



Reluctant Press presents:

Making The Team

Philippa Peters



A 'NEW WOMAN' E-BOOK

Copyright © 2009, Reluctant Press - All Rights Reserved

Reluctant Press TG Publishers

This story is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. All situations and events herein presented are fictional, and intended only for the enjoyment of the reader. Neither the author nor the publisher advocate engaging in or attempting to imitate any of the activities or behaviors portrayed.

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder.

Protect Professional Fiction on the Internet!

We need *your* help! We want to keep providing our readers with low cost, professional quality fiction on the Internet. We spend thousands of dollars to edit, illustrate and typeset *each story*. It is important, therefore, that everyone works to help keep professional fiction alive on the Net.

This story is protected by US and International copyright law, and is owned exclusively by Reluctant Press, which retains exclusive rights to publish these materials. The civil penalties for copyright infringement can be severe, including substantial monetary damages, injunctive relief, and liability for attorneys' fees incurred in prosecuting a case. If a court determines that the infringement was committed willfully, statutory damages of up to \$100,000 for each copyright infringed can be awarded. Even if not found to be acting willfully, a defendant can still be held liable for statutory damages of \$500 to \$20,000 for each copyright infringed. **These penalties apply even if money was not charged.** In addition, criminal penalties may be imposed if someone willfully infringes a copyrighted work for commercial advantage or private financial gain. This crime is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, up to \$250,000 in fines, or both. State civil damages and criminal penalties vary from state to state and country to country, but are always severe.

The best way to keep professional illustrated fiction available on the Internet is to do **YOUR** part to protect the author's and publisher's copyright. *You can be part of the solution.* Encourage others to purchase our stories. Never share the access rights you've purchased. **You** make the continued availability of TG fiction on the Internet possible. Thank you for your cooperation!

MAKING THE TEAM

by Philippa Peters

I. ACCEPTANCE

I love basketball. Basketball doesn't love me. When you're only five feet six inches tall, you get laughed at when you say you're a player. You don't get your chance to try out until all the seven footers have gone to the showers. The coach is long gone and you get to perform for one assistant coach.

You sink three pointers and fadeaway jumpers. You alley-oop to the clumsy big guys still hoping for one last look and you take charges by brutes trying to run over you. In just five minutes of play, your team scores over thirty points with you at point guard, running the plays.

"Hey, you're pretty good," say a few of the guys still left and then comes the clincher, "for a little guy."

No, my name was not on the list for the second round of tryouts at Newman Junior College. Not even a stellar year in intramurals in my first term could make the name of Morgan Miller pop out to coaches who already made up their minds.

"Don't fret it, Morg," laughed Al Trent, six four and listed with the guards trying out. "You'll have a great season in intras next year. You'll beat the thirty a game you put up last year, I'll bet. And I'll get you tickets for the front row for all the first team games!"

Al ruffled my hair as he said it. At least, he hadn't called me Stevie as a lot of guys in house league did; my brownish-colored hair was long like Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns had. In the house leagues, I was as good as Steve Nash. I ran rings around a klutz like Al Trent. I outscored him, I out-passed him. I even out-rebounded him, for goodness' sake, just by positioning better than he did. I led the house leagues in steals. "It's because Stevie is so short," Al laughed to his teammates. "He's so close to the ground, no one can see him."

Other guys were upset when I beat them so easily. I heard Pete Charles say, "It's like playing with a little kid. Does Stevie even shave yet?"

"He must shave his legs," Don Short said and they all laughed at that, not knowing I was just a row away and that my ears were burning. So I wasn't all hairy and thick-muscled like the guys who fancied themselves basketball players. I was just late to develop, I thought. I paid them back, though. I was so motivated in the playoffs that I put up sixty points and outscored Pete and Don's team all by myself. They were pretty nice about it and I felt bad for a while. Then the notice for tryouts went up and I couldn't think of anything but that this was my chance to make the team.

I felt that I would get a longer look this year. I thought someone on the coaching staff would have noticed now that M. Miller was leading the scoring and assist statistics in Intramurals by huge margins. I was confident that I could beat out Al Trent and the other guys from house leagues who were trying out for the college squad in the spring.

But I didn't even get past the first round. I didn't even shower when I saw the list of those who made the second tryouts. I just got out of the dressing room and away from Al Trent's crowing at being chosen, along with three others who'd also played in house leagues all year. They had a shot at making the Newman Bulldogs team. I did not.

After a summer of working as bellhop in the Brenton Hotel, I had just about enough money for a second year in college. "You shouldn't go back to Newman," Jenny, one of the front desk charmers, said to me in a rare, idle moment. "If I were you, I'd go somewhere warm for the winter. I'd go somewhere where they play basketball outdoors all season long."

She had seen me at the park where I spent most of my off days. I played in any pick-up game I could find. I just loved the game.

I lived in the basement of my grandparents' house. My dad I never knew, my mother was gone by the time I was eleven. I lived with two old people who expected me to move out when I was eighteen. I think they were keenly disappointed when I stayed on and went to college at home.

So, I went on the Internet, looking for colleges in warm climates, but I knew it was hopeless. I couldn't afford the tuition anyway. That's when I saw an article in a string of lesser headlines. 'Basketball scholarships still available at Paloma State,' said the headline.

Terry Smith, whoever he was, was quoted as saying that his team needed a point guard. "I don't care about size," Coach Smith was quoted as saying. "Five feet four, five, six, I don't care. I just want someone who can run an offence and get it into the hands of our forwards under the basket. It's the only item we're missing from having a championship team and I'm prepared to look at anybody."

My mouth was dry as I read it. I looked up Paloma State but all it had on its sports pages was information about its winning football teams. I guess the place was a football factory. It was touting several of its current players as 'following in the footsteps' of a bunch of players whom I took to be in the NFL. The site had nothing about basketball.

So, I wrote to Coach Smith. My hands were shaking as I did it. I didn't lie. I told the coach that I was Morgan Miller and I was five feet six. I sent him copies of the scoring ta-

bles for the intramural programs at Newman. I underlined my name at the head of all the tables for points, assists, steals, as well as the fact that I was sixth in rebounding.

I didn't expect a reply so quickly. "The season starts very soon," Coach Smith wrote me. "If you want to go through with a tryout, you'll have to be here on Friday. If you make the team, I can guarantee you a scholarship for three years. Let me know if you are coming down. I'll have someone meet you."

I couldn't believe it. I read the letter four or five times. I figured out the bus schedule. I would have to leave in the morning if I was going to make the offered tryout and it was going to cost me. If I didn't make the Paloma State team, I was probably going to have to work for a year or more before I could afford a second year, even at Newman. I had to hope that Gran and Grandpa would let me live for a couple more years in their basement.

I was very nervous getting off the bus in Paloma. I had my grey sweats on and I was tired. I had had to change buses twice to get to Paloma; I had slept on the bus, over the three days it took me to get there.

"Morgan Miller?" asked a cultured woman's voice as I got my bag, the last one off the bus, from the driver.

"Yes," I said. My voice was husky after all the travelling. I turned to find a tall woman studying me. She had short blonde hair, dark sunglasses and was probably six feet tall.

"You're not what I expected," the woman said mildly.

I tensed at that. "Coach Smith knows that I'm only five feet eight," I said. I had lied just a little bit in my application to him. "He said he would give me a tryout."

The woman smiled at me. "He said that to you?" she asked, stressing each word.

"Well, Coach Smith wrote me," I told her. "I understand tryouts are today."

"Sort of," said the tall woman, sauntering back into the busy terminal.

"I should get out there right away," I said, seeing that it was nearly two o'clock. The bus had been late. I should have got ten in touch earlier, I thought, shown more urgency to get out and play. The woman looked at me and put her glasses up in her hair.

She had very blue eyes and wore a lot of eye makeup. It didn't hide the wrinkles at the corners of her eyes. She was quite old, maybe thirty-five, thirty-six years of age. "You don't have to hurry," she said. "In fact, you can take your time."

"No," I said, a feeling of apprehension coming over me. "I have to go." I licked my lips and told her the truth. "I have to get out there. It's my last shot at playing basketball at the college level. I know I can play if I'm just given the chance. Coach Smith is giving me a chance. I need to show him what I can do even if practice is going on now and I only get into the last ten minutes."

"The main practice was this morning," the blonde woman said to me. I felt the blood drain from my face. This was my last chance to try out and I had blown it.

"Can you take me out to the campus now?" I asked the blonde urgently. "If I talk to the coach and explain about the bus being late, he'll give me a shot, won't he?"

"You think you're that good?" asked the woman in amusement. "Look, I played on the women's national team years ago. I ate little people like you for breakfast."

"You're a woman," I told her.

"Glad you noticed," she said dryly. "I was beginning to worry about you."

I didn't understand what she meant by that. "You're a woman," I said again. "Women players aren't in my league."

The woman laughed at me. "You have no idea, do you?" she chided me. "Women players these days are only a step behind the very best men. Women players from Paloma State are playing professionally in Europe and in pro and semi-pro leagues across the country. You have no idea."

"Can we just go?" I asked her anxiously, hoisting my bags across my thin shoulder.

She hesitated a moment, then said. "Why not?"

Paloma State wasn't far from the bus station. "Why did you choose here to ask for a tryout?" asked the woman as she slid into a Reserved parking spot outside the gym.

