance crew. Thus agreed, we shook on it and I left.

Evan took my statement of going to work for Megan in stride as if I had said that I was going to be a gardener or painter or other “usual” man’s job. He said he would call Ms Higgins to see what could be worked out. With that I went back to my work for him. It did not occur to me at that time how ludicrous it probably sounded for a maintenance *man* to work as a *maid*. On the other hand, Megan had seen no insurmountable problem in my working for her. Neither she nor I knew then what would eventually happen. On Thursday, when I went to get my next assignment, Evan told me to report to Ms Higgins. With that, my short career as a maintenance man came to an abrupt end.

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When I came into her office, Megan was sitting there as usual and mere moments later we were joined by another person, a rather cute redhead who was introduced to me as Patti Waltham. As I arose to greet her, I found she was also just a bit taller than I was. She was also wearing the “standard” maid’s uniform that Megan had described earlier. On her it really looked good!

I then learned the process I was going to get involved in. Once again, as promised, it was going to be another case of OJT, as Megan had said, of on the job training, this time, it was spelled out in no uncertain terms that I would be working as a maid. Momentarily it occurred to me that the one job that I had been trained for, truck driving, had never been followed through to become my career, even for a short time. Of course, I did not know if this was to be a career or just a holding pattern until I could get back to cooking.

As it turned out the maids worked in teams of two. When Patti learned that I was to be her partner, her eyes widened a bit and she looked me up and down with a bit of a frown. I was still wearing my maintenance coveralls and there was an obvious disbelief in her face that could be clearly seen. For my part I tried to smile a warm smile. I wondered what working with this woman would be like.

I was going to learn.

Patti’s look was not lost on Megan who then went on to explain exactly where I was coming from in the company and what the immediate future was going to hold for me, especially in terms of my “uniform”. Patti immediately suggested that since I wasn’t going to be wearing the standard uniform, maybe she should wear the same as I was going to wear since we were going to be a team. Megan, however, said no to that. I could see a fleeting look of disappointment pass over Patti’s face. I didn’t know why at the time as I thought she had a smashing figure which her uniform showed most adequately, and, as Megan had pointed out earlier, it was obvious that she was a maid. I would not be so tagged it seemed as there was no equivalent male attire for maid-dom.

When Megan laid out the OJT nature of my position, Patti tried briefly to argue, but Megan said that it was going to be. She was short of maids and had got

no responses to her ads until I applied. It was a case of taking what was available. She apologised to me, saying that the facts were just that, facts, and there was nothing she could do about it. Patti merely sighed and gave an equivalent response of “right boss!” She did perk up noticeably when Megan went on to explain that Patti was one of the best and that I’d be sure to learn the job well under her tutelage. Today I was to have Patti show me around and give me an overview of the job and tomorrow I was to start.

I must say that I did feel awkward in my coveralls as I tagged along with her. It must have been sort of tedious for Patti too, for she had to repeat the explanation of my new position to each of the maids that we encountered. It was interesting to see the various reactions of those we spoke with. It ranged from the warmest of smiles of acceptance to what I’d term as a sort of cold shouldered rejection. More than one asked if I’d be happy doing a woman’s job. My stock answer grew to be that there was nothing inherently sexually oriented with the job, as far as I could see. That satisfied many but not all of the sceptical questioners.

By mid afternoon I was beginning to get the spinning feeling of being confronted by so much input. It was not difficult but was full of lots and lots and *lots* of details that were beginning to heap up on me. Finally, we called it a day. She told me where to meet in the morning and I went back to my room with my head spinning, mulling over the raft of details that had been thrust upon me. I had already checked and knew that I had the proper clothing, but I might need more, depending on how long I was to work for Megan... It was not a clear-cut decision.

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The next morning I showed up in black slacks, white shirt and black shoes and socks – white above and black below, so to say. It was a comfortable outfit and was what had been asked for. When I checked in with Megan that first day, I was given a maid’s name tag with ‘Joe’ on it. It clearly identified me as a maid. With that I was ready to start my new job,

That first day was sort of a repeat of the previous introductory one with me tagging along and beginning to help as Patti went through her paces. We ran into other maid teams and made, for the most part, polite conversation. It often revolving around a repetition of the most asked question of the day before on how I was liking my new women’s work, most often asked, whether the asker was overtly friendly or hostile, with a smirk... Again, like the day before, I got tired of explaining to these women simply that work was work and so just nodded for the most part with a noncommittal sort of, “It’s OK”. As Megan had stated, more or less, I was almost like a token male in the all woman maid brigade.

It wasn’t for more than a week that we began to get into the full pattern of her (well, also my) job. I was quite impressed with her efficiency and how this came through in such a good job so well done. She had been working alone since her partner had been one of the trio that had so suddenly left, and the hotel had actually experienced somewhat of a slowdown in maid service. I was supposed to be a

part of solving that problem, when I got up to speed, which was happening, but at this time very slowly. The work wasn't hard; it just had a newness added to the fact that there were plainly just lots of details.

The problems seemed to begin about the time that we were getting up some speed, but not up to the full speed that I just mentioned. In some cases, we came into some rooms prior to the occupant's departure from them but with their permission. The established process was always to knock and then announce, "Maid Service!" If no response came after trying this twice (and if no "do not disturb" sign hung from the doorknob), Patti would take her pass key and open the door and we would enter. More than once the occupants were actually still there but had not responded, knowing or thinking they knew whom the maid service involved. To see me, a man, had caused consternation in some of these cases, and the occupants had complained, not to us but to the management. They in turn passed it down the pipe to Megan who explained it back up the pipe. As the complaints slowly piled up over my first several weeks, Megan found she was encountering an unexpected problem and so called us in to see her. Oddly, Patti was not in her maid's uniform for this meeting.

"Joe," she began after greeting us and having us sit down, "I have been receiving complaints about you."

"What have I done wrong? I have been following Patti's excellent model as best I can and am not aware of any shortcomings." I looked over at Patti who was looking at me with probably the same quizzical look as I was giving her.

She then turned to Megan, "He is doing quite well, Megan. What is wrong?"

"It is not a shortcoming at all, Patti." She then turned to me and smiled. "It is the fact that you are a man, Joe, and the clientele have come to expect a woman in your position. Finding a man has been a minor shock, but enough that they have complained, and these complaints, inconsequential as *we* may consider them, have then been passed on to me by my bosses, to the point that something has to be done to ameliorate the condition."

"Why have they complained? I don't quite get it."

"The Maid Service, as you know, consists or consisted of all women. The clientele knew that and so, depending on who they were or what they were doing, expected it. So, when this turned out not to be the case, some got upset and thus the complaints. It seems petty to me, but a complaint is a complaint and has to be addressed".

"Hmmm, what do you suggest?" I had to ask, as I was somewhat perplexed.

"I have gotten reports of your work being A-1, now backed up by Patti here; so, I would be reluctant to fire you or ask you to leave, especially since it could be construed as sexual harassment or some such if you so chose. I did think of an alternate, but don't know if you'd be agreeable."

"What would that be?"

“Well now,” she looked at me, doing another sort of head to foot scan, similar to the one she gave me when I first appeared in her office asking about the job. “Could you change your appearance to be, say, feminine?”

“What, put on a dress?”

“Basically, as Patti well knows, that is what the dress code calls for, but it was designed and written by and for women. We have not had a man in your position before, and, simply stated, our clientele have come to expect a woman. So, what I mean is for you to, say, wear a reasonably obvious woman’s blouse instead of a man’s shirt, perhaps use some makeup. And, you could also wear a lightly stuffed or padded bra, one that would show enough to give you enough of a woman’s figure that would be visible and perhaps a bit obvious at a casual glance. What I mean is for you to appear somewhat as a woman. Your voice is high enough to perhaps pass now.”

“You want me to appear feminine?” I looked over at Patti who wore a broad grin.

“Yes, the only alternative is for me to transfer you out of the Maid Service back to your old job. That would put me in a bind as I still have two vacancies to be filled. No one has applied.”

“But that one does not have enough to do. I’d end up being laid off.”

“And I’d have to start from scratch with someone else?” chimed in Patti, now looking at Megan with a scowl.

Ignoring Patti, she continued to me, “I’m sorry, Joe, but that is the only alternative I see for you. It would be a hardship on all three of us.”

“But I don’t know anything on how to do that!”

“That is why I am talking to the both of you, Joe. Patti has as much to do with solving this problem as anyone.” Still talking to me, she looked over at Patti. “I’m asking her to be your mentor and assistant. I’ve rearranged the work schedule for today so that you can go out together and get the necessary... garments. That is also why I asked her to come in without wearing her standard uniform. Is that OK with you, Patti?”

She once again had a grin. “Yes, of course, Megan. I think it could be fun. He is neither large nor overly masculine,” she paused and looked at me, “Sorry, Joe, but it is true. I think we can get it done alright.”

“Fine, then go on and do it.”

“Don’t I have anything to say in this?” I just had to comment, even if inane.

“Only if you want to go back briefly to coveralls, as the only alternative I see for you. I can’t and don’t want to fire you, and with my continuing shorthandedness, as it now stands, I can’t lay you off. So, to transfer you out is my only choice if you want to refuse. Is that what you want?” Megan’s question quickly summarised my options and I’m afraid I gave several seconds of blank stare before shaking my head “no”.

“Good luck then. Since I figured that this would be the answer, I’ve already set up an itinerary for today for you to follow.” She handed a sheet of paper to *Patti*, which she quickly scanned, her smiles bordering on grins all the time as I watched. “And so, Jo we’ll see what we can do. It will take some what of a wardrobe change plus a couple of other changes. Let me just say, that you should do them all or see how well your coveralls fit. If this plan doesn’t work, then we’ll have to see if there is some other, alternate option, but I don’t have any others right now. This constitutes a minimum as far as I am concerned. Let me know if you have any problems.” With that the interview, such as it was, had come to an end and Patti and I left, Patti was still reading the paper.

“It looks like Megan has the whole day mapped out. We have appointments to make and shopping to do.” She looked over at me as we headed for the exit. “This should be fun *if* you can relax and go with the flow.”

“What flow? Is it a clastic flow or an avalanche flow? What has she got on tap for me?”

“Well, let’s see. There’s a doctor’s visit, a stop at a medical specialty store, an appointment at a beauty parlour to soften your masculinity, and several dress and lingerie shop stops.”

“She must have been pretty sure of herself to set those things up.”

“That is the reason she is our boss. She has a head on her shoulders and she uses it.” By now we were at the hotel exit, heading for our vehicles. “Okay, Joe, I think I had better drive...”

“Hey, I can drive.”

“Joe, we don’t know what you will be going through today or what it all will do for or should I say to you; so, for safety’s sake, I’ll drive.”

I looked at her a bit oddly, wondering what she meant. We were only going shopping, no stress in that. But, instead of standing there arguing, an argument I felt I’d probably lose in the end in any case; I got in her car.

As we drove off, I felt a bit strange riding in her car as a passenger, but it wasn’t bad, just strange.

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Megan’s timing had been impeccable. She had set up our meeting with her and ended it at the right time to go to the first appointment, right on time, so to say. Not only was her timing impeccable but also her reading of what I would do as she had made the appointments ahead of time, before speaking with me. As the day drew on, I felt that she had talked with Patti on this before, apparently not giving details but just enough, although Patti’s reactions bespoke surprise. I mean, after all, she had come to a meeting during the week on a workday without being dressed in her maid’s uniform... Yes, Sherlock, I think you’ve got it.

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The first appointment was at a clinic with a doctor who examined me fairly thoroughly, including taking quite a few measurements, and then consulted with the both of us. Patti had waited in the waiting room while I was examined. Mary Williams, the doctor, talked to us like we were a couple and not two, well, colleagues or even just acquaintances.

“Well, Joe, you are in good health and physically quite fit. Megan, Mrs. Higgins, has talked with me and explained your situation. What I am proposing is to give you a strong shot of hormones that will help in your deception and to prescribe some backup pills. It is a bit of a sticky position to be in, but I think that we can help. The shot and pills will have an additional effect of lowering your sex drive somewhat.” She glanced at Patti as she said this. Patti had a surprised look, as I am sure I did too, but, more or less ignoring these looks, Mary continued, again to me. “Without this help, you will have more problems playing the role you have chosen. I will need you to sign a release.” She put a form in front of me. It was all filled in.

“Is this really necessary?”

“No, it is not *necessary*, but it will help. That is why Megan set up this appointment. The shot shouldn’t make any permanent changes, Joe. It will soften your skin and give it more of a glow. Only with repetitive shots over a longer period of time would any changes be permanent. Any development above and beyond these will be dependent on your genes.”

I turned to Patti. “What do you think?”

“Well, it is not like you were going off in your closet to illegally shoot up your own anabolic steroids all alone. The doctor will monitor and dose them.”

Mary chuckled. “No, Patti, these are not anabolic steroids. Those would have an adverse effect compared with what we want to achieve. These are oestrogens, your type of hormones.”

“Oh.” She thought a bit, then turned to me and smiled. “As the saying goes, Joe, the doctor knows best.”

I liked and admired Patti. At work we were a team but hardly “a couple”, or at least I hadn’t thought of us as such. But as a member of our team, or so I thought at the time, she was giving me input on her opinion, which was not all that biased, neither positively or negatively, so to say. At least it was not negative. She would thus know more than anyone else could what was going on.

We discussed the shot at more length and depth, but in the end I signed the waiver and got a shot in my bum. Before we left, Mary also “did” my ears, using a cannula, for speeding healing, so she said, neglecting to say it would also increase the permanence of the holes she had placed in my earlobes, two per. She also happened to have two sets of studs to hold them open, and, of course sheets on ear care. Other than stinging ear lobes and a smarting bum where I’d been shot,

there were no immediate effects. But, by then it was time to move on, and our minds were on the next stop already.

That next stop was even more embarrassing. It was at a medical specialty shop where I was fitted with proportionally correct, weighted silicon filled falsies, complete with a set of appropriately sized bras. The falsies also had realistic nipples with even there the correct colouring. It was strange to have them in my bra so that the cups were full but not overflowing and the straps were taut but not strained. They were experts not only in proportionality but also in properly fitting my bras to me body type and size. So much for the “stuffed or padded” bra that Megan had mentioned. Anyway, I was told and could more or less see for myself that these were much more realistic than simple stuffing would have given. On the other hand, they were more expensive.



I also was fitted for some “richly” padded pantygirdles that gave me the nether curves that were again proportional, as was the bra, for my height and weight. I left the shop sporting a most definite and reasonably (overly so to my inexperienced eyes) obvious but not bulging set of mounds on my chest and a certain tightness in my trousers at hip and butt. I was now a longhaired what? My face said man but my body said woman... albeit a woman dressed rather mannishly.

The third appointment was also embarrassing but at a different level. It was a visit to a beauty parlour where my hair, eyebrows, nails, and make up were duly done. I had “cultured” long hair but short nails. Well, my long hair was now curled, the eyebrows narrowed, and the nails lengthened with acrylics. Patti, it turns out, had been included in the set up and so she had a much milder makeover than the massive one I got. Topping this visit off was

the setting up of a series of appointments in the evening, midweek, to visit their laser epilation centre for removal of what light facial and body hair that I had. It wouldn't take too many visits until my light beard was history. When we left this shop, we were definitely two women, again one somewhat mannishly dressed but now unquestionably a woman, at least from all appearances.

The last of the four requirements was resolved in the fourth and last "appointment" at a dress and lingerie boutique. Okay, it was a frillies and frock shop, but it sounds better if said fancier... Here, with Patti's help, I got some rather frilly lingerie. I wanted to argue saying who would know, but she said that there were things like panty-lines, bra lines and such that showed under the thinner women's wear more to the observer than to the wearer. I did manage to hold my own and *not* get any dresses, though she held up a number of them to me and mused on how I would look. Based on my now feminine head and body, I did not even have to look in a mirror to get an impression of me in those creations... It was a bit unnerving even without trying any of them on.

I did manage, on one of the less fancy corner racks, to pull off several pairs of black women's slacks and a number of sort of man-tailored white blouses. Patti frowned at the blouses and then put them back, selecting instead some other blouses that weren't man-tailored. Her selections were feminine but not overly so. In trying on an "outfit", as she called it, I found that Patti was right, the cloth was thinner and a lot softer than what I wore. They definitely did show what I was wearing underneath in hints and shadows, and they were neither transparent nor even translucent, well not too much.

We also got a pair of slip-on flats she explained were for wear "around the house" and a pair of two and a half-inch heels that she designated were for work wear (the falsies were not?). They were not lace up like my oxfords and again were obviously women's shoes. Just a bit awkwardly I wore the heels out of there. Now I was glad that she was driving. They weren't all that hard to walk in; it was just that the ankles were not used to the height.

Before we left the complex, we passed (by preset manoeuvring, I'm sure) a uniform shop. There in the window was, of all things, a uniform that was apparently identical to what Patti wore daily at work. She jibed and said that I could always come to this shop if I wanted to match her work attire. I thanked her for the offer but declined with a chuckle. As we walked away, her comment in parting was a "you never know" sort of dig... I was still chuckling at the idea, not realising just how much my current image would fit into one of those maids' uniforms.

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The so-called zero hour was for the next morning. When I got up, I felt a bit of a dull ache in my bum from the shots, a good reminder to take one of the tablets we had picked up at the chemists on the way home the day before. Also, both the shot spot and the tablet "helped" in my selection of clothing. It was like the day before, but this time chosen from the clothing we had purchased, from shoes now

with heels to not a shirt but a blouse, including both the over and under. The bra was a challenge, but it was conquered and the inserts placed in the cups. Again, I found that my blouse covered but did not conceal the bands of white underneath it much less the lumps. As the saying goes, compared to yesterday my dressing that morning “was identical except where it was differed”.

Another reminder of my visit to “my” doctor lay in my tender earlobes. My mirror showed the two studs in each lobe only too clearly. After I tended to treating them as I had been instructed, I turned to my face. I applied a light makeup, emphasising the changes the parlour had made and trying to remember what they had again instructed me on the day before. It took a bit but I was finally ready to leave. Taking a final look at the total effect before going; however, I found that the mirror showed a me, but it was definitely an image of me that had been definitely feminised...

I took the “refresher kit” of makeup and a few other things with me in a paper bag after discovering that this outfit had a notable shortage of pockets. At work I put the bag into my locker and then looked up Patti.

When I found her, I found that she was dressed not in a uniform but sort of like me. She smiled warmly at me and complemented me on my efforts. When I mentioned the lack of pockets, she laughed and told me that we had forgotten one if the most important of women’s accessories, a purse. When I balked a bit she pointed out that paper bags are not really a good solution... Much as I hated to admit it, I sort of had to agree. She did give me a semi out for that day in that she pointed out that my apron had some pockets. Into them, she explained to my chagrin, went a hankie and lipstick and other items that might be needed when I was away from my “purse” which was not carried on the job.

Looking into the mirror I couldn’t help but notice that we were dressed sort of like two peas in a pod. We weren’t exactly like sisters, but were very similar to each other up, down, back, *and* forth! Her hair was redder than mine, but mine, believe it or not, was longer. She, of course, wore some rather nice earrings compared to my simple studs. Like me she had two per lobe.

It was time, however, and we collected our cart and with it came a new name tag for me, one that identified me as a maid like the other one but with the name “JO” on it. I put it on and we headed out into work. I was overly self-conscious, and cringed at the various meetings of our colleagues. Their reactions were again really mixed. Some complimented me on my new outfit while others still managed to frown when they encountered us. These sort of acknowledged my new attire but with restraint. It was hard to tell what they were thinking at the time; however, we were to learn that later.

Now when we went about our business, none of the clients seemed put out by my attire or my apparent sex. In fact, I found that some of the male clientele were, what shall I say, *enthusiastic* about my image, or so I liked to think. It is not that they knew about what it had been before, but they were reacting solely on what they were then seeing. Some had a tendency to be somewhat forward. When I mentioned this to Patti, she just smiled and commented that it would have been

stronger if I had been wearing one of the standard uniforms with their short skirts and scooped neck lines. She said that I should just brush them off, firmly but politely. If they refused to let up, then it could form a basis for them being thrown out of the hotel and being black balled from our hotel system. It made me uncomfortable, as I had not had this sort of reaction before. ... From anyone...

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But work was more or less the same otherwise, at least when I got used to the tightness at my groin and the band of iron around my chest. The new clothing was indeed more comfortable than my old shirts and the feel of the lingerie was also very nice. Patti had spoken of the outward image but not of the feel. I guess she was just used to it after so many years wearing it. It was not bad, not bad at all!

So the week went. At the weekend, Patti said that I should get some more clothing. I sort of had to agree, as my efforts to keep myself in clean clothing were proving to be a chore. Also, I had to wear knee high nylons with the shoes and, in spite of wearing trousers, I managed to put runners in a number of them. So, another Saturday outing was planned.

Although she insisted on driving, it was nice of her to come with me on these shopping forays. I would have been totally lost on what to get. Of course, she also had me look at some skirts and dresses. Although I balked, it was not as strongly as before. In fact, I actually started looking at them seriously, pondering on how I *would* look in them, but I did not let on. It was a bit ridiculous to think that way, but after a week of wearing bras, panties, nylons and blouses, it was not beyond consideration. I just did not tell her that her suggestions were actually being considered seriously. She may have sensed this as we did look at a lot more than before.

Again after our last shop visit, she did stop at the window of the uniform shop to again look in on the uniforms like the one she wore or used to wear at work. I'm afraid that my protestations were not as loud or as long as the last time and here again I actually pondered the uniforms until I realised my thoughts and pulled myself out of it and pushed on.

We put the last of my purchases in her car and then went to a restaurant for a good meal. I had promised her such for helping me. Over the dessert and coffee, I just had to ask her about her freedom and why she was not married or even seemed to be dating since my "date" was so readily made. Her reply, I could tell, was made with some difficulty and her face took on a degree of hardness as she spoke. Looking me straight in my eyes, she said that was down on men, having had some rather nasty relationships over the past several years. Therefore, of late she preferred only women's company, though even that had proven not to be totally "safe". When I mentioned myself, her attitude changed and she looked at me warmly and said that I was definitely different, being neither a macho male nor a conniving female. But, she went no further than that and I did not press it.

As I sat there, pondering her words, I sort of had to agree. No macho male would be sitting in a restaurant while wearing a full, albeit falsely filled, bra, a form augmenting girdle along with a pair of obviously women's shoes with hose. But, was I feminine? This one I had to ponder. She was apparently comfortable with me both on and off the job. I was also very comfortable with her. But I did call into question in my mind the practice, if that is what I would call it or even ponder doing it, of dating someone who was my partner at work. The disadvantage was possibly getting too much of each other; yet, we would learn other aspects of each other not work related in dates or shopping expeditions like today's. It was intriguing. I was encouraged in that she had readily accepted my offer, but it left me wondering just what to do with it and where to go with it or if I even wanted to.

Dating is a practice that I had not had much experience in since I had always been small among my peers and thus a lesser commodity for dating with the girls and then women I came to know from school and onwards. Patti, however, did intrigue me, especially the woman I was now with as opposed to the one I worked with. At work she was all business, but here she was a woman. It bothered me a bit that she knew in intimate detail exactly what I was wearing and that I was only an imitation woman. I had found that for my shopping I definitely could not drop my womanly guise without bringing humiliation of some level on myself. In fact, for the weekend, I was too much into it to drop it then either. I was apparently bound to this image for however long that I worked with Patti at the hotel. I did not suspect at that time what else was brewing in my life nor if and or how it would affect my relationship with Patti. But that was yet to intrude on my existence. Tonight I was having a good time with a woman who was becoming good friend.

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It was on Sunday that I found, as I said, that I again could not shake the image that I had been broadcasting the last week. The hair, eyebrows, and movements that I had been cultivating were there, and I found that I could not simply set it all aside. So, as I cleaned my apartment, I became a Sunday-Housekeeper at home. Of course, from my work experience I had found it now went amazingly rapidly, and I was done in almost no time. Laundry was longer, but it was still doable. I laundered the last of my male clothing and, when clean, put them away. They just did not fit well anymore and also did not fit the image that I was cultivating for work. My selection of clothing had not really been reduced that much by their removal as I had not had that much to begin with and had not added that much yet of my "work clothes". My male clothing more or less went into storage "for the duration", a period of time I could not even begin to estimate as I was storing them.

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Monday of the new week started off similarly as the week before had begun, although I did *not* have any soreness from shots to contend with. Nevertheless, there was a sensitivity in my chest under my prostheses to remind me. It had arisen the week before and was both pleasant and irksome. This time, however, when I left the apartment, I had my purse slung over my shoulder. I did have some pockets in the outfit I wore, but all of my sundries, including my makeup, were now posited in my purse. It seemed a bit odd to call it *my* purse, but what else was there to call it? It was mine and as Patti had said sometime earlier, I found it both very utilitarian as well as necessary!

Work proved to be just like the week before. There were neither surprises nor any notable differences. Those of our colleagues that we encountered that had been friendly remained so and those who had wrinkled their foreheads had wrinkled them again. All went as usual until Thursday when Mrs Higgins called the both of us into her office at the end of the day's work.

"Jo, Patti, it is nice to see you both again. How is it going with you two? Are you learning the ropes, Jo?"

"She is doing quite well," answered Patti before I could react. "*She?*"

"Uh, that's right. I feel I am working in just fine. Patti is a good teacher."

"I'm sure she is. But let me cut straight to the reason I asked to see you two. It turns out that this time it is some of our own staff that has been complaining. It is not the customers but our *staff*. They cited the dress code and said that the *both* of you are violating it. It does not matter that you, Jo, are biologically male. They feel with some probably self-righteousness, I'm afraid, that the dress code is there to be followed not flouted."

We looked at each other. It looked like some of the frowns had wagging tongues attached to them and that they had filed one or more complaints. As I was mulling this over, Patti asked. "What do you mean, Megan?"

"In your case, Patti, you have been working out of uniform." She then turned and looked at me. "As for you, Jo, they made the same complaint; you too are also working out of uniform..."

"What do they expect of me?" I blurted out. "They want me to wear a uniform like Patti's?"

Without changing her expression, Megan answered simply, "Bingo!"

I looked again at Patti who was looking at me, a sort of smile trying to play on her full, red lips. It did not matter that mine were almost as red as hers nor that my blouse was pushed out like hers, albeit not quite as far; she and I both understood what was afoot.

We spent a good bit of time batting it back and forth. I was arguing that I had already gone as far into the feminine world as I might have wanted, and that I was not all that willing to go further. Megan said she acceded to my sacrifices but that

the rules were rules and she could not bend them any further. We had bent then far enough already but in this she said that she could not go any further. I would either have to get into uniform or go back to maintenance or quit. Going back to my old job was now out of the question, especially how I now looked and quitting was equally not an option that I wanted to take; the job market had not gotten any better, worse if anything.

Well, we bounced it around further until I did manage to get a sort of compromise. It was giving in on my part, but not all the way, and, in spite of what she had said, it was Megan bending the rules again, but in a different way. IF I wore a black skirt, hose and “real” heels, then maybe it would quiet our antagonists? They all knew my true gender. Were they, just perhaps, taking out some innate internal man hating spites on me or was it some form of “professional envy”? Whatever it was, I had the feeling that we had not heard the last of it... I was, in a way, stuck. It was work here or move to some other city... It was not a simple choice. Patti had also been included in the question of what to do clothes wise, being told in no uncertain terms to get back into uniform...

So, another shopping expedition (and dinner after) was planned for Saturday once again. I had not asked Patti out on a date during the week as work generally left me quite tired. When I had mentioned being tired at night, she said that if I were to work more efficiently, then I would not be as tired. I had thought I was doing just that, but she started showing me some of her “tricks” and shortcuts. My OJT was still going on although I thought that I had a reasonably grasp of the job...