"I read all about your championship football team," I told her, guessing she worked for the university. "I figured it was about time that you had a winning basketball team as well."

"What do you know about our basketball team?" asked the woman, nodding to one or two young people leaving the complex as we entered it.

"Only what Coach Smith said on the Internet," I told her. "The website for the college doesn't say anything about basketball at all. It's just football, football, and more football."

"Yes," said the tall woman with a sigh. "Dressing Room A," she said pointing me to it. "Change and come out to the West Gym." She pointed to gym doors down the hallway on our left. "Coach Smith will meet you down there."

"How do you know?" I asked her, butterflies growing in my stomach. I liked that feeling. I needed butterflies to play well.

"I know," she said to me. "Now, excuse me, Morgan Miller, while I go and round up some players to try you out."

The gym was empty when I went in, a basket of balls was parked in the key. I took one and began to do some warm-ups.

The blonde woman surprised me by appearing next to me when I looked up from stretching. She was in blue shorts and a white singlet. She picked up a ball and whisked it through the nearer net, thirty feet away.

I raised my eyebrows at the fine shot. "The national team," I said, impressed. "I can see why."

"Let's go a little," said the woman. She had a gleam in her eye as she pushed the wagon out of the way and went out to half court, her hands raised for the ball. I tossed her the one I held and she came at me right away.

She was a very good player and I didn't mind warming up with her until the coach got there. She wasn't as quick as me and soon she was puffing very hard. I took it easy on her. I only shot from beyond the three-point line. I didn't pressure her shots and she knew it.

"You don't have to take it easy on me," she snarled. The last game to thirty, she didn't even get a basket and I took only ten shots.

"Enough, enough," she said, doubled over. "You made the team, okay."

I grinned at her, scarcely breathing. It had been a nice little workout. "Only the coach can tell me that," I said.

"That's me," said the woman, panting hard. "Me," she repeated, looking at my uncertain face. "Me, I'm the coach. I'm Terry Smith."

"They have a woman coaching the basketball team?" I asked, disbelieving what I was hearing.

"Why not?" asked the blonde who said she was Coach Smith. "At Paloma State, we only have one basketball team, the women's basketball team, and you just made it, Morgan Miller. Here are a few of your teammates to welcome you to the team."

II. TRAINING CAMP

"You have got to be kidding me!" said Rhonda McKinnon, six feet five in her stocking feet as she looked down on me. The other two girls with her, also over six feet tall, were looking at me as if I was something the cat dragged in.

I agreed with her words completely. Coach Smith had to be insane. I hadn't been trying out for Paloma State's women's team. I hadn't! I couldn't! Didn't the coach see that I was a man? I glanced nervously at the tall women who surrounded me and felt a distinct queasy feeling overcoming me. Any one of these women could make mincemeat out of me in a fair fight if I was critical of them or women's basketball in any way.

"I didn't understand," I stammered. "I didn't know."

"You didn't know?" sneered the coach at me. "You didn't understand? Where have you been the last few years? Hiding under a rock? We here at Paloma State are not exactly unknown, you know."

"We've been finalists in each of the three years I've been here," said a dark-haired girl, slapping a basketball with her hands. "We're going to win it all this year."

"Not without a decent point guard," retorted Coach Smith. "Babs, play with Morgan against Rhonda and Cathy. Half court, two on two."

"I can't," I said miserably but the girls were already lining up. Babs, the brunette, fired the ball at me and I caught it by reflex. Rhonda, the tallest player, was all over me. Well, I

thought, I've played against much taller players before. I dribbled and faded. When she hardly moved after me, a smirk on her face, I elevated and dropped the ball in the basket.

Babs yelped from her side of the court, laughing and pointing at Rhonda and the look on her face. Rhonda took the out and busted down the center. I got my feet planted and she went right through me, over me. The charge was so obvious even a blind coach could have called it. Rhonda went in and laid it up.

"Three-two," said Coach Smith as I got up from the floor.

"That's how we play basketball in the CSAC, little boy," said Rhonda, as Babs took the ball and lined up again.

"The Sissy Athletic Conference?" I asked her and she cackled. She was still smiling as Babs delivered the ball to me. I blew past her and laid it in easy.

"You're the only sissy here," said Rhonda, taking the ball and coming at me again. I got down lower. When she made her step into the key, I swept the ball away. She might at least have tried to keep it a little behind her, out of my reach. She looked pretty funny swatting at the air as I went back to the line and tagged up.

Babs broke wide open and I put it in her hands, right where she only had a step to make to lay it in. Rhonda scowled and the game became serious. It was fun, actually. Babs was pretty good at getting in the clear. After I had fed her for four straight baskets, Rhonda instinctively went for my fake at center court. I faded back. I was just inside the half court as I did one of my bombs. It went in, all net.

"Yeah!" screamed Babs, coming up to high five me. "Way to go, girl!" she said. I flushed like mad at that.

"Don't say that," I said. I started thinking of bus schedules. Yes, if I got out of here and got to the bus station by seven, I could save on staying overnight in Paloma. I could really use the money after quitting my job back home to come on what had turned out to be a wild goose chase.

"Seen enough?" Coach Smith asked Rhonda, who was bent over and gripping the bottom of her shorts. Rhonda wiped sweat off her forehead.

"You're crazy," she said to the coach. I agreed with her.

Coach Smith reached over and lifted Rhonda's head so that the two looked at each other eye to eye. "Donalda, Sherry and Misty are gone. We didn't win anything with them anyway," she said. "You've seen the recruits this year. They're all green as grass. The three of you here are the team this year. Do you want to win? Will you do anything to win? Or will we settle for a ten-win year, if we're lucky? No exposure, no offers from Europe for sure and a hard road to get noticed by the pros."

"Morgan Miller? Someone's going to notice," said Babs.

"Margie Miller," said the coach. The girls looked at her and I felt a cold chill go through me. "So," she said carefully. "Are you with me on this or not?"

"Sure," said Rhonda, looking down at me.

"Yes," said Babs, also staring at me.

"If you can get away with it," said Cathy, frowning.

"No," I told them all, backing away from the little confab under the net. "It's the stupidest idea I've ever heard."

I almost fled from the gym and jogged quickly to the dressing room. I was not going to play basketball on a women's team. I wasn't. It was the stupidest idea I had ever heard. I wouldn't mind being famous in basketball but I shuddered as I thought what it would be like to be the first guy on a girls' team. That's what I thought the coach was proposing. Soon, I would find out what she really meant.

There was no one else in the shower. I took my towel out and showered, my mind in a whirl. Why did the coach have to do that, I wondered, play with my mind like that? She should just have told me at the bus station that I'd gotten it all wrong. I could have caught an afternoon connection and be back on the road by now. Silly, stupid woman, I thought angrily. I got out my last clean shorts and T-shirt and reloaded my duffle carefully so that my stinky clothes were in the plastic bag I had brought for my laundry.

I was packed and in my sweats. My wet hair was plastered back on my head when the door opened. The three girls were standing there. They didn't say anything but just looked at me.

"What?" I asked them bitterly. "You want a tip for letting me play against you?"

"Feisty creature, isn't she?" sneered Rhonda.

I didn't like that. I hoped that a bus to town stopped near the Kinesiology Department and that it came really soon. I wanted to get away from the site of another disappointment in my life.

"We're here to show you the dorm where you'll be staying," said Babs then. I stepped back, startled. Not one of the girls was smiling at me now.

"I'm not staying here," I said. My nerves were beginning to jangle as the three big girls filled the doorway. I wasn't getting out that way unless they let me.

"Coach is upping her offer to a full scholarship and a job here at the gym," said Rhonda. "Three years and a full ride. That's pretty fair in exchange for a championship this year. You can skip out on the last two years if you want."

"I'm not joining your team," I told them, shaking. Rhonda uncurled in the doorway and I saw how really big she was. "I'm not a girl, I'm not gay, I'm not one of those trans things. I'm a boy."

"You don't look like much of one," said Cathy, the girl with bleached hair. "Why do you wear your hair so long?"

I hesitated.

Babs clicked her fingers. "He thinks he's Steve Nash," she said. "Without the height or the bad skin."

"Or the hairy legs," added Cathy with a grin. "In fact, you don't look like a basketball player at all. Certainly not a Dove."

A Dove? I looked at the girl and wondered what she was talking about.

"Geez," said Rhonda in disgust. "You come all this way and you don't even know the nickname of the team you're trying out for? This is going to be one awful week, ladies. This rookie has so much to learn."

"I'm not," I began. "Hey!" Rhonda had stepped into the shower and taken my duffle bag right out of my hands. She handed it to Cathy and blocked me as I tried to get it back. "Hey, that's mine!" I called out.

Rhonda and Babs were both grinning as they toyed with me, not letting me out of the dressing room. My money, my clothes, and my ID were in that bag. I got past them and dashed to the door. There was no sign of Cathy.

"She's gone to the dorm," said Babs, clicking up to me. No wonder she looked taller. It was the high heels she was wearing. She actually looked pretty nice in the chocolate brown and white dress she was wearing. "If you want your bag back, we'd better go after it."

Babs and Rhonda swung into the 'Ethel Hubbard Building: For Women Only.' They walked me past a few girls who looked at me in surprise. We entered an elevator. As I looked back, the girls we had passed were laughing to each other.