Saturday came and with it another shopping expedition. This time, however, I was not buying pants and blouses but rather skirts and heels. Our first stop was a shoe shop. I had thought that the heels I had worn were close enough to “regulation”, but Patti reminded me that they specified 3 inch or higher... I guess I was now into “higher”. I slipped off my comfortable flats that I had worn for shopping and was fitted for several pairs of black high heels, two pairs of which had heels of the required height or more (AND that would go with the uniform – just in case). To my consternation, she had my flats packed up and I wore one of the higher heeled shoes out of the shop. However, due to the fact that my “heels at home” had heels almost as high, I hardly noticed the difference. She had also picked up several pairs of pantyhose in my size in a neutral beige color.

When I bought my first skirt, I was almost ready to pack it up and move on. She, however, said that I should wear it out of the shop too, and she packed up my slacks. I tried a bit to argue, but it was for naught again, like in the shoe store... I ended up with several skirts and half-slips to add to my wardrobe, but when we left, my trousers, my comfortable and at this point comforting trousers were, as I said, firmly packed away in one of the “skirt-boxes”. Of course, this also necessitated my putting on the pantyhose. When I left that shop, it was with a swinging skirt and noisy heels on the concreted floor of the shopping centre. This time when we passed the uniform store, there was much more interest, at least on her part, in the uniform. I did manage to just barely resist her taking me into the

store for “just a fitting”. If it had fit, I’d have betted that I would end up with another box or two...

Again we dumped the purchases in her car and then went off for our “dinner date”. At least I liked to think of it as such. I don’t think she did, though it was a possibility. Naturally, I did not ask.

Again, it was a most pleasant evening. It did not take long with our convivial chatting for me to forget just exactly what it was that I was wearing. We talked more of our roots and hopes and desires. She chuckled at my AIT experiences, wondering how it was that a man as small as I was had been able to land such a “macho” training. I couldn’t answer that one. Of course, there was the cook’s OJT that I had gotten in Germany. It did not take much for me to agree that most of my training had been *on the job training* of some kind or other.

She talked a little of her past. She had been raised within sight of the ocean and had not really left the area. She had gone through two years of college but had not finished. She mentioned without details some of her past affairs, the where but not much on who nor on what they had done. I did not press her on it and she said no more.

For my part, I was finding this woman to be fascinating. I am not exactly sure on what levels but found it to be true. Her outlooks were a lot broader than her experiences as told to me would have dictated, but I was not about to argue. Again over dessert and coffee we brought up the current dilemma. I was reminded of my current apparel and started to worry on my ability to carry off such a change in life style. Simply stated, now I would *have* to wear a *skirt*, *heels* and



hose, not to mention the half-slip. At that time I would be totally clad in women's clothing, no questions asked or no doubts given.

Her comment was that I would have to learn even more how to carry myself as a woman would, as it would unequivocally be what I would appear to be. I would have to learn the additional chore of shaving my legs and under arms unless I had my hair removed by some other method. I did not mention the laser removal that had made my chin now so smooth, but it would not be so hard I reasoned to include my arms, legs and body, if necessary... When I expressed my doubts about it, she laughed a musical laugh that I found most charming and then added that I would have to learn by doing and observing... In other words, I would have to learn by doing an active OJT. In essence she was tossing my experiences and modes of learning of my various jobs on to my shoulders for this new "job". There was not much that I could say to that... But, for the evening it did set my mind awirl.

Much as I hated to admit it, she was right. When she dropped me off at my apartment, she helped me carry in some of the packages and at the door consoled me. She had seen how the last OJT statement had changed my demeanor and said that it would be all right and that I would do just fine. I had, after all, a head start in my apparel up to today. It was just an expansion and learning some "new moves". As she parted, she unexpectedly gave me a quick kiss on my lips and then, just as quickly, was gone.

I DID have a lot to ponder. As I got ready for bed, I doffed the skirt, slip and hose. Looking at my legs, I realised that even though my hair was light, almost a blonde, that I would have to shave them, but that was for the morning. Now I was to get my sleep, a sleep that was haunted by skirts and uniforms and hose and high heels and all. It was not very restful, but what else could I have expected? My life was taking another turn.

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My Sunday housekeeper duties were carried out wearing hose, heels, slip, and skirt. The whispers of the skirt and slip the evening before in the restaurant were neither shouts nor subtleties but rather were quite noticeable and stimulating... I thought of Patti and what we had talked about and wondered if she gave thought today on what I had done or if I had done it... Thinking of someone thinking of you?

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On Monday, my regular ritual ran the same up to but not including pulling on my slacks that I had naturally left for the last. When I was "powdered and primped", I looked in the mirror and saw an excessively feminised version of me. I then pulled on the slip and the simple black skirt. Looking again, it was no longer a feminised me, but a simple woman, not bad looking, but nonetheless a woman. I had not really seen it the day before, but also had not looked for it. Now, when I

slung my purse over my shoulder, it was undoubtedly a woman. What had I gotten myself into?

As I moved slowly towards the door, I realised I could simply make a phone call and then start packing up my stuff to move out of town. But, I did not do that. Instead, I left my flat and headed off to work...

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I did not dread going to work. I did not dread meeting the hotel guests that we may encounter during our work. I think the ones I dreaded were the forehead wrinklers, those that had frowned on my presence, at least one of which had filed the complaint... *they* were my antagonists...

Well, I did not meet any that wildly wrinkled their brows and wagged their fingers at me, so to say. This does not mean that I did not meet any antagonists. It only means that those I met did not openly react negatively. Of course, Patti was once again resplendent in her maid's uniform, which I found very pretty, showing off her better attributes as well as just her innate beauty, if I can use "just" in her case.

Well, as she had said, my OJT was still going on. To begin with, when I was working and did a stretch or bend or some other compromising move in my skirt that she saw, she would point out that I was "flashing my panties" or "showing more than I should" or some such. The first day had a whole lot of learning on how to move in a skirt in my job. I had spent Sunday in one, but that was very different from what I had done there... Well, maybe it was not all *that* different, but at home I did not have an independent observer to tell me what I should or should not have done...

The net result was that Patti more or less carried the load with me being a fumbling type of assistant. She did not complain at all; she just kept up a line of corrections and such to get me "on the straight and narrow" (almost, if not, a description of my skirt).

I hate to admit it, but it was a real mixed bag. In some ways it was easier on me as the skirt did not bind as pants at times can have a tendency to do when you are doing gyrations that my job required. But, on the other hand I had to be more careful on my stance and motions. My skirt, although a bit longer than Patti's, tended to ride up or be "open" in odd directions when I least expected it or when I was in some sort of compromising position. Nevertheless, once I got used to wearing it in public (I don't count Saturday or Sundays in this time frame/location) and learned more of the ropes on skirt-wearing, it began to be quite comfortable in its own way.

As the week drew to a close, I dreaded getting a call from Megan to come see her, fearing that this was not enough of a move. But, the call did not materialise. So, as we were closing down our shift on Friday. I made an assumption and with it my "move".

“Patti, you busy tomorrow? We did not hear from Megan this week, but I think I should have a couple more skirts and wondered if you’d like to go shopping again with me tomorrow... of course with a dinner as payment for your help and expertise.”

“I too was wondering if Megan was going to give us a call. You are not yet very graceful in your skirts and all, and I was sure someone would have called you on it.”

“Or called us...”

She smiled at that and then commented, “Yes, we do make a good team, don’t we.” For a fleeting second some sort of a look that I noted but could not read passed over her face as she looked at me as I smiled at her.

“And tomorrow?”

There was a “break” in her expression as those thoughts, or whatever, were apparently put aside or something. She smiled one of her wondrous smiles and gave me the reply that I had hoped for.

“Of course. It sounds like fun. You know, Jo, you should also consider getting some dresses for home wear and to, say, get used to a dress in the event that Megan says you have to get into uniform...” There was a pause where we sort of looked at each other, wordlessly, before going back to work.

I am not the shiest, nerdiest person in the world, but neither am I the most macho aggressive either. I had this innate feeling about Patti and her relationships with men, some of which she had barely mentioned. She had not said she was a man-hater, but there was a sort of tension that she exuded when she was talking about them or if the topic or near topic came up in our conversations.

Asking her to go skirt shopping with me was about as back door of a method of getting a date that probably ever existed. After all, how many *guys* do you know get a date with a woman by asking her to help you buy *skirts and dresses* that are for *him* to wear? Well, on the other hand, considering who is likely to be reading this, maybe that is not all that far fetched after all. It was to me at the time...

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On Saturday, as I was preparing for the shopping excursion/date, I decided to change bras, selecting for the first time to wear a black lacy thing for whatever reason. I unhooked my “morning bra” and laid my falsies on my bed. For some reason, I looked more closely at my chest. Sure I felt it when I showered but did not normally *look* at it. This time I did and noticed two things. One, my nipples and aureole were noticeably larger and darker. The aureole actually protruded a bit forming cones that weren’t all *that* low. And two, touching them caused them to shrink and withdraw back to what looked like my normal chest, well almost. As the nipples had most apparently grown some, they definitely did not disappear, just “tightened up”. But after a short span when they relaxed, they again protruded, quite noticeably to me. I did not have to have a large jump in logic to real-

ise what was going on. The questions were such as, how far will it go, do I want to let it go, what else is going on, and so forth.

All of that notwithstanding, I ended up with the lacy black bra anyway; it both felt *and* looked good, if I do say so myself. But, its contents I now realised were not *totally* the falsies; a portion of it, however small it may have been, was me in a way that had not been there before I got that shot and started taking those pills.

Once more as was almost becoming a habit, she picked me up and we drove to the shopping centre to “do our rounds”, including a stop to look but not go into the uniform shop. I almost wanted to go in and look, but clamped down firmly on my resolve and looked but did not touch. As it ended up, Patti had me buy several more skirts, some “matching” blouses, as she called them, and actually got me to buy some dresses. To boot, we got me some more lingerie, lacy panties, some black half-slips, and a couple of really slinky nightdresses... I’d say sexy but they were almost floor length.

What the heck was I going to do with a dress? For that matter, what was I going to do with all of the skirts I now had? They weren’t all black. I had worn one of my black skirts into the shop because at that time I only had black, but I left wearing one of sleek nylon that had a soft, dark blue color. It was lovely; I could not argue that, but *on me*?

The dresses were fairly simple with sort of open necks, not too long nor too short... comfortable to be sure. I drew the line on getting more... In a way I was hedging my bets. Holding off meant I could use this same excuse to buy more clothes some time in the future... and for another date? I was feeling a bit sly at the time. I don’t know if Patti saw through my strategy. It did not seem to matter at the time. I actually did need her to help me shop. In skirts I had no clothing sense at all although I was slowly gaining some being with her and listening to her commentaries. Of course, people-watching at the mall and later at the restaurant (meaning, of course, women-watching) had its own rewards...

One thing was for sure. After a week at work, I was much more at ease out in the public wearing heels and a skirt. I won’t say it was old-hat, but it was definitely not a nail biting, white knuckle, on-the-edge experience like it had been at times throughout the previous week. I’m afraid I was getting used to it. Of course, with Patti’s constant commentaries thru the week, I had become much more proficient and more skirt-smart, for sure! But even here, she had comments and guidelines and hints and helps on how to move and all. I was not surrounded in the middle of the forest, nor was I out of the woods? I could see the edge... a bit... in the distance.

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The meal went swimmingly as I had hoped it would. Our conversation was getting off of the surface generalities and more into details and wanderings onto other topics.

In learning more about her, she also probed my life and being. It was a standard sort of give and take exchange. What I found fascinating in its own way was that the more I learned about her, the more fascinating I found her. Of course, her possessing and frequently using one of the warmest smiles I knew of did not hurt either.

As I found I was definitely warming up to her, she in turn seemed to be warming to me too, getting freer in what she could and would talk about. Still, I sensed the reluctance to discuss men in her life, an obvious (to me) dark shadow of some sort that was lurking in her past and colouring her present. We had been working together for some time now, but I noted at this meeting that in talking with her, she would occasionally reach out and touch either my hand or my arm or shoulder or whatever. To most people this may seem insignificant as touch for many people is simply a part of communicating, but I knew from the past that it was not with her. Sure, we would often touch at work, but that was work, often just bumping into each other. In my buying a skirt or dress she also touched to adjust and such, but this was different and I knew it. It was but a small increment that I guess I wanted to be significant.

One point that may have been more significant was that we talked, ate, talked, and had a leisurely coffee and desert where we continued to talk. There was no sense of any “eat and run” mode of action. On the other hand, it is interesting how much we did talk about since she was my partner at work and we did talk a lot there... just that was more... well, on work and less on personal.

All good things have to come to an end and this one did too. We ended up as before with her driving me to my place and helping to carry my stuff in. I did not feel comfortable in making an offer for any kind of “night cap” type of come-on (or is that a “come-in”?) and so saw her to the door. There she paused and gave me one of her wonderful smiles and then, as the last time gave me a quick kiss. I was not as surprised by it this time and managed to kiss back for the fleeting partial second of contact. But again like last time, it was kiss, and then she quickly faded into the night.

As I closed the door I pondered this quick, fleeting act and what it may have meant in as much of a relationship as we had. Was it just partners or was there more in the offering, or did it have any meaning at all? You know, was it just “one of those things women do”?

I also pondered her comment on wearing dresses to get prepared, just in case, if I was called upon to wear a uniform. After all, a uniform is, basically speaking, a dress. So, I spent Sunday doing my domestic chores, but this time in one of my new dresses, what she had adequately called a “house dress”. I had to admit that there was a difference, but I did not know quite how to quantify it or even handle some of the differences. The waist was defined but there was no blouse to pull out of the skirt. To move was for the whole dress to move. Of course, there was still the “show” of leg; that did not change, but it seemed somehow different as it was linked not only to waist but seemingly all the way up to the shoulder. As a first extended experience, it was interesting, but also seemed like just “more of the same” in skirts.