"This is our floor," said Rhonda when we got to the fifth. She walked me down to the end of the hallway and round the corner. There was Cathy standing outside an open doorway. A key on a hoop was twirling around her finger.

My duffle bag was sitting on the bed, looking out of place with the frilled curtains on the windows, the pink sheets on the bed and the frilled, multicoloured quilt folded several times on the foot of the bed. Even the lightshades were pink. A dressing table with lights around the mirror above it dominated most of the rest of the room.

"This has a private shower," said Cathy. "It's a senior's room, really, but seniors are in short supply this year so no one will object."

"I'm not staying here," I said, heading into the room to get my duffle.

"But how are you getting out?" asked Cathy. I may be quick on the basketball court but I wasn't quick enough to grab the door. She pulled it shut and I was locked in the pink room.

I banged on the door, screamed and hollered. All that gave me was bruised knuckles and a hoarse throat. It was nine o'clock that night when they came to see me again. I was starving. Babs brought me a bowl of tomato soup, crackers, a glass of water and nothing else.

"You're on a restricted diet," said Babs.

"You're holding me against my will!" I screamed at them. "That's kidnapping and a federal offence. You're all going to be in big trouble when I get out of here!"

"Oh, don't be silly, Margie," said Rhonda to me. "You'll tell one story and the three of us and the coach will tell another." She lay back on my bed; her feet touched the end of it as her head was on the pillow. "Who do you think the police will believe, girls like us or you, a strange boy, trying to pass himself off as a girl to get into our dorm?"

I tried to make a run for it but Cathy slammed the door shut. Babs held me off until Rhonda's powerful arms grabbed me from behind. "Dump the soup," said Rhonda, turning and depositing me back on the bed.

"Are you sure?" asked Babs as she did what Rhonda had said. "He's pretty thin as it is."

"She's pretty thin," Rhonda retorted. "Take her bag," she said to Cathy who did just that. I struggled but it was useless as Cathy put the bag outside the door. She brought in a little blue suitcase that went on the quilt at the end of the bed.

"That's for you, Margie," said Rhonda, grunting as she held me steadily. "You get dressed in your nightie and you get breakfast tomorrow. Don't and you will face the floor monitor, Babs. It's a rule that you don't sleep in the raw on this floor. We don't take kindly to girls sleeping in boy clothes on this floor, either. So decide, Margie, when you want to eat next."

They must have thrown a circuit breaker somewhere outside the room I was in after they left, because all the lights went out suddenly. I was alone in the dark. The windows opened but there were iron grilles on the outside. I was five floors up. I would have broken my neck if I had jumped from a window.

I slept on top of the bed and woke with a raging hunger. In the nightcase, as Cathy had called it, were cosmetics as well as toothpaste and a toothbrush. There was also a long, white nightie and a pair of panties that had the same pattern on them as the nightie. Would they really not feed me if I didn't put this stuff on?

They didn't. "Same thing at noon," Rhonda said with a grim smile. "We might feed you if you're sitting pretty, like a good girl should."

So I caved. I was starving and I caved. Thin tomato soup and two saltines had never tasted so good. Sitting there at the dressing table in a long, flowing nightie and frilly panties was so silly. I felt weird. But the girls didn't laugh at me when they came in to see if I was going to cooperate.

I shivered when I finished; my bare shoulders were beginning to feel the cold. I wished I was back in the warmth of the bed but that reminded me of how the nightie had felt soft and silky about me.

Babs went into the bathroom and turned on the shower. She came and took some shampoo out of the nightcase along with something called body lotion and something else. I knew what Nair was. Pro ballplayers used it, several teammates had told me. No one likes hairy-legged basketball players or track athletes. Swimmers said that having no body hair made them faster.

Babs put it on the shelf for me. "JDo under your arms and across your chest. But don't do your face. We've got something else for that. The lotion will take away the odor of the Nair. You'll be glad you used it."

I smelled of roses and some other womanly perfume after I finished using it; no amount of showering could get the scent out of my nostrils.

Babs brought me a towel. She put Nair on my chest and under my arms as I protested. I protested when she reached in the shower and poured almost a whole bottle of the stuff over my back and across my abdomen and pubic hair.

"Hey!" I yelled at her. To make matters worse, she had turned the water off. We struggled a bit and she smiled.

"Mmm, roses," Babs said. "I love that aroma. It suits you. You should use it all the time."

I couldn't believe the amount of hair that peeled off me. I couldn't believe how my pubic hair vanished. I looked like I used to when I was thirteen.

"That's good," said Babs seriously. I tried to avoid her but she was spilling lotion all over me again. The scent of roses almost overpowered me. I clutched at the towel to give myself a little decency in front of this tall girl who wanted to check out my legs.

"Margie is all yours, Cathy," Babs said cheerfully as I staggered back into my room. Where the nightie and the panties were on the bed before I had gone into the shower, there was now a dark pink bag with a pussy cat on the front. I could guess where the nightie had gone. I looked over to the chair for my sweats and my last T-shirt. They were gone.

On the rack where my clothes should have been hanging, there was a line of clothes, brightly-colored clothes, girl clothes, dresses and skirts.

"We had so much to buy for you. It's been fun, really, shopping on Coach Smith's credit card. Now you have so many things you needed, Margie."

Babs opened the other side of the closet; there was stuff on the shelves that made my hair stand on end. There were bras and panties and packages with stockings and pantyhose in them. There were shoes, high-heeled shoes in red and black. On the top shelf were two wigs, one blonde, one brunette.

"I-I'm not wearing those things!" I protested.

"You're right," said Babs. "I don't think you should wear a wig, either. You can't wear it on the court. Luckily, Cathy did hairdressing last year. She can get you ready to get out of this room."

I clutched the towel about me as Babs pushed and pulled me to sit in front of the dressing table mirror. "What are cheerleader outfits doing in the closet?" I asked her, certain of what I had seen.

"It's one of the traditions here at Paloma," said Babs. "The men come and do the cheers at our games and we go and do the cheers at theirs. It's why so many girls come out for basketball and why the last two or three on the team are chosen for their looks. It counts as a credit course too. Apart from basketball, you'll find your academic load here quite light, in comparison to the main student body."

Cathy then put another towel over the mirror so I could not see what she was doing to me. But I did feel the hot wax she put on my face

"Leave it," Cathy snapped, taking my hand and looking critically at my fingers. "At least you don't bite your nails like Barbara Watson over there. We can shape them a little and paint them." Cathy wiggled her fingers. They were long, curved and red. "These are

acrylics," she went on. "You can't have long nails for playing basketball. When we go out, we girls always put on acrylics. I'll show you how to do it and you can choose a shade to match your lipstick."

"I'm not wearing lipstick!" I said furiously. I couldn't say much more as Cathy chose that moment to begin removing the wax strips and cover my face with some kind of lotion. She used a Q-Tip and began to put some liquid on my eyebrows, below and above them.

"What are you doing?" I yelled at her.

"Getting you ready to go out," said Cathy. "Now be still while I do your hair or this will really hurt, I promise you."

It didn't really hurt. She was doing something with every strand of hair on my head, or so it seemed. I smelled some funny liquids as Babs came up with a stool and talked to me about basketball. She distracted me from what Cathy was doing while she questioned me about breaking the trap. Babs told me the zone formations that Coach Smith employed most and the little wrinkles that the coach had added against certain hot players.

I could feel that Cathy was pinning my hair all over my head in tight little bundles, slathering my hair in liquid. She kept me leaning back so I wouldn't get it near my eyes. When she finished that, Cathy suddenly straddled the chair, sitting on the towel. She was grinning at me as she took brushes and makeup from the nightcase and began to put makeup around my eyes and on my face.

"I'm not going out looking like this," I thundered. Cathy looked at Babs who shrugged.

"You're not going out naked through the Women's Dorm," Babs said. "You'd have the campus police charging you with attempted rape before you got down the elevator. And since all your male clothes are gone – girl, did they ever stink! – the only way you can get out of here is in a dress and some makeup. So you see, we are only trying to help you."

"You're not trying to help me at all," I snapped at her and her friend who seemed to be enjoying herself as she put lipstick on my mouth and showed me how to move my lips and spread it about. She had some kind of blotter with her that she used to 'dampen the effect,' or so she said.

Cathy did something more to my eyes and eyebrows, then sat back against the dressing table. "Momma Smith was quite right," she said in wonder as she powdered my face. She reached in her pocket and put heavy, square earrings that pinched me awfully on my ears.

"I am a genius," said Cathy, looking at me.

"You are a genius," said Babs, moving so that she could see my face as well.

They moved the towel so I could look at what they had done. A girl who looked a little like me stared back at me. Her hair was in cornrows; several hung at the back of my neck, tiny ribbons or beads at the end of each.

The cornrows made my pink-rouged and powdered cheeks seem softer and rounder. The black eyelashes, blue just above the upper line of the lashes, another line below my lower set, made my face startlingly attractive. My eyebrows had almost vanished into a thin line arched femininely above my eyes. The pink lips, formed into a cupid's bow, set my heart jangling. I would love to kiss a girl with lips like that. My ears glinted as I moved

and Cathy was putting a necklace, metallic and cold, about my neck. I looked like a girl from the neck up. Worse, I looked like a pretty girl.

"What have you done to me?" I protested but they just grinned at me.

"When we take the cornrows out," said Cathy with a smile, "your hair will be all wavy and much more feminine. You'll see a real girl when you look in the mirror then."

Cathy was taking away my towel but still the girlish image remained. I looked like a girl getting ready for a date with the way she had made me up. Babs reached around me and I watched as the girl, me, had a bra attached to her chest. Round, heavy pads were put in them and the bra bulged on my chest.

"I can't do this," I said weakly. My hands were trying to prevent the girls from looking at my tiny manhood and making comments about how puny I was. The girl's face might be fascinating to look at but I had to protest. It was idiotic if they thought they could make me into a girl so that I could play basketball with them. Oh, what a fool I was, I realized in panic. That was exactly what they were trying to do.

"This is the hard part," said Babs sympathetically. "This is going to hurt but you'll thank me later that you have no pubic hair any more." She had a roll of tape in the hands and Cathy grabbed my arms.

"No! No! No!" I screamed. I wiggled and tried to kick her as she taped my manhood back between my legs. She pushed my genitals back into a cavity in my body I didn't even know that I had.

I moaned and screamed with the discomfort of it all. "Can she possibly play basketball taped like that?" asked Cathy. She held me against the chair while Babs slapped my legs and got the pink panties on me.

"She better," said Babs. "It's the only way out of Paloma State for me and some dreary assistant's job for years. We get a championship and the three of us, and Margie here too, can write our own tickets for anything we want to do in basketball."

"I'm having some doubts now," said Cathy suddenly but her vise-like grip on me didn't slacken at all.

I wriggled as Babs put a garter belt on me. Then she took each of my legs in turn and rolled on stockings, attaching them to a garter belt.

"Are you going to cooperate as we put a slip and a dress on you, Margie, or shall we call for Rhonda to come and hold you while we do it?"

"It hurts," I moaned at her. Babs looked sympathetically at me.

"You have to get used to it," she said. "You're going to be taped up a lot this season. You'll be glad about it when you're leading the cheers."

"Oh, Margie will be on top of the pyramid," said Cathy with a smile. "That will make Rhonda real snarky. She hates looking up some girl's skirt at her panties, she always says. I wonder if she will mind looking up Margie's skirt?"

"She'll love it," laughed Babs.

Cathy stood me up and let me go as Babs put a light slip on me. My whole body gave in to shivering and shaking as the thin straps went over my shoulders with the bra straps. Then the skirts reached the stockings pulling on my legs; I couldn't bear the light touch of silk against my bound-up thighs and legs.

It was so weird to look at myself. I looked entirely like a girl. Then Babs chose a yellow and white outfit for me and I felt even worse. A frill at the hips flared out, making it seem that I had a waist and the wide hips of a girl while all the time, the tight skirt restricted my movements.

"She's beautiful," smirked Cathy.

"Until she speaks," said Babs, lifting my legs. The skirt ran up my legs, showing off my panties and stockings, before she put the black high heels on my feet. I fought against her, outraged at seeing myself like that but Babs wasn't fazed at all. "Remember to whisper all the time. You have laryngitis after coaching all year at summer camp."

Cathy smiled at her partner in crime. "Crafty," she said.

"I think so," said Babs, pulling me to my high-heeled feet. I almost wobbled over right away. "Lesson one: how to walk like a woman," Babs went on. "That's why I put you in high heels."

I wanted to cry. I wanted to fight someone. I teetered as I almost looked Babs in the eye. That's how high those heels were. Take short steps, Babs had said. What else could I do with the skirt about my knees, restricting every movement?

I minced like a real pansy-boy. The girls told me that that was the way to do it. "Oh, yes," enthused Cathy. "Gyrate those hips, girl, just like that. I think Momma Smith is going to be so pleased with you, Babs, and yours truly. I think this thing will work out after all."

"Only if this girl can play basketball in a real game as beautifully as she looks," said Babs. "Let's go and introduce her to her teammates now."

III. PRESEASON

I thought it was all a scam. I thought they were pulling my leg about people being in the place. They weren't. I wobbled out of my room. Barb's big hand grasped mine firmly, then Cathy came up on the other side of me. We reached the end of the short corridor and suddenly the babble of voices hit me. I tried to pull back but Cathy's hand against my back pushed me forward, into a wide open common room where girls were sitting and standing everywhere. A screen was set up at the end of the room.

Coach Smith looked across at me and smiled triumphantly at me. I teetered nervously on my heels and swore that one day I would get even with her for every humiliation I was suffering at Paloma State.

“Now that the last members of the basketball team have seen fit to join us,” Coach Smith said. Most of the girls turned to look at us, to look at me really. I squirmed inside and thought about what they must be seeing. Coach continued, “we can get started.”

Babs led me to a table off to one side. “Smooth your skirts under you and cross your legs like Cathy,” she whispered to me. With several girls still looking at me and smiling, I did as she directed me to do, my insides shaking like jelly. The rasp of my stockings one over the other induced a weird feeling in me. It was so strange to feel my legs as they were, to feel the tug of the garter belt. Girls have to endure this all the time, I told myself so I could, too. The ache between my legs told me how different and stupid it all was.

The program was something all girls had to watch each year, I gathered. The first part was about the rules of the house. Boys and men were expressly forbidden in the Ethel Hubbard Building, I learned with secret amusement. I was told how I was to dress outside my room; no flashing of my breasts or nudity.

“That means you, Lucy,” said someone loudly and that started a lot of loud, risqué comments during the rest of the movie about boyfriends, drugs, date rape drugs and how not to get pregnant.

“And, of course, feminine hygiene,” said Coach Smith with a smile as she changed videos. “Let’s watch this one without all the comments, please.”

That one I could barely watch as it was intimate, to say the least. I don’t think that I had ever seen a girl’s vagina that closely before but there it was on the screen. The video went on and on about douching and showed the correct way to do it. There was a lot about what could go wrong and about infections and what they looked like and felt like. There was a lot as well about how to safeguard against pregnancy with the merits of the pill, condoms and sexual pleasure discussed along with techniques to satisfy a male without being penetrated.

There was even a section on anal sex featuring several women saying how much they liked it and how it stimulated them and their lovers. They could go to the limit and not get pregnant. I could scarcely look at the screen where a boy and girl were doing it but, any time I looked down, Cathy or Babs poked me and I had to watch what was going on again.

I was very queasy when the film ended and Coach Smith took over again. “So, we have satisfied the requirements of the university and showed you the compulsory films for this year,” she said with a smile. “Abstinence until you are married is still the best form of birth control. We advocate that here which is why you are all in a women’s dormitory.

“There are no men in here, you can all be confident of that. The Founders’ Day Ball that we share with the men’s fraternities will be on the twentieth of the month this year. All girls must wear a ball gown and have an escort to attend. New girls, give your names to Babs and she will arrange a choice of escorts for you. Yes, Hubbard girls get a choice. Only the most desirable girls are allowed in here, as you all know.”

That brought a titter among all the girls.

"All right, basketball girls stay. The rest of you will have your own meetings with your monitors now to lay out your floor's ground rules," Coach Smith finished.

I think there were about twenty young women left behind. The huge crowd slowly disappeared, the noise and high-pitched chattering gradually receded. Coach Smith then had each of the girls stand up and she introduced them. I saw that Lucy, a well-endowed blonde, not very tall, was part of the basketball group.

I shivered as she said "Margie Miller." I uncrossed my legs and stood, wobbling, even though Babs put her hand on my arm to steady me. "Margie has been working in a girls' summer camp," the coach said. I couldn't look at the twenty pairs of eyes focussed on me. "She's lost her voice but not her basketball touch. I think she's going to be the backcourt player we have been seeking for the last three years.

"Margie has transferred in from a junior college and will be in second year here. She didn't play last year. Until we get all the paperwork done, she won't be playing in the Blue and White intrasquad game or the training camp tilts we run against the junior colleges in the Valley. Thank you, Margie."

I sat down as I had before, my legs trembling as I crossed them again. No one shouted out, "What's a boy doing on our team?" I was accepted as a girl and it was very disconcerting. I should have spoken up then and said what I was and what the coach and senior players were doing to me but I didn't.

I would have been ashamed and humiliated to have the girls laugh at me. Then there were the stories Rhonda had said she would tell about me. It would be so embarrassing, so degrading, to not be believed and be treated like a pervert, which I definitely wasn't.

"Now, cheerleading," said the coach. Her impending announcement was met with loud groans from all over the room. "Now, you all know why we do it so pipe down on the negatives. It's a compromise to bring men's and women's athletics together after our fight over sports funding led to having just one major sport for each gender. The men don't like cheerleading for you girls just as much as you girls don't like being ogled by every yahoo on a football field. Lucy has agreed to captain the cheers again and first practice is ..."

"Tomorrow, at six in the East gym," piped up the girl named Lucy.

"Good," said Coach Smith. "Now, about men in your rooms on this floor." Smiles broke out across the room. "Fifth floor has the unenviable record of more violations of that rule than any other floor in this building. After the Founder's Day Ball, there were more men on this floor than there were women, thanks to three girls who brought back multiple partners. Now, Donald is gone this year, but she aims on being back with the alumni for Founder's Day. So, I'm going to be here all night on that day."