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Monday proved to be easier than the previous Monday. As usual, Patti greeted me warmly and complimented me on my dress... that is the general term dress as I had worn my “regulation” black skirt and white blouse. This blouse, however, was a bit more translucent than the others that I usually wore. This one easily let my bra show through as a white shadow. Where it touched the cloth at the cup, the laciness of my bra was clearly visible, if you looked at it. She did not mention or seem to notice this, for now at work it was all business.

We collected our cart, filled it with supplies and set out to work. This week, I found that I worked easier, much easier than the previous one. I actually did get some work accomplished, as I was a lot less self-conscious about the skirt I was wearing. This was also driven by the fact that I had more or less packed up my men’s wear. Thus I stayed dressed as I was in the evenings unless I had something special to do where I wanted to (try to) appear as a man. Of course, after the parlour visit, this was getting harder and harder to even try; such that when I had worn pants and my plainest blouse worn without a bra, invariably I had been addressed as “Miss”. At first it bothered me, but now it was no longer something to get upset about, not really.

I was not yet proficient, however, in wearing skirts. I was still getting a running commentary from Patti on moving, rising, sitting and even just standing. However it was not as constant nor as disturbing as before. I had managed to get a lot of my moves under control. Also, my people watching, as mentioned before, was bearing fruit. Oh, I wasn’t moving with feminine style and grace, but I had more or less shaken the truck driver image (from my AIT?) that I had from before when I had first started working with Patti. I was now moving more smoothly and had hand motions to match a more feminine image. Of course, I suppose I might have been more upset if I had realised at the time that these motions were now becoming automatic, having slipped from the conscious to the subconscious levels of my thought processes.

Among other things, I should also say that I was becoming more proficient in the job. Needless to say, it was still Patti doing the work, and I sort of helping, but I was doing better and better at it. My maids-OJT was bearing fruit. This was my third career based on OJT though my driving had not strictly been OJT. I could still drive and could still cook, but now I was becoming an almost efficient maid.

I’m sure there are those that will say that my careers were deteriorating, especially in terms of macho imagery, but heck, a career is a career. You do what you can. There were no driver positions open that I wanted, and cooking was fine, but there were no cook positions open either. See what I mean? I could have gone to either of those if I had wanted to leave. However, since I did not want to leave, I was “doing with what I got” to the best of my abilities and thus was picking up this new occupation.

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I occasionally thought of asking Patti out during the week, but nixed it, as there was still an aura not unlike rejection, a sort of innate standoffishness, that I sensed without even making such a request. I had no problems asking on the weekends — as long as it was in connection with shopping. It was an opening that I was ready and willing to take advantage of. And, besides her knowledge of clothes and clothing, I found her to be a fascinating, warm, interesting and just plain good person in whom I found a good deal of joy to be with.

I'm sure some of you out there are saying, "you turkey! Why not ask some of other women out, or go out cruising or something like that?" Well, I have a basic shyness and have never been "a cruiser". Besides, I don't drink the hard stuff and thus look askance on shopping for a mate where that is the first order commonality. Anyway, I was finding her enough to supplant any other conquests. Besides, with my current appearance, I would not want to hazard a guess as to what I *would* attract in a bar, regardless of what clothing I was wearing. Remember what I just said about wanting to look male and the result of being addressed as "Miss"...

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As the week went on I found I was still learning hand over fist not only the job but also the art of being feminine. Note that it is not on *appearing* but *being* feminine. I was a pro on neither job nor demeanor, for I was still learning and had a long way to go on both, even after this long on this job. You may say that being a maid is a simple process. Well, if you are a subservient maid in a household, that might be more true than in my job. This, however, was a job that was not all that simple as it had its own sets of demands that *had* to be fulfilled. I knew it was a masterable job, but not suddenly. Every time I thought I was getting a firm handle on it, something new and different would happen or come up. Yes, it was an on going learning process.

Patti and I had figured that Megan was now satisfied since Patti was back in uniform and I was wearing heels, hose, skirts and blouses with the proper padding underneath. Not only that but I was also wearing makeup and doing the weekly beauty parlour visit gambit. Yes, one night a week I went for touch-ups or some such. From the laser epilation sessions, long since completed, I was almost embarrassingly hairless other than top of head, eyebrows and public area which was now inverted triangle of hair. Thus, we were taken by surprise when we got called in on Friday.

We went in and sat down opposite Megan; I smoothed my skirt automatically and crossed my legs at the knee almost identically to what Patti did with her shorter skirt. I had the feeling that Megan was watching me more closely than Patti. Why not, I was the odd one out, so to say. My hands had also gone more or less automatically to my skirted lap and lay there, one nested in the other, palm

up. I was comfortable and did not know there would or even could be something that she would pick up on. I had learned my mannerisms from Patti and from watching other women and had learned well enough that I did not have to think of these things, nor at the time did I *think* of the fact that I did *not* think of them...

“Patti, Jo, I had hoped I would not have to say this, but your efforts, instead of being rewarded are still being criticised. There are those on the crew that feel that Jo is still, how is it stated? Out of uniform.” The smile that she had greeted us with had faded away by this time. “I laud you, Jo, for your efforts and above all for your accomplishments.”

“Thank you, Megan,” I replied, “I have tried and Patti has proved to be an excellent teacher!”

“And Jo has been an ace student. I know I have absolutely no complaints about her,” Patti added in.

“Well, I know these things, but it does not seem to be enough for your critics. I don’t know how some of these people can be such sticklers for details but, well, maybe they aren’t exactly details. It is probably a simple jealousy or envy on their parts, but it boils down to basics; namely, it is simply a case of one rule for all and all follow the rules. I’m afraid, Jo, that the request is that you follow the rules. Otherwise, there could be a really minor revolution because others would want to have your “freedom” from rules in spite of your basic gender or on the other hand, perhaps because of it. People’s motives are never simple nor are they usually worn on their sleeves.”

“Uh, which means?” I asked, although I already knew what the answer was going to be; nevertheless, I just had to ask.

“It means as good as you look, as much as you have tried, as much as you have succeeded and as well as you are doing, there is the request that you go that proverbial extra mile.”

“Oh?”

“Patti should be able to help you get a uniform and tutor you on how to wear it.”

The bird had flown the cage and the truth was out or, using yet another cliché, the jig was up and I was destined not just for the skirts that I was already wearing but for a maid’s uniform like Patti’s, shorter skirt and all. At least it was not the stereotypical maid’s uniform like the famous (or is that infamous?) french maid’s uniform. It was, nonetheless, a uniform and not something you’d wear shopping or dining out, unless you really had no other choice. I considered this newest of requests.

When I was in the military, I had uniforms to wear, but this was different. There you were supplied with a set of uniforms and were *expected* to wear a uniform every day, practically all of the time. Oh, there were “civies” that could be worn if you were going off base, but to be seen in uniform at any time of the day was almost expected, especially on the job. Now, with a maid’s uniform, there is a

difference. It is a work uniform, like a waitress's uniform, and when worn meant one thing... you were either on duty or were either going on or coming off of duty.

Well, if there was a good side, I could hope for another "date" with Patti. At least she would not insist on me wearing the uniform out of the shop like she had insisted my wearing the high heels or skirts after purchasing them. At least I *hoped* she would not insist on such...

Thus, when we left Megan's office, I asked Patti for another Saturday "get together" with dinner on me after. To this she readily agreed; so, the harshness of the situation was ameliorated by the prospect of another good evening. And, by now, I knew I would be wearing skirts for our outing, but this was no longer a big deal. It was matter-of-fact, sort of *de rigueur* for such a date, as I wanted to call it but not to call it that to her. Anyway, as I've said before, all of my male clothing was more or less packed up. Short as my time in skirts had been, the thought of wearing pants seemed to have diminished all on its own. It was thus a mixed blessing. It was the uniform that was required to keep this job to stay in town and perhaps to also slowly come closer to Patti? ... I wondered if this latter was really a factor or just another of my thought ramblings.

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And so, what can I say about buying the uniform? Patti picked me up again and so was there to help me. She was not really there to *select* the uniform; what I had to buy was more or less *preselected* before I stepped into the store. She was there to "pose" me in different positions to check for freedom of movement and lack of binding. When I asked why she had not done that when we were buying dresses for me, she said simply that I was not going to be doing maid work in those dresses and thus would not need fitting and checking. In this case, however, she knew what was needed and what was to be avoided in my selection and fitting of my new uniform. I easily acquiesced to her greater knowledge and experience.

We could not get away, however, without her taking me into some of the dress and lingerie shops for "accessories" and "free time" clothes. Yes, I ended up with more than I started out to get, not that I was about to argue, as her taste in clothing was impeccable!

As we put the boxes with the uniforms, yes, I had bought two, and other stuff in her car, I suggested a nicer place to eat than we had gone to before. I was no longer self conscious about being seen in my skirt and blouse. I knew that I looked enough like a woman and moved, well ... sufficiently like one to match the appearance. Thus, even though I had just spent a couple of fistfuls of money on the uniforms and the rest, I was prepared to spend more than last time for a meal and her most excellent company.

And thus we went to a nice restaurant and had an excellent meal and, of course, a most excellent conversation. As we were waiting for dessert, she looked over at me and said that she did not feel quite right taking advantage of me for

such an excellent meal. I countered with *I was taking advantage of her*. I wanted to add that it was of her knowledge and experience of which I was taking advantage. But, when I had said the first half of what I really wanted to say, she looked up at me with an odd and not very pleasant look in her eyes, one that I had not seen before as she interrupted my fuller statement half said by quipping, “It wouldn’t have been the first time.”

There was the opening. In essence I pulled out my fencing foil and took the stance to pursue it. I did not want to upset her, but I did want to know what it was that had formed the glass wall between us that I had sensed all this time, one that could not be penetrated without her letting me. It was the one that I had mentioned earlier to you the reader, but it was one, which I had no direct “knowledge” of. Caution, however, was the watchword...

With the greatest of care, not that I am naturally diplomatic or any of that stuff, I managed to find out very sketchily that she had once almost been married and that the cur had taken advantage of her. Although she did not say it, there was some sort of implication that in essence he had raped her; at least it seemed so in her mind. He had then abandoned her. Now here was an uphill climb if ever I saw one before me. Of course, this glass wall was already partially overcome in that she had at least confided that much in me. But, where does one go from there?

Patti was my friend, practically the only one I had in this lovely town. The town was friendly, but it was not a community of friends. I had grown fond of Patti as a friend. But, she had always sort of stood off a bit from the very start. I hoped that this private confidence she had just given me would not stand between our growing friendship, for I sensed in it that she had just “given away a secret”.

It definitely put a dent in our enjoyment of that desert, but she agreed to an after desert coffee that allowed our talking out on other topics to soften her admission, sort of setting it aside, lessening, I hoped, its importance. In the course of that conversation I told her about how I found her fascinating, fun to be with, and very compatible with my way of seeing things. I then had to chuckle as I added about how that did not really extend to my current clothing. She had a laugh at that which broke the patina of bitterness that her earlier disclosure had drawn over her demeanour. Once again I had “my” Patti back and was glad of it. That particular cat being out of the bag had thinned the glass wall, but it was still a topic I knew, for the time being, to avoid as it was a past trauma for her, and I did not want to stir up that pot.

When in the ensuing conversation I “confessed” that I had seen men ogling me when I was out and about, she smiled, then almost chuckled, further softening her mood. She said that the ogling and perhaps crude or rude comments “went with the territory” of skirts, heels, and femininity, meaning I’m sure, but not really saying *my* femininity.

By the end of our conversation, she knew exactly where I stood, or sat at that time, especially when I picked up my purse, pulled out my makeup bag to refresh my face and chose the ladies when I went to the loo. I’m afraid I was more com-

mitted to my new life style than I thought, as I had not made a conscious choice on where to go to go. I hoped it was not just my imagination that she was now warmer towards me than she had been when we came in.

When she dropped me off, she again accompanied me to my door, helping me carry the boxes. I quickly deposited them inside before she left. This time she thanked me for a lovely evening and, as hoped, gave me a kiss. I was ready this time and put some loving into my kiss as I returned hers. It was a lovely kiss, let me tell you, but all too short. When she pulled away, she looked me in the eyes with a really quizzical expression followed by giving another quick thanks before disappearing once more into the night.

All in all, it was a night in which more had happened than I thought would have. I was pleased on the one hand but still troubled now for her and her “history” or what little I knew of her trauma. I wanted to do something to ease it, but did not know what or how. I further knew that *whatever* I pondered doing would have to result somehow from something that would have to be initiated *by her* to be effective. It was an enigma I wished that I could solve but I was without a clue on what to do; so, I decided to bide my time and see what was yet to come.

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Sunday was another quiet day of housekeeping, reading, watching the telly, and also doing some just plain relaxing. I had unpacked and hung the two uniforms up on the outside of my closet so as to be sure that they did not get wrinkled in their boxes. Being a soft yet stiff sort of nylon or whatever, they probably wouldn’t have wrinkled anyway, but I wasn’t taking any chances! Of course, each time I went into my bedroom I was reminded of what Monday would be holding for me.

Somehow, all too soon, Monday *did* arrive and it was time to “suit up”. I had pondered wearing a skirt and blouse and then changing at work, but I had not done that when I first started wearing skirts at work and had had the chance to wear trousers to work and to change into skirts there; so, it did not happen now either.

Actually, I would have thought it would have been traumatic or at least dramatic to put on that uniform “for real” (and not as just for a try-on). But, lo and behold, putting it on was just like putting on a dress, and that I had done often enough that it did not hold any surprises for me. I did manage to wear my black lingerie as a sort of black under black statement, so to say. It may have lain hidden to the viewer, but its physical effects were for all to see in my bulging chest, but its psychological effects on me were not as obvious, or at least I hoped not.