The groaning drowned out her next words. "... and I promise you all, I will call more than campus security if it gets out of hand again, ladies," she finished with a smile. "No, I don't want you all sneaking off to some sleazy motel or hotel with a football player," she paused and everyone seemed to be yelling 'Lucy' at the same time, "but I do want you all to use a little common sense. I don't want roommates sleeping on the couches on days before big games because certain persons are making it with some footballer anxious to celebrate his winning season."

"Lucy again," said someone in a loud voice.

"That wasn't me!" protested Lucy. The laughter and finger pointing in the room got louder and louder.

I was astounded at the way the girls behaved. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Babs leaned over to me and smirked. "Aren't you glad that you're on a team like this for the next year?" she asked. "Even if we don't win, we have one heck of a great party in here after every game, football or basketball. We only let the cutest guys ..."

"The tallest guys," put in Cathy.

"... in here," finished Babs.

"So, practice hard," said Coach Smith, "and play hard," all the girls, except for me, chanted it with her. "See you all on the court at nine o'clock tomorrow morning."

More groans followed that.

Coach came over and smiled at me. "You look lovely, Margie," she said while I gritted my teeth.

"This is kidnapping," I whispered at her and she grimaced.

"Have the voice lesson tapes arrived yet?" Coach Smith asked Babs.

Babs shook her head. "Tomorrow for sure, the couriers said."

Coach Smith nodded. "Where are you taking Margie tonight?" she asked.

"Campus Theater," said Cathy. "They're showing Some Like It Hot as part of a classic series and we thought it would be a good idea to take Margie."

"Take her over to Admin first. Get her pictures taken and have her sign the scholarship papers," Coach Smith said, staring at me. "When I first saw you in the bus station," she said to me then, "I thought you were a pretty girl, strung out from the trip you took to get here.

"Then you opened your mouth. But we can fix that, can't we? Now, you won't practice with the team until you can talk to my satisfaction. You hang out with Babs and Cathy and forget most of what you heard tonight. The girls here behave like proper young ladies most of the time. And I'm sure you will as well, Margie."

I was furious. I wanted to give her a piece of my mind but Babs and Cathy were hauling me to my feet. Cathy went to get my purse; several girls, including Lucy, came up, gave me a hug and welcomed me to the team.

Normally, I liked being hugged by girls but I was terrified as their soft breasts pressed against me.

"Oh, it's the heels that make you so tall," said Lucy, feigning relief. "It will be nice to have a small girl in the front row and for the pyramids. Rhonda will be able to lift you easily." She went on about cheers and I felt a sinking feeling in my gut. Lucy laughed at me. "Oh, it's not so bad, really," she said. "All you have to do is smile and squeal a lot. Well, squeal a lot when you can, that is. I hope your throat heals up soon."

Babs had told her that I had a bad throat after yelling so much to encourage the kids at the summer camp I was supposed to have been at.

"See you later, Margie," said Lucy cheerfully. Babs and Cathy directed me along the hallway, reminding me in whispers to take short steps and to put my feet one in front of the other.

I was terrified as I entered the elevator with the purse Cathy had given me under my arm. I was totally dressed like a girl! Everyone about me was treating me as if I was one of them!

"I can't do this," I said to Cathy and Babs. They winced.

"Whisper, whisper," said Babs. "You have laryngitis, remember?"

The elevator opened and other girls got in.

"Hi, Barbara," said one girl, pretty and smiling. "Are you going over to the Student Center?"

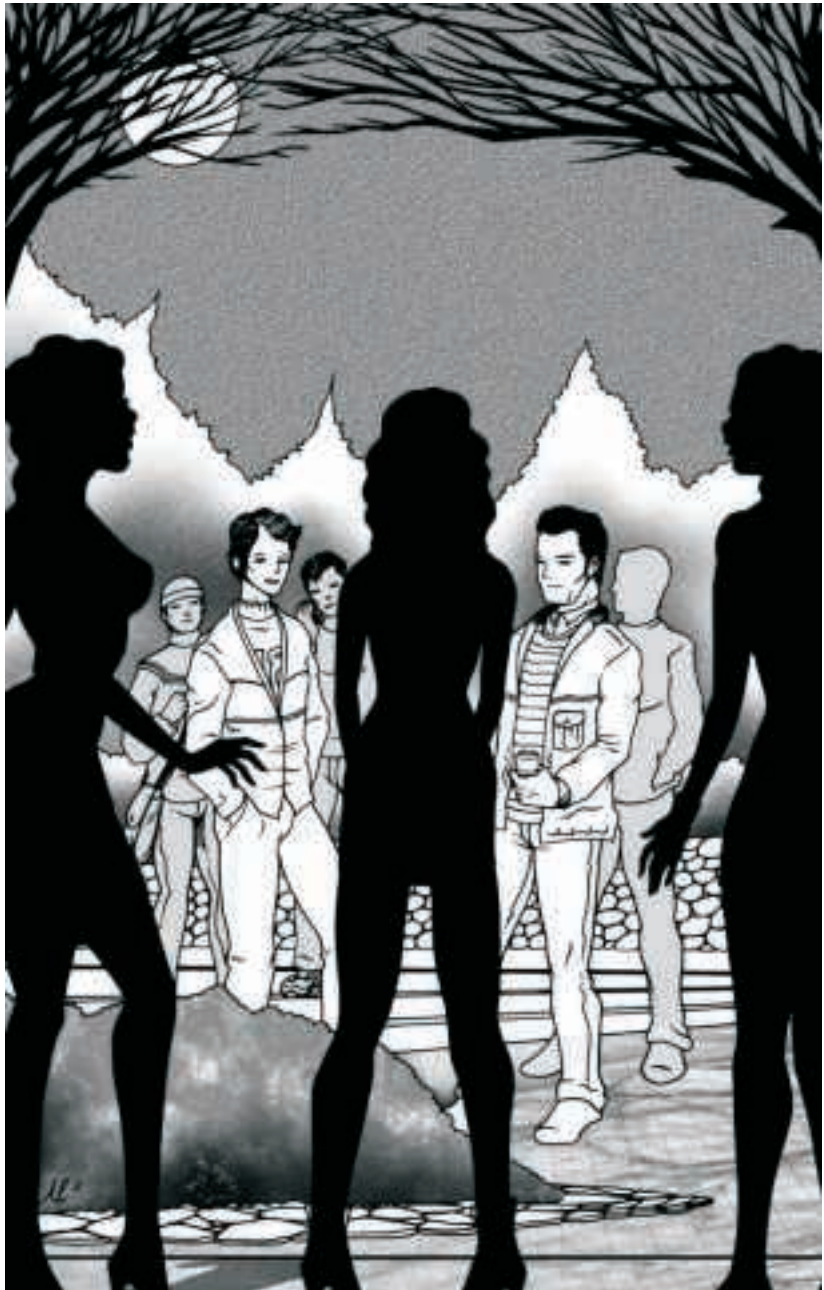
"Yeah," said Babs with a grin. "We're showing our new recruit around and maybe take in a flick."

The girl looked at me with interest and smiled. "You must be pretty good at basketball," she said to me, "if they've recruited you and you're so small."

"She is," said Cathy. "Come to our games and you'll see."

I wobbled as we got off the elevator. Babs put her hand casually about my shoulder and slowed me down. We walked down steps with a clicking that went right through me as my heels pounded on the concrete steps.

It might have been a nice night, warm, but I felt as if my legs were exposed to cold, chilly air; the dress exposed my lower legs as if I was wearing shorts. But my legs weren't bare. I was wearing stockings but it felt as if I was wearing nothing on my legs at all. I was



restricted by the tightness of the skirt as well so I had to take smaller steps than I was used to. Babs' arm through mine steadied me as she talked about landmarks until the other girls were out of range.

Then there was my chest and the way the straps on my back pulled on me and reminded me that I had fake breasts in front. A quick glance down and I was filled with terror at the mounds I saw leading me through the campus.

Then it got worse as a bunch of guys came down the walkway. A stab of fear went through me. I couldn't look at them at all. I felt ashamed at being dressed the way I was in front of other guys. They must be able to see right through me and wonder what in the world I was doing, wearing a dress and makeup, my hair in a girlish hair style. They grinned at us and said, "Hi!"

Babs waved them on with a smile. I quivered in embarrassment as I heard one of them say, "The one with the cornrows is mine!"

I thought of kicking off the high heels and running for it then, anything to get away from the horrible situation I was in.

"I do think that this is going to work," said Babs to a grinning Cathy.

"Margie's first conquest," laughed Cathy. I seethed and shivered as I minced unsteadily along towards a crowd of people. Cathy took my other arm and hurried me forward.

"She can do a lot better," said Babs guiding me to a line that was heading into a movie theater. She greeted several people in the line, boys and girls, who looked at me a little curiously, making me flush even more.

"They just don't know you yet," murmured Babs, her arm firmly holding mine. She was catching on to the fact that I was trembling all the time, so embarrassed did I feel to be dressed and out on the town as I was. "You're pretty. That's why the boys are taking a good look at you."

"Why don't you take her in for photos while I get the tickets?" asked Cathy. Babs pulled me out of line. I had to mince past the whole line in my high heels and go into the Student's Hall and up to a woman who was busy registering a group of students.

"Hi, Babs," said the woman, a student, I guess. "This is your new basketball player, is it?"

"Margie Miller," said Babs, leading me through the barrier that the other woman raised for us.

I had to sit down and have my picture taken.

"Very pretty," said the woman. I sat there shaking, not knowing if I should cross my legs or not. "I like that dress, Margie. And your hair is pretty as well. I bet Cathy Briggs did the cornrows for you. She and I were in Fashion Studies together and did that module. She can do hair so much better than I can."

I shuddered as I saw the picture of myself as a girl, in full makeup and my hair styled the way it was, emerging from a printer. I had to sign papers then. My hand quivered as I

wrote 'M. Miller' as I normally did. I was given a temporary student ID card with the name 'Margie Miller' on it.

"You can pick up your proper ID in the morning," said the woman with a smile. "Welcome to Paloma State, Margie. See you on the basketball court."

In a daze, I went with Babs. Cathy was waiting for us and she lead us into the theater. We walked past large mirror-tiled walls which showed me three girls walking together into the theater. It was hard for me to believe that the smaller girl in the middle was me, so vivid did my eyes and eyebrows appear, so pink and glossy was my mouth. Then there was the dress and the high heels I was wearing and the purse under my arm. I am a girl, I thought in terror. I was glad to go into the darkened theater where no one could see my blushes.

Then I had to endure a movie all about two guys disguised as women to get away from the mob. I couldn't laugh when the rest of the audience did. "That's who you can be on Halloween," Babs whispered in my ear halfway through just to make my agony worse. "You can be Marilyn Monroe."

I could barely look at the screen; every time Marilyn came on, I could only think of myself as her. We waited as the huge crowd left, then we sauntered along behind the crowd. Four guys, all over six feet and quite muscular, stopped and waited for us to approach and I felt that sinking feeling in my stomach again. It wasn't butterflies this time. It was sheer panic.

"Hi, Babs, Cathy," grinned one of the guys, his dark hair and brown eyes giving him a Latino look. "Are you going to introduce us to the new girl?"

The new girl? He meant me! I felt myself tingling all over in shame at the deception I was making. I couldn't do this for a whole year!

"This is Margie," said Babs briefly. "She can't talk until her throat clears up."

That one, Margie, is the campus Lothario, Dean Gomez. He thinks he's a quarterback. Avoid him whenever possible."

"Aw, now, Babs," said this Dean character. "You know I got first dibs on the prettiest girls in school."

"By which he means," snapped Cathy, taking my other arm firmly, "that he wants to get into your panties at the first opportunity he has to get his hands on you."

"Aw, Cathy," said Dean, grinning widely. "How about tonight then, pretty Margie Miller?"

The taller girls almost picked me up and ran me past the boys.

I heard barking and yelping like the sound of dogs behind me. Then one of the boys, his face flushed, glancing over his shoulder, came up level with us. "Sorry, sorry," he said. "We had a few beers and shots before the show. Seeing a Marilyn movie, well, it gets some of the guys worked up. They'll be nicer, more polite tomorrow."

"It's okay, Lance," said Babs grimly. "Just take Dean down a peg, will you? Beat him out for the starting position for once."

"I try," said the tall guy. He glanced at me, a little smile on his nice-looking face. I would have called him handsome but what do I know about what girls see in guys? I instantly liked him a lot more than I did Dean Gomez. He was the sort of guy I would have liked to be friends with. "But he has that golden arm, you know. Anyway, I'm sorry for standing there and letting Dean be so crude. We're not all like that on the football team."

"Huh," muttered Cathy. The boy grinned before turning away.

"That's Lance Irvine, backup quarterback," said Babs as we left the student entertainment complex. Babs declined a suggestion from Cathy that we all go for a drink in the students' bar. "He's rather nice. He talks to us on the field and tells us how good we are."

"That's because he doesn't get to play," said Cathy with a snort. "Do you mind putting our girl back to bed yourself, Babs? I want that drink."

Babs' grip on me didn't relent. She waited till Cathy was out of earshot before she told me, "That's a girl who let Dean Gomez into her panties. She's still got a thing for him but she's gone into the bar to chase another guy, Ron Meade, one of the defensive tackles. We may have to slip Ronnie past the door wardens in the morning. Now that term starts tomorrow, they'll be back on duty and no one will get in the front door without ID."

We walked in past the 'For Women Only' sign. An older black woman in a blue uniform jacket stopped us and asked us for our ID's.

I opened the little purse I had been given; there among the makeup containers was the card I had been given at the Registry desk. "You'll have to have photo ID tomorrow," the woman said gruffly to me. "And you sign out a key during the day if you are going to be late."

"What happens if a girl is late?" I asked Babs as we went up in the elevator.

She made a face again at me. "I hate hearing you sound like that," Babs said.

"Like what?" I asked her, baffled.

"Like a boy," Babs said. "A pretty girl like you should sound like a girl. Tomorrow we have to start work on that. And to answer your question, you have to ring in and they send security over to let you in after midnight. That's when the keys stop working. Call in three times and they ask you to leave. Besides that, they can see you on the cameras as well." She pointed to them in the lobby. "Getting someone to let you in counts the same as a call if it's after midnight."

"Then how?" I began. No, on second thought, I didn't want to know how the girls smuggled boys into their dorm.

"We have our ways," said Babs with a grin. "We'll probably have to show you all our tricks by Halloween. Any boy you're going out with by then will expect you to let him in."

I couldn't believe her! I couldn't believe what Babs was saying to me, what she expected of me. "I'm not gay," I hissed at her. We went down an empty hallway towards the passage to the room I had been locked in, past the large, now empty common room.

"No, you're a girl," said Babs to me with a grin. "And you're going to be a pretty girl for quite a while. You might as well enjoy it. We girls will help you avoid the Dean Gomez

creepazoids of this campus. You can't get through eight months of school, however, with no social life at all, you know."

Eight months of being a girl! No, I couldn't do that. I swayed into the room assigned to me and Babs told me to take off my shoes and stack them away properly. I did so, noticing with a start that there were new shoes in the rack besides the ones I had first seen. There was also a plastic case with a long dress in it.

"Oh, that's pretty," said Babs of the red dress. "That's your ball gown for the Founders Day Ball. Oh, you are going to look gorgeous in it!"

I reeled and Babs started to undo my dress. She made me hang it up properly. Then I had to take off my slip and place it in a laundry hamper. My underwear followed, my bra was next, but not the inserts which went on a shelf. Then came the garter belt, my stockings which had to go in a special bag, and the panties I had worn.

I hated standing in front of Babs like that as she took off my earrings. Blood flowed back in my ears, hurting me. She slathered my face with makeup remover. I really had to work to get my eyelashes free of all the makeup in them. Then, as I was washing my face, Babs put her hand between my legs and ripped away the taping. I screamed. I had to fling myself on the bed and roll around at the intense pain. I felt. Blood rushed back into the abused parts of my body.

"You can't do this to me again!" I screamed hoarsely at her.

"Sorry, kiddo," said Babs sympathetically. "But the tape goes on in the morning. And when you need to go to the bathroom during the day, one of us goes with you and tucks you up again. I've got another special gadget on order for you that you're going to love. I hope it's here for Halloween."

Babs opened the nightcase. The nightie was there for me, along with the panties. Trembling, I let her slip them on me. I then went to the bathroom to clean my teeth. I wanted to scream again when I saw my face clear of makeup. My eyebrows were so thin that they had almost disappeared. My eyelashes looked like they had retained some makeup as well. I looked so girlish! It was unbelievable.

Babs came behind me then and began to release my hair from its binding. I could only gasp as she unravelled the rows and began to brush my hair. It had never been curly as it was now and it had changed color in places. My hair was streaked blondish, just like a girl's hair. Babs brushed it very hard and it bounced then stayed put in these crinkly rows around my head.

"Oh, Cathy did a super job on your hair, don't you think?" enthused Babs. "It's much better than cornrows, isn't it, when it's soft like this." She grasped bundles of hair at the back of my head and tied them with pink ribbons from the nightcase. "Pippi Longstocking," she laughed at me. "But you'll look much nicer this way in the morning. Sweet dreams, princess. We've a busy day tomorrow."

IV. COMMITMENT

Even though it was only a short distance to the gym, I had to wear a dress and heels, lipstick and eye makeup to go over to the dressing room which turned out to be full of women in various states of undress. I didn't know where to look as Babs directed me to a locker next to a smiling Rhonda.

"A boy would think he'd died and gone to heaven if he could be standing where you are now, Margie, wouldn't he?" Rhonda asked me, deliberately stripping off her jacket, showing me that she wasn't wearing a bra or anything else underneath. I flushed at the sight of her small, high, firm breasts. Rhonda cupped them in her hands, smiling away at me and my discomfort in being there.

"Leave our girl alone, Rhonda," said Babs testily.

"I'm showing her mine," laughed Rhonda. "She should at least show me hers."

"Stupid cow," said Babs, helping me undo the dress I had put on. The flared dress swished audibly as she got me out of it.

"She's not very well endowed, is she?" smirked Rhonda. She snapped the sports bra Babs had put on me and told me I had to wear to every practice.