Each day it seems that more of the fill in my bra was mine and not the falsies, good as they may have been. I suppose I should have expected some of that as a matter of course, for the doctor had said that there would likely be some development in that line, but I was still taken aback by the speed of growth as well as the quantity that was developing. I had scheduled another visit to the clinic more or

less for a mileage check on what was going on. I wasn't alarmed, not really, but I was somewhat concerned as to what was "really" going on. The pills seemed to be dosed on a never-ending supply though I knew from the label that the prescription expiration was a year from when I first received them, and that was to me a considerable time yet in the future, especially considering what they had already done!

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As on various other Mondays before, this one was given over to poor Patti doing the majority of the work and coaching me on handling the shorter, perhaps more mobile skirt of my uniform. It was shorter than any skirt that I had ever worn to work. Of course, the uniform being one piece like a dress meant that it was easier for it to ride up more than the skirt and blouse combinations I had worn before where, perhaps, the blouse could just pull out of the skirt and not take it with it. Thus my concentration was more on my uniform and what it was doing than on what I was doing. And as well, I was listening to Patti's clues on what to do, how to handle it (or what not to do, as the case may be). I did make it through the day, but with a lot less real work being accomplished than usual. I almost felt like I was starting over...

Tuesday was better but I had my appointment to see Mary on the imminent Thursday, and it was also affecting my whole outlook. I asked Patti if she wanted to go with me since she had been there for my first visit. She smiled one of warm smiles saying, "Sure, let me check" She checked with Megan who agreed to let her go.

Wednesday's work turned out to be better; I even got some of it done, sort of.

Thursday was better yet. I was more relaxed at work but getting mentally tensed up since I would be at the doctor's that afternoon. At least I would have Patti with me for moral support. The doctor's visit was not for an illness, but it was for, what could I say? It was for my "job security" in a rather weird way, but, nonetheless, it was necessary.

The afternoon came, finding us again together in the office of the doctor. I was called in while Patti waited for me, ready to come in if I asked her to. When Mary saw me well coifed and in my uniform, she smiled and complimented me on my appearance and how well I was fitting into my new role. I explained my concerns about my breast growth and that I was obviously, at least to me, developing the way no man was supposed to. So, I got a repeat examination similar to the one I had on my first visit. When I undressed, she was most complimentary about my choice of lingerie. I replied that it was only right and the only things that fit both the role and my body. When she commented, however, that I seemed to be going above the "minimum needed" for my job. I'm afraid that I blushed but did not respond verbally to her comment, probably didn't have to.

When my bra came off, she looked at my chest and then examined it more closely, humming softly, occasionally nodding as she probed, felt, and evaluated

my somewhat swollen chest. She then followed with the rest of the exam including what I guessed was a repeat of the same regime of measurements of my body that she had done before. When all was done, I was told to dress and then come into her office, and she would consult with us. I assumed she meant “us”, as I had told her that Patti had also come with me, adding that she was there for support. She smiled at that and said that *we* should come into her office as soon as I was dressed. It did not take long and I collected Patti and went into the doctor’s office.

Mary bid us sit while looking at a folder before her. When we were settled, she looked up and then, looking at us (not really only at me) she said that I was physically quite fit, as healthy as the proverbial horse. Okay, I thought as much, but...

Then she got to my chest and looked down at her documents, “Jo, it looks like your genes are working over time. You have developed more than I would have expected. I would imagine it is fitting your original desires and your boss’s requirements, right? She did not pause for an answer as she just continued, “But from your demeanour, dress and general outlook as I see it, you two look almost like two bananas out of one bunch. It looks like you are probably also fitting right in at work” She looked down at her folder. “For comfort, you may want to consider either getting some smaller inserts or perhaps a larger bra, depending on the image you want to cast. I checked your measurements and noted that there is a definite if not large redistribution of fatty tissue towards the female pattern giving you the beginnings of a fine figure, should you want to continue.”

“Continue what?” I had to ask.

She looked up at us again and continued, “It appears obvious to me, at least, that



you have made a commitment to your current occupation with Patti's help, no doubt. As your consulting physician, if I can say that, I would recommend you continue with the hormonal treatments, perhaps even accelerating them somewhat, but not enough to curb your libido too much." She had actually looked at Patti as she said these last few words, and I think both women smiled, but I don't know if it was in agreement or at some joke unknown to me.

"The medications you have been taking were meant to be just a supportive dosage, not an altering one, but your body has decided to make it an altering one. It is, as I said, in your genes, which seem to have become very friendly to the actions of the medications. You could also just stop and your body will go back to its original state, the fatty tissues will stop redistributing and you will lose any gain you may have experienced in your feminisation although the breast developments would slow and may not all go away.

"On the other hand, I'd recommend an increased dosage which should not make for massive changes, but it would again depend on your basic genetic makeup and how it will react. Patti would find you getting more and more feminine as time progresses. I don't know if that would upset you or not, Patti."

Patti looked at her and then looked at me with a sort of half smile. "No, I think it would be just marvelous. She is getting quite good at her job, and this would probably ensure that she would not just wander off, breaking up our team. Also, our co-workers would have less to carp on."

I did not know if I should have got upset at being referred to as "she" and "her". But, in light of the fact that I was sitting with my legs chastely crossed at my knees with my short skirt pulled down as far as it had let me and with my chest being quite reasonably pushed out by its underlying bra, both spelling "woman", there was not much to argue on. On the other hand, here she was, giving me support for what I had come to find out about and with me thinking it was aberrant. As the saying goes, it was back in my court. I got the support I had asked her to give me, but I was not sure it was the way I had wanted it or the support I had originally wanted. Instead of backing off, she was supporting going even further!

I looked at her for a bit, trying ineffectively to read that half smile. It was not malicious, that I knew, but what did it spell? She wanted me to become more feminine? Was it some sort of revenge in absentia for her one time lover who had raped her? Or was there some other reason that I could not even begin to fathom? I had come to see the doctor to get an answer to what I had considered a relatively simple question but ended up with an even more profound set of questions.

"You want me to do this, don't you?"

"It's your decision, Jo. I'll go with whatever you decide. But, you asked me for my support and that is what I thought I was giving you, if you want it."

Speak of a circular answer! I was on my own. I could stop, continue or increase. The doctor was recommending increasing and, as far as I could tell, Patti was backing her up. Now what? Well I had to make a decision so I weighed my options.

If I stopped, I'd revert to what I was. I might be able to get my cook's job back, though with my hair and with the altered appearance of my eyebrows and ears, there could be a slight problem. I had pulled the rings out often and had noted that the holes were quite obvious, at least to me. My beard was gone to say nothing about my overall hairlessness that appeared to be permanent, which would be no problem with my current position, but its total lack would not be a sign of "manliness" outside of it.

If I continued "as is" then I would continue to change, albeit slowly.

If I accelerated as recommended, I would change somewhat faster with possible longer lasting effects. But, in the end, it was supported by both the doctor *and* by Patti. Would she be happy with the current state? I didn't want to ask her that, however, as it would be presuming on her.

Then there was the pivotal question on going back to cooking... What would Patti say or do? I think I knew the "do" part of it... I would most likely lose her as a friend. I felt that I was still in the process of slowly gaining her friendship and perhaps her confidence too, through this job that had included my current state of feminisation, which had obviously not been repulsive to her but apparently quite the opposite. If anything it may have helped our friendship in some way unknown to me... It was these last thoughts that formed the resolution of my quandary.

"Alright, Doctor, I'll take your and Patti's recommendation and do the acceleration." The die had been cast, the choice made, and the action called for.

And so, there was another signature on what was like the original form but slightly different, followed by what felt like a horrendous shot but which was actually an implant, and the repeat like on my first visit. As the final move, there were more prescriptions for more "drugs". As promised, Patti was supporting me, alright, but was it for the best? If so, then for who's best?

Again when we left I had a smarting bum. But, whatever these things would bring as a result, Patti was now somehow more animated. In fact, before we got back to work, she paused, took a long look at me and said that I needed another parlour visit. She had seen it coming and had even made the tentative appointments for us on Saturday – my (?) Saturday to make suggestions to go shopping and such. Well, it was a turnabout that I had not dreamed of. But, in light of our just concluded visit to the doctor and the direction that I had more or less decided on, I could hardly refuse, not that I wanted to... And so, I didn't...

When I acquiesced, she added that dinner was *on her* this time. This one stopped me momentarily. I couldn't argue, not really. I suppose that she was giving back, in a way, what I had been giving her. So we returned to work, as if nothing had happened; however, my life had taken a different tack. Nevertheless, the world still turned... and me with it, I thought!

On Friday, she told me that I should wear something nice for the parlour visit; we'd be going out after and not going back home first. And, as she had consistently in the past, she would pick me up.

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From my expanding wardrobe I selected a dress. It was somewhat plain, but cut to show off (and augment?) my figure, being full at the hips with a reasonably full skirt also emphasised by a snug belt. I thought it looked good with heels. As I looked in the mirror, yes, I could see that a parlor visit was indeed due. My hair had lost its snap, for sure, having grown out to boot. My eyebrows had also got slightly fuzzy from growing back. I had “neglected” a lot of my “beauty regime”, for sure.

Patti picked me up, as usual, and we drove to the same parlour as before. As she was parking I asked her what I should ask for. Turning off the motor she turned to me and smiled saying, “Not to worry, Jo, I have set up the appointments for the both of us. Just go with the flow.”

Go with the flow? I knew enough to know that I did not really have much choice in that respect. At work, for sure, I had been getting well into this woman-thing, but this was an area where I had no real expertise. One visit does not an expert make. I wasn’t even sure of all that had been done the last time. I had remembered the hair gig and the instructions on how to care for it, instructions that had worn thin by now. Yes, I had visited the “laser shop” that had done its specialty, but not in a parlour.

We went in and Patti announced our presence. The receptionist looked in her appointment book and acknowledged our appointments by telling Patti that booths for her and her girl friend (me?) would be ready shortly. So, we went and sat in the waiting area from which we were almost immediately called. We were set in adjacent booths, but they were open to each other so that we could each see the other.

My operator took one look and tut-tutted me for neglect, saying I was long over due. When the manicurist came in it was more of the same, adding that my nails should have been filled over two weeks ago. How should I know about filling? I could see that the acrylic nail had grown out quite a ways. If I waited long enough the acrylics would have simply grown off, but she fixed that by filling in the gap between nail and cuticle with fresh acrylic even as the operator was working over my hair. I guess my lack of expertise must have been evident as she gave me a lot more “tips” on care to include fairly detailed instructions on doing nightly roll-ups too. As I was sitting there being worked on I hardly had time to see what was going on in Patti’s booth much less talk to her. For her part, however, she was watching intently if not amusedly what I was undergoing.

In that visit I was returned to my former “glory”. The only difference being that I now had hair that matched hers in colour if not also in curl. It had taken only a bit of lightening of my naturally red hair to match her colour. It was really pretty, as I already knew that hers was. My eyebrows were restored to their former thinness, if not more so, along with more admonitions not to “let them go so long”. By now my nails had also been restored to full acrylic beauty and were painted to match my lipstick. I must say that the mirror did show Jo with no obvious rela-

tionship to the Joe who had started this current job so many weeks back. Well, there was a facial similarity, but not much more...

Patti was effusive in her compliments. She paid for the visit and the tips and we were off. It was now quite late afternoon. She said it was too early to go eat, too late to go home, but not too late for a bit of a walk in the city park. We drove there and did walk a bit, watching the people, some sports, the swans on the pond, and a rather pretty sunset. It was getting dark by the time we got back to the car. We had also talked a bit, but it was inconsequential banter, a lot of which was praise for my innate beauty and what the parlour had done for it and for me...



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We then drove to a rather nice restaurant. I almost blushed when we got there; it was nicer than the one I had taken her to on our last night out. The waitstaff didn't exactly fawn over us, but we did not want for anything for long. It was a lovely, leisurely meal with good food and, need I say? good company. She somehow seemed more animated, as if this whole thing was her idea from scratch. Well, in a way it was, but it was still reciprocating what I had given her before. All in all it was most pleasant.

It was also not the same as before as I could not help notice my fuller (if not longer) red nails every time they came into view, and no, I did not sit on my hands. After the meal I had to fix up my make up and this time we both went to the ladies' together. It seemed so right, fitting and proper.

When we were enjoying our desert, two men came over and asked if we'd like to join them for some dancing. I looked at her and she at me. I gave a slight negative nod, and she thanked them but politely refused their offer. I was glad on several levels, not least of which being that I did not want to "share" her. Just as politely as they had come they then left.

When they were out of earshot, Patti got an almost wicked grin and asked me almost conspiratorially, “What? You don’t want to dance? I thought they were rather handsome and were probably good dancers.”

“Patti, I know what I may look like,” I replied almost as conspiratorially to match her grin, “but my mind and especially my body is not inclined in that direction, regardless of how I may look. If I were to want to dance, it would be with you and only you.”

“Oh? And you fancy that, do you?” Her grin had now widened.

Oops, I was going out on a limb and she had the saw. “As a matter of fact, yes, I would love to dance with you but would never ask in this garb and with my hair, hails, makeup and all; I couldn’t pass very well as a swain, now could I?”

“Well, we definitely couldn’t dance here, even if they had a band.” She smiled as if at an inner joke before continuing. She then looked at me directly in the eyes, “There are places where we could, you know, but I don’t fancy all of the philosophies that they embrace. I guess we are just a pair of old stick in the mud straights.”

“Straights?”

“Yes, you know, not into kinkiness or what some call aberrant monosexual practices.”

“Mono... Oh, I’d agree there, although what I am wearing I’m sure would be seen by some about us as kinky if they knew what was really under this dress.”

“You mean the bra and panties?” Then she lowered her voice some more, “Or what’s in them?”

I’m afraid that in spite of myself I blushed at this. I had indeed been thinking of my lingerie but not specifically what they held. She now grinned an *impish* grin. “That’s alright, Jo. I know the whys and wherefores, and it really does not bother me. I actually prefer you looking this way than trying to be macho and manly and all that other crap.”

She did?