Cathy joined us then with a pink singlet and white shorts, the legs almost non-existent, for me to put on. I had to take off my stockings and garter belt in front of Rhonda while I seethed inside.

My hair was swept back and tied behind my ears with a pink ribbon, also pinned to my head. My ears glinted with the gold studs Babs had put on me. She had pierced my ears before she let me have breakfast.

I had to wear white socks and pink runners like the other girls. Babs led me over to the sinks while the other girls looked up in interest. She cleared my mouth of lipstick. "I don't know, Margie," she said as the other girls tittered. "What was the last team you played for, the Sluts? On the Doves, we don't wear anything, save for a little eyeliner, on the court, in practice or in games." I fumed as Babs washed my face.

"We should call her that, the Slut," taunted Rhonda. She kept it up all through my first practice with the full girl's team. Coach Smith didn't run the practice as a game. It was drills, drills and more drills. There were two assistants with her, Diane and Lacey, and so we were all kept at it. I seemed always to end up in the squad that Coach Smith was drilling.

Apart from the three big girls who were in charge of me, the other girls weren't very good. Some had difficulty taking a charge. Well, with their breasts, I could see why. They all got examined by the Coach and scolded for coming to practice without their sports bras. They had to run laps bare-breasted for that.

I hoped there would be a little game. I was going to toast Rhonda for all the taunts she had made at me.

We gathered while some girls still doing laps. "Miss Miller," said Coach Smith coldly. "Is that makeup I see on your face? Don't you know how to dress for the basketball court? This is not Fashion Studies. Ten laps if you please."

Rhonda murmured 'Slut' to me each time I came by her. I had to run with the bare-chested girls, who were flopping all over the place and looking uncomfortable as I went past them. I got sent for ten more for the look I gave Coach Smith, then five more for not running fast enough.

"Good," said Coach Smith when I finished and all the others were gone. "You can run in those shorts. You have nice legs and a pretty fanny." I went rigid in shock and rage as she said that to me. "I noticed that right away when you first came out on court. Some of our girls are so shapeless, don't you think? You, dear Margie, are a little flat-chested but you will do. Now, go and shower with the girls."

I took a step that way before I realized what she had said. I turned back to her, my cheeks flaming.

"The stalls are all separated and Cathy will be on watch for you," said Coach Smith. "I don't know what we are going to do on the road yet but here in Paloma, you'll get the privacy you need."

Naked girls walked around the steamy locker room, chatting and drying themselves. I didn't know where to look. I nervously got a towel out of the locker. Cathy, in panties and a bra, reached into my locker and took panties and a different bra with the inserts already in the correct pouches. Then she walked me over to the showers.

"Your shower shoes," Cathy said, giving me a pair of flip-flops from a shelf. She flicked her towel at Lucy who came out of the shower; her ample breasts and bushy vagina were on show as she made no attempt to cover herself from my gaze.

I was shown where my singlet had to go, and my shorts, but the sports bra I had to take back to the room and wash out myself. I was allowed to wash my hair in the shower but I had to use scented soap and a scented conditioner and a scented body lotion along with the scented shampoo.

There was no one left in the locker room but Babs and Cathy as I tentatively reached out of the shower and got a towel about me. I had removed the taping in the shower and so I had to have that re-applied. Cathy's cold hands made me shiver, but she was gentler or more expert than Babs; I was taped quickly and back in my panties before I knew it. I slipped on the bra as we heard someone at the door. I was frantic that someone would come in and see me. I felt relief to have my bra on. No one came in, however, so I felt like a fool, encouraging Cathy to re-dress me like a girl so quickly.

I had to dry my hair with a blow dryer and it crinkled up. Cathy pinned me up again, grumbling, "You're going to have to learn to do this for yourself, girl. You can't expect me to be your maid every day."

Babs grinned at me and handed me my garter belt which I had to put on myself. I put the stockings back on. I felt how soft they were as I pulled them over my legs and fastened them.

"Nice, aren't they?" asked Babs, catching what I was doing. I didn't want to admit anything to her but I had been admiring my legs and thinking that Coach Smith was right. I did have shapely legs for a boy...or a girl.

Babs helped me into a dress and put perfume on me while Cathy did my makeup again. "Don't mind what Rhonda says about you," said Cathy lightly as I stood up and put on the mid-size heels they had let me wear. "She picks on all of us during the year. Right now, Lucy and Angela aren't saying anything because they're just glad it isn't their turn. Later on, all the girls are going to sympathize with you."

I thanked her for saying that and followed the girls out of the dressing room with my new Doves carryall with my runners and my sports bra, in it. As we went up again to Student Hall, I reflected on how I had so easily accepted Cathy's assertion that I was going to be like this, be a girl and play basketball with girls for a very long time.

I got my photo ID. I got a course outline. I was in Fashion Studies and Women's Studies besides taking a Phys. Ed. class and the Basketball and Cheerleading which Babs had told me about.

"Which Phys. Ed. class do you have?" asked Babs. "109? That's a dancing class. You need that one. I'll bet you've never danced with a guy before, have you? That's what they teach you in 109, how to dance backwards properly with some dweeb of a boy who only comes up to your navel."

Cathy laughed. "That's you, me and Rhonda," she said. "Margie is short. She's going to have her pick of the guys."

The mailroom in the Student Union had the parcel Babs was expecting so I was escorted back to Babs' room to listen to the tapes; my voice coaching began in earnest. I refused to play along at first.

"You're an idiot," said Babs after I refused to do the exercises that the woman on the tapes outlined. The lessons assumed a willing person listening to them, a man willing to find his 'feminine voice' and to use it and strengthen it.

I folded my arms as I sat on Babs' bed, my dress beneath me, rustling each time I moved. "You're an idiot," Babs went on. "You were giving me all this blah-blah-blah about how you loved playing basketball and how you'd play anywhere, with anyone."

"I would," I told her truculently. I felt my arm lifting my false breasts up against the round neckline of the pretty dress, pretty, that is, if a girl was wearing it.

"You get this fantastic chance to play for a real team, in a real league, with huge crowds of people watching, and what do you do, you chicken out," Babs said, leaning over the back of the chair in front of her computer. She was watching the blonde-haired woman, who had said that she was once a man herself, talk about being a woman.

"I'm not a woman," I said thickly.

"We know that," said Babs, "and we don't care. You can play with us and, believe me, when we meet the top women's teams, it isn't going to be easy at all. There are six foot eight, nine, centers, just like on the men's team. It will be rare to meet a girl on a starting line-up under six feet. They'll have your shooting range; some of the black girls we have to play against are so quick they're unbelievable."

"Your team finished second," I said to her miserably.

"We had Donald, black, Sherry, black, Tonita, Wyona and Miriam, black, black and Latino, plus the three of us and Pam and Misty. We slowed down the play and we frustrated the quick teams as we put them in foul trouble. We won on our depth. This time around, the first year black girls you saw at practice are green but they will have to play. It's going to be a struggle. You've no idea how picky big league refs can be. Half your steals in our pick-up game would be called fouls. You'll be sitting out in no time if you play like that."

"What do you want me for then?" I asked her.

"You could be great," admitted Babs then. "We don't have to win it all. No one expects that. But if we could just be competitive, be in some of the big games, play against Anita Sorrano or Danielle Shaw or be in our conference final, that's what Coach really wants. Everyone is badmouthing us because we've lost eight of last year's team and all the stars but Rhonda.

"It's basketball, though, girl, real basketball that you should enjoy. It's competitive basketball and it's an offer to play a game you love. But you're too chicken. Too chicken to pay the price. What's so bad about making up and wearing a dress and high heels? Half the world dresses this way, you know. But you're scared of being called names, scared of what people would say about you if they found out.

"And that's why we're doing all this to you. So, you won't be found out. We're putting ourselves out and prepping you to play basketball. Basketball is the only game in town, and this is the only place that wants you to play. But you're too chicken, too macho, to take the chance to play. All you have to do is ignore all the stupid distractions like all of us Doves have to do."

Babs' little speech was fine but she didn't have to do what I did. Well, to be fair, she had shaved her legs while she was waiting me to finish showering this morning. She said that it took her over an hour each day, as it would take me, to get her face ready to meet the day.

"Here," said Babs, opening her cupboard and taking out my bag. She threw it on the bed, followed by my clothes. "Go on," she said. "Take them with you. Get out. Go on back to Podunk or wherever it was you came from. Laugh about us to your friends. Make bets on how many girls on our team are not really girls. It doesn't matter what you say, it won't be true anyway. I don't know how Terry is planning on getting you past the sex testing and I don't care. Go on, get out of here! Basketball doesn't mean as much to you as it does to a bunch of girls!"

I stumbled to the door, certain she was going to stop me. Babs turned her back on me and turned off the video. I picked up the bundle of clothes and rustled into the hallway, right into Rhonda McKinnon.

"Hey, Slut?" she said, curling her big lips at me. "Where do you think you're going?"

"I'm going home," I whispered at her. I heard Babs come to the door of her room behind me.

Rhonda looked down at me and her mouth gaped open. She grabbed my arm and Babs called to her, "Let her go!"

Rhonda's let go of my arm. "You're letting her go?" she asked, the shock clear in her voice. "You can't do that! Does Coach know?" Babs shook her head. "You can't do this!" Rhonda said to her teammate. I backed away from both of them down the hall. "We need her!"