She had put away the saw and I had climbed back off of the limb, I guess. I had sensed that this was the way that she felt, but was unsure of it. I again wondered if my visit to the parlour had not been some small step towards getting back at her former fiancé, albeit in absentia. Maybe it had, but that seemed to be behind her now. I liked to think of it as being behind *us*, but did not want to make any rash assumptions. I don’t think that her actions and motives were driven by past experiences, but I’d bet that they were nevertheless rooted somewhere in her past, roots that I did not know of or could even guess at...

It had been an excellent meal with conversation that was both interesting and enlightening to me. We had coffee and then leisurely wandered off home.

As she dropped me off, I commented on how I did not have any packages to carry in. She said that it was all right, she did not mind as she had enjoyed the day out and the evening. Those were welcome words to me. Nevertheless, she

walked me to my door. It was such a masculine thing for her to do; I had not done it once for her; couldn't as I had not even been to her place as she had always driven. And, at the door, she was the one that kissed me, again a masculine act. I noted these things and wondered just who was in charge or if anyone was... It was as if my putting on dresses and skirts had somehow abrogated any and every male dominant role in our relationship I may have thought I had... Oddly, it did not seem to bother me all that much, if at all.

I savoured the kiss we had just shared, again regretting it was not longer, but knowing also that such was not to be, not at this time or even if ever. As I closed the door behind me after she had disappeared into the night, I pondered just what it was that I was doing and why... Where was this life of mine taking me?

To begin with, I had stayed on at the hotel, as I liked the town and the friendliness of its people. Then I had gotten into this maid's job and with OJT in more ways than one had been picking up the job. To begin with, Patti was just my mentor and partner. But now, what was I to think? Was there more there than I thought? What was my heart saying in its conversations with my head? Who was trying to sway whom towards what?

That night, after setting my hair and climbing into bed wearing a soft, slinky nightdress, one of several she had insisted I buy, I realised that I had not come to any concrete answer. I also knew that what I was doing was no longer *just* to stay in town... it was now also the additional factor, if not an overriding factor, of staying with Patti. I think she realised that this was also a reason for my staying... We had not yet come to the point of discussing anything like that; she had not even asked me in all of our talks if I had even thought of moving on. On the other hand, would we? Could we? Time would tell, I told myself, as I slipped off to sleep, recounting the events of the day and evening...

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On Sunday, I got up, and, after my morning ablutions and breakfast, I put on a light makeup and started my housework dressed in a housedress. I had put them on as a matter of course and had not even thought of wearing anything else.

As I worked, I hummed to myself and, since the work was not mind-bending, continued to think of the night before.

The answer seemed simple, but what of the implementation? Well, that was something else. I found without much deep or profound thinking that I was indeed falling in love with this woman, if I had not already fallen... But, what was there I could do about it? She now knew that I was not homophilic as I now suspected that she also was not after her reactions to the men who had asked us to dance, though I could not be rock solid sure. That lack of negative reaction was definitely a sign to be considered. I was rapidly transitioning in the direction of womanhood, however. If I got there, what would she think? Would I then be a woman in her eyes and therefore not one to love? Could I continue to transition and *not* achieve this state in her eyes?

At this point I was conveniently in front of a mirror. Looking into it, I saw this woman looking back. It was not a case of a guy in a dress anymore, or was I? I was gaining the figure of a woman and was filling in where padding had previously supplied the curves. Was this feminine image what she saw or did she see me as a guy in a dress still? There was not much, if any, guy visible. If she was still showing interest with this image, what could I infer? On the other hand, should I infer anything at all?

She had had a really bad experience with an earlier would-be lover, if I could use that term. Was my new image cultivatable because it was “safe”? Then again, was it really? I had not really lusted after her body. Maybe I should? On the other hand, that could be the fastest way of losing what I now considered a growing warm friendship. We had a lot in common, but... And when we were with the doctor, why had she been so supportive of the fast track? It was also no small process I had gone through yesterday at the parlour. Where was all of this going? And, on the other hand, where had it already been? Where had she been? For that fact, where had I been?

And so I agonised and dreamed and worked. The work kept my hands busy and occasionally occupied my mind, but not enough to distract me for long. And, one of the largest questions lay unanswered, “How should I interact with her at work?”

I finished relatively early. After all, housework was like an extension of what I was doing at work and I had one of the best teachers there. Patti was, if nothing else, proficient in her work and I was a relatively eager student. So, once I finished, I again curled up on the sofa, watched some telly, did some reading and, in general, relaxed. Tomorrow would come soon enough.

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Monday did come, and I again donned my uniform at home. It wasn't quite a street dress, but was not so obtuse that I couldn't wear it on the streets on my way to work. It is not like wearing the uniform on the street such that it would make the passers-by look for the dog that I was obviously walking for some employer since I was dressed that way. No, they'd see a “domestic” and nothing more. Furthermore, I did not find this demeaning; it was just a sign of my job.

At work, it was business as usual. She was her usual self of teaching me where I needed it or giving hints on how to move in my uniform. I hate to admit it, but even after a week of wearing it, I was still making faux pas every now and then. But as the week wore on, they were becoming fewer. It was Wednesday when I thought I would “make my move”. We were coming off of our shift and were sitting in the deserted employee's lounge filling out our time sheets and daily reports. I looked at her and spoke.

“Patti?”

“Mmmm? Got a problem?” she was rereading what she had written.

“Well, you could say that. Are you free on Saturday?”

At this she looked over at me, a sort of blank look on her face. Had I blown it? Then, with the same blank look, she asked, “What did you have in mind?”

“I’d ask for dinner and dancing, but we’ve already seen the problem with the dancing bit. So, how about a movie and dinner after?”

She seemed to ponder that simple question as if the fate of earth depended on her response. Then she smiled one of her warmer smiles, having decided whatever it was that she was apparently debating, and answered, “Sounds like a nice idea. Want me to pick you up at seven? Or when does it start?”

So, our paperwork was temporarily set aside as we worked out the plan much to my glee. She had agreed! And I did not have to use an excuse like shopping or a parlour visit or anything else. It was quiet an ego boost that I revelled in, but just as quietly as I could. Refusal would not have been devastating, but would definitely have been disappointing. Of course, there was the ever-present factor of having *her* pick *me* up, taking the edge off of my revelling but not putting a dent in it by any means.

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Saturday I did housework till mid afternoon and then started getting ready for the “date”. Well, I suppose I should take the quotes off as it was set up as a date and, as far as I could see, accepted as a date. The biggest question was, what should I wear? I had not mentioned anything about attire and nor had she. I decided to take the way out that I suspected that she would expect and put on fresh lingerie, a nice dress and makeup and heels. It was what I thought she would want. So, at 7, when the knock on the door came, I grabbed my purse and clicked on my heels to it and opened it up.

There was the barest flicker of surprise followed by a warm smile. To my delight and surprise, when I came out, turned to close the door, and turned around again, I was greeted by a warm, albeit short, kiss on my lips. I had barely enough time to return it; so, my return, so to say, was a smile of my own. I wondered, what would the neighbours think of these two women kissing in public like *that*? Well, women do it all the time, as far as I can see; however, would any of the neighbours remember that a man originally rented this flat, that he had shown no intents or actions towards moving out, and that he looked an awful lot like me? I guess I was my sister in their eyes if they had even noticed...

The evening went marvellously. We had a fine dinner and afterwards went to a movie. Many answers came to me. She approved of my clothes. And in the movie we held hands and kissed several more times. These were longer, lingering kisses that were more passionate. Apparently some of my feelings for her were being echoed back to me.

Yet, when it came time to part company I again sensed an inexplicable feeling floating about her that sort of said to me to just part company and not to try any-

thing that I might regret later. As it was, she walked me to my door, like so many times before. This time, however, *she* put *her* arms about *me* and kissed me again a long, warm kiss, which I tried to return just as warmly. She then thanked me for a lovely evening. There was an awkward pause as I was not sure what to say; so, with a quick peck to my lips again, she parted into the night as I slowly made my way back into my flat, thinking after the fact of all of the responses I *should* have made...

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The next week went normally. I was still learning even after this long. Perhaps learning is not the right term; maybe I should say that I was “honing my skills”. In any event I was also a bit emboldened by my success in getting my date last week. I am not an assertive man but rather am considerably more shy and retiring in such things. In the army I could not brag of conquests as so many of the other troops had; I had met women and had even dated a few but it was for companionship, not for sex or the like. I did enjoy Patti’s company, that’s for sure, and some thoughts of sex had arisen, but I was not assertive enough to pursue them and too, there was that glass wall that I had sensed. I felt that any aggression on my part would surely have changed it to stone or worse. I was far from macho to begin with, and after all, how macho can one be when wearing soft, lacy lingerie, skirts and heels? I’d known of macho woman, but my daily attire would in general not be *their* chosen attire, not by a long shot!

On Wednesday I screwed up my courage a notch or two and asked for our “regular” (at least in my mind) date. She turned and looked me in the eye, but her face had a blank look to it. There was no readable emotion showing when she replied, “Sorry, Jo, but an old boyfriend is in town and has my weekend spoken for.”

I tried to maintain an equivalent cool, as I interpreted it and replied with something like an “OK” or such. The screw on my bravado had loosened considerably. The wind was no longer fully in my sails, and I no longer had the courage, and so did not follow up but went on with my work. I noticed, sort of out of the corner of my eye that she watched me for a short while, but I could not read into it any particular meaning... But, for me, the subject was closed, at least for the moment. Nonetheless, I was more aware than ever before of my maid’s dress with its short skirt and matching high heels. Even my longish hair about my neck was a reminder of how I looked.

I spent a quiet weekend to myself, wondering on and off what they were doing. At least for a while I managed to lose myself in my housework, though I did ponder if he ever did housework. I was relatively sure that if he did that he probably did not do it while wearing a dress with a soft, pretty slip underneath it...

I pondered if this was “the” boyfriend, but, remembering not only what she had said about him but also *how* she had said it, I felt reasonably sure that it would not be *him*. Since she had not talked almost at all about almost any of her past

boy friends, I was left to speculate on him and on her feelings, to say nothing of my feelings for her...

For the first time since I started this whole dress thing, I went out, sadly alone, and got some more dresses and lingerie. It was sort of drowning my aloneness in shopping... It was definitely not the same.

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Monday morning I was again on the job with her, working side by side. She said nothing of her weekend and I was not going to ask. I did not want to know if it went wonderfully, nor did I want to commiserate if it had gone the other way. I was curious, but could not bring up the subject. It may have been some form of paranoia or whatever, but I felt that she was watching me more than usual. I wondered if I was wearing my emotions on my sleeve.

On Wednesday, I again broached the topic of a date that weekend. This time there was a different kind of reaction. She smiled a sort of amused smile, not her warm smile, and replied that he was still in town and had spoken again for her weekend. I hate to admit it, but I was disheartened and she must have seen it in my face as the smile faded to a look of concern. I suppose she was trying to ease my feelings but did not very much as she explained that he was leaving (a feeling of relief for me) but that another friend was due in and had already asked for the next weekend. She then added softly that perhaps we could get together again after that? It was a question I welcomed but did not know what to say; so, I merely smiled, somewhat, and nodded my "yes".

I did not like being sort of put on the shelf, but, well, I did see her and enjoy her company daily. It was just that even at lunch when we would talk that I was a bit uneasy looking at her smart maid's dress, dark hose, high heels, well made up face and nicely coifed hair, realising that I looked about the same. In fact we had been almost tauted as twins, definitely as look-alikes.

How could I compete with these men in her life? Did I want to? Well, as I'd come to know more about her, I felt that I *did* want to but was at a loss as to how, especially with my ever-developing female figure that was growing to match my attire. Once or twice, especially when gazing into a mirror, I almost felt that I should compete for the boyfriends... but such thoughts were fleeting and quickly dispelled as totally ludicrous at best. In spite of my figure and my clothes, it was she that I was interested in, drawn to.

In my new guise which was now full time, I had met and interacted with a number of men and for the most part now perceived them in general as pushy, smelly, macho animals with only one thing on their minds, minds that were ruled by their lower head... It was disgusting, as a rule. There were some that were more gentlemanly, but they were much rarer. I hated to think that that was what I may have been like before I pulled on this mantle of womanhood, but could not be sure either way. Of course, if I had been like my general impression, then I doubt I would have gotten anywhere with Patti in the first place...

I sort of kicked myself for not asking when I had the chance, for midweek of the next week, when I screwed up my courage again, she apologised and said that her friend was still there and had also asked for that week end too. This time, however, having a certain level of frustration and longing, I asked for a date on the following weekend. She paused as if weighing some inner questions and then smiled one of her warmer smiles and said that it would be fine, that she had almost come to the point of asking me. This gave me more confidence and warmed a heart that had been drooping almost noticeably, at least to me.

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I guessed that she also noted it as my spirits picked up and the week ended more evenly than the last several. I did notice her watching me again, but this time with a smile on her lips, one that had not been there the week before. My weekend chores were done more lightly than the weeks before, as I was now looking forwards, not backwards.

Wednesday at lunch she said that we'd go have dinner and maybe dancing as she had some things she wanted to discuss with me. To this she added that I should dress "prettily". With my "current" body, there was no way now that I *could* dress macho, but I interpreted this to mean "femininely pretty". If that is what she wanted, that was what she was going to get. I thought of my closet and what dress she had not seen yet; skirt and blouse were out as I didn't have any sets that I deemed were what she was looking for.

Of course, it wasn't until just before the date as I was dressing that I decided on a pretty blue dress, a deep yet almost electric blue that allowed a hit of my by then natural cleavage to peek through at the neckline. I even had matching shoes with slim, four-inch heels to match. No, I didn't have blue lingerie to match, but I would have worn it if I had had some. I did put on an extra petticoat to allow the full skirt to fluff a bit more. Like I said, if she wanted feminine, I'd give her feminine.

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She arrived right on time, as I knew she would. I was a bit disappointed in that she wore a black, knee-length, a-line skirt, a somewhat lacy white blouse and a matching black blazer, along with black high heels. I felt that I had out-dressed her, but any disappointment was short-lived, as I was quite happy to be out and about with her once more. We went out to her car where she held the door for me as I got in. I was quietly grateful, for the extra petticoat under the full skirt of my dress took an extra bit of handling. We then drove off for points unknown to me. I had long given up making or even trying to make that decision unless I asked for it first, or, if it was my initial idea/invitation.

We ended up in a smallish, relatively exclusive restaurant where she had even made reservations. It was positively cosy and even intimate where each table or booth was relatively isolated from the others.

We had a delicious meal and chat. Nothing was brought up by either of us about her recent visitors. She didn't offer, and I felt innately that I could not ask. Nevertheless, I had the feeling that she was watching me extra closely all through the meal and into our usual after dinner coffee. I couldn't question that either. Things were not the same as before, but I could not put my finger on it.

Under the influence of my clothes, my feminised body and her scrutiny, I ended up being about as feminine as I had ever been. There did not seem to be a macho bone or movement from me the whole evening. It was when she ordered a small dessert that I began to really wonder. That was something that she ordinarily did not do *after* coffee. We usually had a desert and *then* coffee, not the other way around. When it arrived, it also came with fresh coffee, and with its arrival she sprung her plan on me.

“Jo, we have known each other for some time now and I have become what I would have earlier have called ‘overly fond of you’.” She smiled and then continued, “My visitors weren't exactly friends who “just happened” to just pop in on me. I had to test myself and resolve some inner turmoils before I could go forward in my current plans.” At this she reached into the inner pocket of her blazer and pulled out an envelope. She pondered it a bit, tapping it edge-on on the open palm of her other hand a couple of times before continuing.

I had invited two ex-boyfriends, not just one as I may have sort of misled you to believe. Sorry for not being totally up front on that one. We had good times, at least up to a point. It was when they pressed me, and when they also emoted the ‘standard’ macho lines and demeanours, that I realised why they were both **ex**-boyfriends. It was a final learning experience for me and helped me to make some decisions.

“My last guest, about whom I had said as little as possible, just saying ‘guest’, was definitely misleading for you. You probably thought it was yet another boyfriend. In reality it was an old and a very intimate girl friend that I had known perhaps too well at university. Yes, though I never mentioned it, I actually spent some time at university up until not long after I lost my parents, but by then I had found that it was not what I wanted. I did odd jobs until I landed here and, well, you know the rest, more or less.

“I had asked her by so that I could answer some other yet open questions in my mind and more importantly in my psyche. With all of these visitors, I put or tried to put my thoughts and feelings about you on hold, under suspension. With my last visitor I remembered that we had had good times between and after classes, some of which were very, very intimate. They were better than what I had experienced with most of my ex-boyfriends; yet, it was not really what I wanted ultimately. I had asked my visitors here not telling them that ultimately their presence was not amorous but in truth to help me come to a decision about you, dear

Jo.” Saying that, she then opened the flap of the envelope and extracted a single sheet of paper. Unfolding it, she quickly scanned it and then handed it to me.

I read the title and stopped, looked up at her, but she had an unreadable expression, and then I continued... It read:

“Prenuptial Agreement”

I, Joe Martins do hereby agree to the following stipulations before entering into the state of holy matrimony with Patti Waltham:

1. I will continue to dress and comport myself at all times as a female to include hair, makeup, dress, etc.

2. Other than swimwear, I will dress only in skirts and dresses unless specifically allowed by Patti.

3. I will continue my current regime of oestrogen hormone therapy, alterable only with Patti’s advice and specific consent.

4. I will not undergo any elective surgery to alter my physical appearance, again without Patti’s explicit consent.

5. To the world outside of our home I will endeavour to present myself as female in all ways and cases except those that Patti explicitly allows otherwise.

6. On fulfilling a marriage contract, I shall change my name to hers. The signature below pre-empts the change from the name indicated above in this contract and shall be binding.

7. The wedding vow for Jo will include the line to “love, honor and obey” normally said by the bride.

8. If any of these conditions are violated, then the marriage contract that was signed by Patti and me will be declared null and void and Patti will do the division of any properties and/or monies held in common between us.

Signed (Jo Waltham, nee Joe Martins)_____”

To say I was stopped cold would be an understatement. The implications of this single piece of paper were world moving for me.

I read it several times and then looked up. Her expression had not changed. I just had to ask, “Are you proposing marriage to me?”

“I suppose that is a pretty close approximation... It is a proposal with conditions. Most of these agreements are made for wives-to-be. In this case, you could say that it is also true; only, your basic gender is not female.” She paused and then added. “I know this is not a simple decision. I will answer anything I can tonight, but I don’t really expect much as it is so new, unless you have an immediate answer either acceptance or rejection. But I expect neither if I have read you correctly.” She handed me the envelope. “Here. Think it over and let me know as

soon as you have decided. I don't mean to be clinical about it but I've found much to my own amazement that I have fallen for you and that I do love you and sense that you love me too. But my past has such complications that this decision cannot be made without conditions. Only time will tell what would become of us."

I refolded the paper and put it back into the envelope and then put it in my purse. "You could knock me over with a feather now, Patti. I've given a good deal of thought to asking you for your hand. There was, however, an indefinable wall that I sensed. This clarifies a lot; however, now that the question is on the table, so to say, I'll have to make a final decision. It isn't something to take frivolously, that's for sure. "

We did manage to talk some more, but with that question now open and hanging, it was difficult, so we departed. At my doorstep she once again kissed me deeply and I thought almost hungrily. I returned it as best I could in kind. It was sort of hard in a way when I was melting in her arms. This was no longer a casual friendship.

When we broke the kiss, she looked into my eyes searchingly for a few fleeting seconds and then was gone. Once in my flat I pulled out the agreement and then tossed my purse on a seat, sitting myself in a nearby chair. I read it again several more times. It was basically an enforcement of my current life style that had been dictated by my job... Of course, there was the added factor of Patti... Yes, it did not take any soul searching to come to the decision that I did indeed love her, had for some time; I just did not feel that I could act on it. Here in my hand was, in essence, the reason I couldn't. She had some barriers, or hurdles, if you wish, that I had sensed and which had inhibited my actions towards her.

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With the implications and ideas expressed in the agreement running around in my head I turned off the lights and went to my bedroom where I divested myself of my dress and then my lingerie. I then stepped over to the mirror and looked in, almost as if anew... This image was not the Joe Martins who had spent time in the army! Not having put my hair up nor removed my makeup, I was Jo, a maid and erstwhile companion to Patti. My somewhat widened hips, narrowing waist, and highly sensitive budding chest all spelled "woman" while my penis seemed to almost hide. Yes, this was Jo not Joe, more of a Josephine rather than Joseph.

As I prepared for bed, that image now played its own role in bouncing around my mind. I thus fell asleep with these questions and images roaming the maze of pathways of my mind, looking for the right door to open to give a final answer. As sleep over took me, I think I came to the conclusion that what she was asking for was for *me* to be her *wife*, not in so many words, but it seemed that that was what it added up to...

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Monday morning, as I prepared for work, I looked again in my mirror and realised that what she was asking for was not too obtuse... But, I would have to think about it more... To say “yes” and sign would definitely affect my future in ways that I would have to think about! This was definitely *not* a time for a rash, unthought-out decision!

At work it seemed to be business as usual even though the momentous document was hanging over my head and still playing with the grey matter therein. Nevertheless, I was still the maid that I had been hired to be. I wasn't quite as proficient as Patti, but was gaining on the differences, so to say, and was now well earning my keep. Midday or so, when I paused, I noticed that I was doing my job and was not thinking of the skirt of my uniform dress as it swirled about my hairless, nylon covered legs, nor of the strange puffy sleeves that hugged the tops of my arms like no man's shirt ever had. My high heeled shoes were now more or less just a pair of shoes, nothing special nor out of the ordinary as far as my feet were concerned. In these respects I seemed to have settled in and gotten used to all of these as a daily part of my life...

For her part, Patti worked and seemed as normal except every so often I'd catch her looking at me questioningly. She was not pushing the question. It was sort of like the “give him enough rope...”

Could I take this on as a permanent life style? Both at work *and* at home? I now had a reasonably large wardrobe of women's clothes and accessories as it was, to include makeup and hair care “stuff”. Quantity and quality were not a question. It boiled down to a question of life style... the old question of balance came in – what would I be giving up as opposed to what I would be gaining? At this time, due to my job and how I dressed for it, day or night, I would be giving up very little in terms of my *current* life style and gaining a great deal if I were to gain Patti. But, could I continue this way? What would the future bring? Would I change my mind? Would she? What about any relatives, legalities, and all that?

Round and round it went all day and into the evening, defying resolution.

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The next morning did not bring any revelation or *deus ex machina* to solve my dilemma. I was still in a muddle over what to do. How long was she going to wait for a decision? How long could I wait?

It being a new day, I dressed as I had the day before, the week before and so forth. I no longer questioned donning pantyhose, bra, panties, uniform, and heels. It was as common to me now as putting on fatigues had been when I was in the army; only, these clothes were a lot nicer and more comfortable, albethey of the opposite gender. As the day before, there was a consideration of my blossom-

ing body with the same observations and questions. Would this impede any dates? I'd have to test that one.

At work, again at noon, I casually asked for a date on Friday night. With a twinkle in her eye she agreed. Why and wherefrom the twinkle? In this case, I was not going to question it, more like run with it.

All through the day and up to quitting time on Friday she seemed to have more smiles than usual and a few pats and touches. She seemed warmer than before. I think that while I was worrying about getting this date she had been worrying more about *not* getting asked, worrying that the agreement would form a barrier rather than a door between us.

For sure, I had been carrying the agreement in my purse each day, and I had it as well on our date. However, I did not draw it out, nor did I have to, as I had read it so many times by now that I now knew each line, each word. Many times I was on the verge of asking her some fine point or even *the* large point of why have it at all, but somehow I never got that far. We did, nevertheless, enjoy ourselves thoroughly, even fending off a number of men who wanted to "share" us.

Towards the end of the evening, there was another "knock me over with a feather" incident. I knew we were to leave shortly but she reached into her purse and brought out a small, readily recognisable, felt covered, hinged box, which she presented it to me. As I opened it she said, "You haven't signed the agreement yet; however, to show that I am indeed serious about it, here is a token to show you what I am feeling."

It was some token, it was a moderately sized diamond solitaire engagement ring. I looked at it and then at her and then at the ring. She then reached over, took the box and removed the ring, only to put it on my third finger, left hand. It reminded me once of an almost totally forgotten incident of her "borrowing" a ring that I had worn on that same finger several weeks back. Needless to say it fit beautifully and I could only stare at it there, being somewhat speechless.

Since I did not take it off, she put her hands on mine and quietly asked *me* for date tomorrow. Two dates *in a row*? And one of them was to be during the day? I tore my eyes away from the ring and looked at her warm smile. Then and there I quickly agreed. The momentary freeze was broken, but she did not quickly remove her hands from mine. They were, as I knew from other times before, warm, as warm as I also knew her heart was. It was a warmth that was pervading my mind and my body as we sat there and gazed into each other's eyes.

We discussed where and what to wear and all, and then we left. At my door there was another of our long, warm, passionate kisses. There almost seemed to be a hunger there that I had only sensed before. Now it was stronger and I think I reflected it in kind from my own feelings. When we broke she told me to be sure to wear "her" ring, not that I was about to forget it; it was way too important to me and obviously to her, but for me to wear it "in public"? If I were dressed as a man, it would be way out of place. But, as I was dressed then and as I knew I would be dressed for our date, that same public would only see me as an engaged woman, nothing more, nothing less as far as I could figure.

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We had a fun day and a casual day full of handholding and occasional hugs and kisses. It was informal. I had worn mid-heeled pumps along with a full skirt and blouse as had she and we spent the day, despite the season, on the beach with a sort of picnic-beach-combing-lolling type of day and afternoon. I was so very comfortable with her and with what I was wearing, and she seemed to be just as comfortable with me too. All in all it was a marvellously successful day.

We ended it in a cozy little restaurant where, as far as I was concerned, it was just the two of us; the rest of the clientele just did not register. I even fleetingly toyed with asking her home, but the agreement, still in my purse negated that. If I wanted her in my bed, chances are it would be in *her* bed, and, *only* on *her* terms. With those fleeting thoughts and realisations came the nagging question of could I do that? Would I do that? Then the questions and the idea evaporated as we enjoyed each other's company and brought that wondrous day to a close...

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Sunday morning I had gotten up briefly to do my daily ablutions and had then donned the ring and had gone back to the snug warmth of my bed. There I lay for the longest time contemplating the ring and my thoughts on the agreement and what it would mean to me. My mind was racing and leaping all over the place, again and again. I doubt I could have gone back to sleep if I had wanted to.

Among the questions that arose several times over was the question about whether or not what I was going through in my mental and emotional states was the same as a woman confronted by such a prenuptial agreement would also go through. Each time I dared to ask myself that kind of question, I came to the same conclusion that I thought it would be or, at worst, be a very close second.

When I got up, I got dressed in my Sunday-do-housework housedress to do my Sunday chores along with catching up on undone Saturday's. As I did them I paused relatively frequently to look again at the ring and ponder what I was going to do. By accepting it I had in essence agreed to marry her at some yet to be specified time in the future; I was now engaged, silly as it may seem. It was also a tacit, logical, but not physical signing of that prenuptial agreement. It could not be completed without that signature, however. I knew this, but it did not deter me from wearing, admiring and yet pondering the significance of the ring and my wearing it of it.

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On Monday I went to work again as usual, but now I sported the ring too. On that first day I wore it, it caused no end of comment among our co-workers. It did raise a number of eyebrows when I responded to the "who" question that my

“husband-to-be” was going to be Patti. I think that most of our co-workers had somehow simply forgotten that in reality I was actually a man, especially since for some time there has been nothing in my appearance, actions or demeanour that spoke in any way of my being male. Those that accepted it congratulated the both of us and were put off with the statement that we had not yet set a final date. The others frowned, perhaps grumbled but had nothing they could do about it.

Things were escalating in spite of the paper barrier that I carried in my purse. If I were to sign, then it would be the final “Yes” that needed to be said but was lacking for final completion and our final joining. In a way my wearing of the ring was digging me a hole... What was I going to do if I decided not to sign? How would Patti take it?

Megan, of course, heard of the ring and had us “drop by” her office. She asked to see the ring, which she oohed and ahed and was most impressed. Of all of the staff there, she was the most knowledgeable if not the only one who was aware of Patti’s background and previous “love life(s)”. In the course of our talking, the nuptial agreement came out. I trusted Megan and knew that Patti did too and so brought it out and, with Patti’s consent, let her read it. Noting the lack of signature, Megan found it to be in line with both Patti’s past and her present. She “warned” me that Patti had an exceptionally strong character; she would not dominate me, but that she would definitely, as the agreement stated, more or less, “wear the pants”, if in the end I agreed and signed, and then we got married. She chuckled and added that if I signed, she might be the *only* one of us to wear pants...

I had not really pondered, well not *too* often, the question in those specific terms, but, per the agreement, I would not be able to wear pants without permission. I found dresses and skirts somewhat pleasant and had got quite used to them, but forever? Of all of the decisions I had ever made, this agreement was without a doubt the most momentous and most likely far reaching. The Army had changed me in many ways but my enlistment had been short, with a limited term of service that I had not renewed. The cook and maintenance jobs were similar; only, this time *I* was not renewed. It could be that same way with this maid job, but I knew I was good, had one of the best of teachers! I could quit, but what would I do for a job? My current body and, to a larger degree than I may have wanted to admit it, my mind were now bending towards if not steeped in femininity. Then again, what would I do about Patti? Those were not inconsequential questions and considerations, and the answers had the most direct bearing on what I was going to do... to sign or not to sign... I don’t think my delay was as much procrastination as it was trying to answer a tough set of questions!

Now the people at work knew of our “plans”, or at least what Patti planned and what I was supposedly a willing party to... Our team, Patti and I, worked like a well-oiled machine and did what I knew was an excellent job. We got no complaints and, being thorough, even got compliments. It was somehow quite different from any of the jobs that I had had before and was, nevertheless, as fulfilling as any, knowing we did our job well.

We worked as a team together and yet... she was not pushing for a signature on the agreement (or for a refusal). If she was going to be the stronger one, the leader, why didn't she push? I don't know but also was not about to argue...

Again, what were my considerations? I had never been a macho man to begin with. I was small in stature and was not muscle-bound, especially now under the influences of the estrogenic hormones. I had dated but never with anyone like Patti. No one had ever had that kind of influence and effect on me. But, saying yes would change my future life style, or would it? Oh yeah, it was my current life style, but it had evolved due to the job, not due to Patti, though she did have her own influences, which were assisting, not driving. They were, nonetheless, pointing in the direction I was now heading... I thought of this as I looked down at my bulging chest and ran my hands over my expanding hips and rear.

If I stopped the hormones, I had been told, these would eventually regress, but their effects would not necessarily disappear... The longer I waited and continued, the more of these feminine curves I could expect to not only retain but also to develop. It was like an additional omen pointing towards a future that signing would assure rather than just "suggest"...

This went on for a week and the questions slowly tapered off. Well, the questions from others. *THE* question still dwelt in and plagued on my mind, refusing, naturally, to go away or even to diminish. It is not that decisions were lacking. Very often making a decision is easy to do; the difficulty lies in sticking to it and carrying it out! I knew I would have to make a final decision before too long... But I still did not know what it would be.

On Friday we had our "usual" date, went out to a movie and a quiet dinner afterwards. All went swimmingly. The agreement hung heavily over my head but it did not interfere with our enjoyment of each other. It ended again, as usual, when she dropped me off, walked me to my door where she again kissed me. I did not initiate it, had long since given that up. I stood and watched her drive off... Again the agreement surfaced. It was as if it had been signed, though it hadn't. I went in and to bed, pondering as if anew.

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In the morning I got up and did my ablutions and went back into my bedroom to dress and get ready to do my housework (OK, it's a flat and not a house; so, sue me!). I stripped off my nightdress and my underlying bra and panties. Then, bare-breasted too, as I had not yet put on another of my bras, I went towards my closet to select a housedress to put on. This move, naked as I was, was out of the ordinary for me to do, and in so doing it this way this time, it had its consequences! At the door of my closet I was "confronted" by my full-length mirror. I looked into it and stared as if I were making a brand new discovery, like something I had never done before!

In reality, I had been looking into mirrors as far back as I can remember if not further, since before I knew that the being in them in reality was myself. But... the

being that confronted me that morning was acknowledgeably “me”, but a me that somehow also seemed almost like a stranger looking out at me from my mirror. It was a sort of Epiphany.

My hair was still up in curlers, set the night before and not yet removed, my face was smooth and hairless, and it bore traces of makeup that had not been totally removed the night before, especially the deep red blush on my lips. Further down was an almost totally hairless body. On the chest were breasts that were not gargantuan by any means but were nevertheless, in this, my “new discovery”, quite sizeable and were conspicuously and undeniably breasts and not just extended or expanded pectoral muscularisation. My waist was slender, especially in contrast to the wideness of my hips. There was about the lower abdomen and hips a slight bulge of typically femininely distributed fat that added to the coverall image. The only hair below chin level was an inverted triangular patch at my groin, in which were the only non-feminine accoutrements that were visible; however, they did very little to deter from the sum of the basic image.

I do not know how long I just stood there and stared, looking at the many feminine features my mirror presented to me. Then I recalled the images from my youth and also those from my army years. There was definitely a separation that left this image isolated from them. Nevertheless, using the hackneyed description, when I moved, the image moved. Yeah, there was no denying the truth of the moment. The womanly image in the mirror was that of my personal body! It did not really reflect the soul, but it would probably have been just as feminine too, if it had also been reflected...

I finally broke the hold this image had on me and got a dress and then proceeded as in weekends past; I donned my lingerie and got dressed in my house-dress and did my house work. Now, however, I was haunted by the image in my mirror, for a variant of an earlier question had arisen as if anew... If I stopped the hormones would I *really* revert? The building of the image was relatively rapid, but I suspected that if I would *really want* to revert then I would have to take testosterone... I seemed to have become some kind of an oestrogen hormonal junkie, whether I wanted to continue or wanted to try and stop. The state of my being now was markedly and undeniably female. Several times I looked down at my bulging housedress and ran my hands over my bra, my waist, my hips and my fleshy butt... It was undeniable even if I would want to deny it for some reason; I now had the body of a woman, and it would continue to develop yet more before the hormones I even now had implanted in me would start to wear off. That observation was definitive and, as I said, undeniable!

Thus went my Saturday... haunted by a mirror that always wanted to show me that image or variants on it...

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On Sunday, after breakfast, now sitting at my kitchen table with my purse in front of me and with a pot of coffee, I pulled out that form yet one more time, read

it again 3 times, pondering it each time and sipping my coffee between readings. Then, taking pen in hand, I signed it and then read one more time before refolding it and putting it back into the envelope for the nth time.

Having made that momentous, well, for me, decision, I called Patti and set up a dinner date for that evening, not telling her that I had made a decision. Having made my decision, I would now need nerve and resolve to carry it through. As I said earlier, I had made the decision; now handing over the signed document would be the completion of the decision. Not giving it to her would be the negation of the decision. There was just one last proviso; however ... I wanted to know why. The answer to that simple question was now the last thing that could negate my decision.

When she picked me up, I had the signed paper in my purse where it seems that I had carried it unsigned since she first gave it to me.

Among the other things that I had long since learned was not to go anywhere without my purse... In it were some of the standard accoutrements of the female consisting of my small makeup bag, a comb, a small brush, my indispensable pocket mirror, my somewhat lacy hankie, and, just for show, some tampons, and, of course the document since I had received it.

I think I checked four times while waiting to be sure the document was the right document and that it was included there in my purse. Like, where else would it be? The only time it left my universal purse was when I (often) dragged it out to read again, long since a useless gesture, as I knew it by heart!

I tried to under play the tension that I was feeling. Nevertheless, I could tell that she was reading me, noting my level of tension, but not knowing what underlay it. If she guessed that it had to do with her prenuptial agreement, she did not let on.

After a pre-dinner cocktail I had relaxed enough that I interacted with her almost normally. I might have been successful in giving “normal” relaxed performance excepting that now *she* was also a bit on edge because *I* had been on edge! Nevertheless, all things excepted, in spite of that we still had a delightful and delicious dinner. Afterwards, we shared a slice of sinful cheesecake for desert along with our standard coffee to wash it down.

While we were letting it settle, sipping our coffees, she piped up with, “So, what’s up, Jo? All evening you’ve been edgy, at times like the cat sitting next to the empty canary cage, and yet trying almost, but not quite successfully, to be your old, usual self. Did you win the lottery?”

I’m afraid I must have given her a quizzical glance at the last question, but only momentarily. Obviously, she had, in reading my mood, had enough and was up to finding out what had set me off...

I looked a few moments into her eyes, reading concern and puzzlement mixed there. Then I simply looked down and reached into my purse, grasped the now shopworn, limo, and somewhat crumpled envelope holding the agreement, almost

as crumpled and creased as its envelope, and, looking again in her eyes, pulled it out and lay it on the table in front of me.

“Patti, this agreement has been constantly buzzing in my head. I have one more question... why?”

She looked at me and the smile faded to be replaced by a look of seriousness that I also knew well from work. “Jo, you know briefly and superficially of my one bout with being a fiancée. I’m afraid it scarred me deeper than I ever thought possible. I could never go through that again. I’m sorry that it has come down to affect our relationship. Maybe it will diminish with time and your love.

“As you know I have recently ‘entertained’ some old ‘lovers’, well, not exactly. I was contemplating asking you to marry me, but I had to be sure of my own feelings. No, as I told you before, I did not get ‘laid’ by either of my past boyfriends. I had to experience some dates with these macho types of men that I had dated long ago to solidify my stance on the whole macho thing. This is not your demeanor, Jo, but I wanted some form of assurance that it would not become such. Each of them thought that by my inviting them here that I had changed my mind about the rejections I had originally expressed to them when we had parted long ago.

“My last ‘guest’ was, again as I said earlier, a woman. We had been quite intimate and were somewhat again on her visit. I think that she, like the men, thought that I wanted to take up where we had left off before, but I couldn’t quite. I found that... well... the swing of the pendulum that far away from macho was also not for me, not totally. It did solidify my thoughts, again moving further away from the macho life style but settling them, if you’ll excuse a lousy pun, in ‘no man’s land’.

“Thus I solidified my thoughts and emotions and made that agreement to set out in no uncertain terms the basis of any long term relationship that I would want with you and hoped that you would want with me. I love you dearly, Jo, but you have to know on where I am coming from, so to say, and agree to my terms before I can marry you.”

She stopped, still looking deeply into my eyes. I then realised that the answer to the “why” had been before me all along. I had just failed to recognize it. Knowing it now, I found that it made no difference in my decision. I picked up the envelop that was now, as I said, a bit crumpled for having traveled so far, so long in my purse and also having been opened and closed so often, and handed it silently to her. She broke eye contact as she took it, opened it and extracted the similarly crumpled document, opened it out and quickly noted my scrawled signature at the bottom.

Any and all deep concern that had been in her face and eyes suddenly vanished as she smiled one of her more beautiful smiles. She then closed the document, put it back in the envelope and now deposited it in *her* purse, all this time now gazing lovingly into my eyes. As the saying goes, my decision had been made and had now been carried out to completion.

Any tension that might have been between us dissolved in a trice. After she closed her purse, she put her hands on mine, one finger toying with my ring, and said simply, "Thank you, Jo. You have made me very, very happy!"

I had no repartee to respond with and just sat there soaking up the love that she was lavishing on me. I did not need any special senses to see, feel and then absorb it. Then again, I know that I was trying my best to send the same to her as at that moment I felt more in love with her than I had ever felt before for anybody. For a time, the restaurant, the other diners, and the rest of the world, in essence everything else did not exist... there was just she and I, together as never before.

Our trance was broken by the waitress asking if there would be anything else. Such a mundane ending to such depth of feeling as had passed between us!

So, our meal, dessert, and coffee being over, we decided to leave. This time she took my hand and that is how we left, hand in hand. Believe it or not, we had not done that before quite the same way nor with the same depth of feeling. But, things were now different between us and she let it show. And, believe me; our parting kiss at my door had more passion in it than we had ever had before. It was a magical topping to an evening I would long remember!

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I'm afraid the results of that decision border on the mundane. We went into planning for our wedding, where, when, who to invite, and all the rest of the fold-over. I was not totally surprised to find that she had already arranged for a minister willing to marry a couple that would appear as if they were apparently two women. She had also had a small chapel lined up where the knot could be tied. She had done her homework, so to say, and was prepared, apparently banking on my signature.

This was not to be one of those big church weddings with all of the trimmings, multiple brides' maids, lavish bridal gown, and all that. It was a simple affair with the two of us and a selection of our colleagues from work (no brow wrinklers, for sure). Neither of us had family to complicate matters.

We both wore dresses, as I would have expected, except that I was the one in white with a sort of token veil. The only real alteration of the ceremony that I would have expected from not only the agreement but also from what Megan had "warned" me of was the alteration such that I, the nominal groom, had the line to love, honor, cherish *and obey* her... Not that it made that much difference, as it was what I had expected. Then, after we had exchanged rings, when the minister said, "the husband may now kiss the bride", Patti turned to me, lifted and turned back my veil and then like a re-enactment of the end of every date we had had, *she kissed me!* It was the sealing of my position in our union, not that I ever had any doubts what it was going to be...

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But what followed, good reader, is an entirely different chapter of my life that I shall not go into here, as it was, in essence, the rest of my life, which thankfully is still going on. Need I say it? In essence it was going to be the greatest OJT of my life, learning to be a good wife to my female husband.

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