"No, we don't," Babs said clearly. "Margie doesn't like basketball as much as we do. She won't put up with all the crap we put up with. She thinks it's wrong to wear a dress and curl her hair. Forget her. Let her go back to her job waiting tables or helping old ladies find the right size shoes to wear. She doesn't like basketball enough to want to play big time. So let her go! I'll tell Coach."

I knew Babs was playing me. The thing was, she was right. I had no chance to play basketball, real basketball, with coaches, proper refs, the real game, anywhere but here. I thought of all the hopes and dreams and ambitions I had when I had ridden the buses down to Paloma. But they had all been about me playing for a men's team. But I can't, I thought miserably. There wasn't a men's team anywhere that wanted me.

I made up my mind. "Just one thing." I said. Rhonda and Babs were both watching me stand there in my stockings and white, summery dress. "You are not to call me 'Slut' ever, do you hear me?"

Rhonda's mouth came open again. She turned and looked at Babs. "Rhonda will never call you that name again," said Babs. "If she does, I'll jump her and beat her brains out right there on the spot."

"Hah," said Rhonda, looking at me. I stood there uncertainly in my pretty girl clothes, my hair quivering on my neck and at my painful ears.

"I'll try to follow the video," I said. My heart was bouncing, I'm sure, in my chest as I said it. I was committing myself to being a girl and I knew it. Babs knew it, too, and she shooed Rhonda away.

Babs was very serious. She made no jokes and no comments. She just took my clothes from me and put them back in her cupboard. "Is there anything you want from here?" she asked, taking my bag from me.

"My money, my ID, my credit cards and stuff," I said. She went through my bag and gave me all my money. "The rest isn't going to be of use to you unless you take off," she said. "It's all in the name of Morgan Miller. You're going to have to change all of those over if you stay here and play basketball."

Babs stored my bag away then. She didn't lock the cupboard. She made sure, in fact, that I knew where my clothes were. It was almost as if she was daring me to change my mind on the commitment I had just made.

“Let’s begin then,” said Babs. She turned on the computer and re-started the voice training program.

V. A WHOLE NEW ME

I rued that day many times over the next weeks as I became a Dove. I thought the cheerleading practice would be the worst, but it wasn’t. It was awful to dress in the uniform like the other girls, with the skirt halfway up my thighs and my hair tied in pink ribbons. It was awful to walk to the gym and have boys whistle after us, Cathy and me, my face hardly needing the rouge and lipstick that Cathy had had me wear.

Lucy took charge and worked us hard. We had many cheers to learn. We had to learn how to use the pom-poms and we had to smile and be enthusiastic. Once or twice at the practice I managed to laugh, as the other girls did, at the antics we were forcing on ourselves. It was a relief to know that I was as bad as several other girls.

The only problem with that was that Lucy made us into a special squad. We had to meet her at noon each day and squeal our way through the cheers. My voice improved dramatically after the many sessions I had each day with Babs. I learned how to keep my voice up in my head and I could mime when I couldn’t get a squeak out of myself.

Fashion Studies turned out to be learning how to use makeup like a girl. When we could do that, we had to do each other’s hair. A girl named Maureen dyed my hair after she was only supposed to streak it; I went back to the dorm as a platinum blonde, with a matching hair piece to make a ponytail. Every girl in the Ethel Hubbard Building told me how sweet I looked. Several told me to be Marilyn for Halloween. I dreaded its arrival.

It would be as bad as Ballroom Dancing, I guessed. Madame Orshin demanded that we all wear long, petticoated skirts, mid-calf in length, for her class. Of course, we had to wear high heels. The boys, yes, there were boys there, more than girls, had to wear jackets and ties.

I learned how to waltz backward, with a boy holding me and grinning while I flushed. I tried steadfastly to keep well away from the boy dancing with me. We learned all kinds of dances, our partners changing frequently. We learned to ‘jive’; I was spun crazily by the boy I was with. My skirts flew up away from me as I spun.

“That is not the way to spin, you silly girl!” Madame raged at me. “You must put your hand on your dress, there, and you must wear more petticoats. We do not want to see the tops of your stockings or your garter belt or your panties, my girl. I assure that I did in-

deed see all of those, as did all the boys waiting to dance with you. You are supposed to be a lady, Miss Miller, and you will behave like one!"

Only in Women's Studies was I able to relax. It was the only course that demanded anything of me in the way of reading and writing. I had to read *The Second Sex* and *The Feminine Mystique* as well as biographies of the authors. I had to read *Are Men Really Necessary?* and listen to the most vituperative debate on the role of men in society. I couldn't join in because I had such a 'bad throat' but Ms Barker, the lecturer, did read a from my essay. That led to more heated debate in which all I could whisper was, "Not all men are like that!"

The clincher to the debate was when one girl sneered at me and said, "I bet you're going to the Founders' Day Ball, aren't you?" I shivered as I thought of the dress in my wardrobe that Cathy and Babs had liked so much.

"Of course," I said huskily, trying out the voice that Babs insisted that I use all the time. "Aren't you?"

That brought hoots of laughter from the class. I learned that the Ball was a way of turning us women into a male idea of what we should be like. All the mannerisms I was struggling to master were pooh-poohed by the girls.

"She just wants to be a dumb blonde," said one of the other girls. That led the professor and several girls to defend me. I was bewildered as to whether they were defending me for being a blonde, and stereotyped, or because they thought that I was too dumb to defend myself.

We practiced the pyramid cheer on the grass of the football stadium. Lots of guys stood around to see us practice. "Smile and smile, squeal and have fun being girlish," Lucy told us all. "Be excited. Don't wait for the set pieces to wave your pom-poms. Come on, Margie, smile. We won't do the pyramid till Homecoming. Smile, Margie, wave at those boys over there looking at your legs. You are going to be the cute blonde at the front of the line. Don't worry about making mistakes. We're all going to be following you, anyway."

That just made things worse for me. I had to be out at the front since I was the smallest girl in the squad of basketball players. I had to be the one lifted and thrown since I was so light. I had Rhonda's hand on my thigh or my bound-up parts almost all the time. That made me squirm as she looked up my skirt. I could feel her head move. I could see her grin. But she didn't say anything to me.

"Why don't we practice the game?" I asked Cathy after another basketball practice of conditioning and drills. I was standing with a towel draped over me, waiting for a shower stall to become available.

"It's in the rules when you can start practicing," said Cathy. "It will be after Founders' Day; we will have two-a-days and cheerleader practice then. You won't have time to be burning your bra then."

I frowned. Cathy laughed at me and hugged me. "Isn't that what Ms Barker is telling you all to do?" she asked me. "We did a ceremonial burning last year in her class. Maybe she's mellowed a little."

I got a note from Registry that I had to see the girl I had met on the first movie night.

"Hi, Margie!" said Alison as I arrived nervously at the desk. I wasn't locked in my room any more. I was usually in Cathy's or Babs' company because I needed them in the locker rooms or when I showered to cover for me. Muriel, in my fashion class, had permed my hair as I had permed hers. My hair now bounced at my ears, turned upward in a wave all about my platinum-colored head.

I had to have my picture taken again. I waited until the photo was ready for an ID tag. "Um, there's something wrong," I said in as girlish a voice as I could. It still seemed squeaky to me. "This says Margie Smith."

"Oh, yes," smiled Alison. "That is your legal name, isn't it? We didn't know that you were related to Coach Smith. She's had a devil of a time tracking down people who knew you as a little girl. It must have been terrible not to have your birth registered. But that's all sorted out now. Coach Smith was going to talk to you about legally changing your name to Miller if you want to keep your cousins' name since they raised you. But that's who you are legally now, Margie Smith."

"What's in a name?" Coach Smith smiled at me when I confronted her. "I just thought that someone might connect the small basketball player, M. Miller, at Newman, with the M. Miller on our team. Stranger things have happened."

"Like boys disguised as girls playing on basketball teams?" I asked her, furious with her for changing my name and not telling me about it.

"I made you safer," said the Coach. "Here." She gave me a birth certificate and a Social Security card for Margie Smith. She gave me a bank card with my picture as a blonde on it and a credit card with Margie's name on it.

"It won't work," I told her as I took them in my manicured hands, my pink fingernails on display. "I won't pass the sex test anyway."

"Yes, you will," said Coach Smith with a wry grin. "That's all been taken care of. It will be the day after Founders, the day before we can start practicing for real. When you are called, just go in and do what the other girls do."

I was showered and back in my room in Hubbard when I realized Coach had said 'the other girls.' I realized she had lumped me in with 'other girls' as if I was one of them. I mean, I was trying hard to fit in and suppose I was. I had lots of girls wanting to be friends with me, including Muriel and Maureen from Fashion Studies, and all of the girls on the basketball team.

I practised and practised with my voice and I achieved a semblance of femaleness with it. I could go anywhere on campus now and be called 'Miss' wherever I went. I didn't go everywhere, of course. I had to avoid areas where the men congregated though I would love to have been there. I would love to have heard what they were saying about the new me, with my blonde, bouncy hair. I also shuddered at what they could be saying about the new, blonder, me. Maybe I didn't want to be where the men congregated, watching all of us girls pass by on our way to our classes.

Founders' Day came. I didn't know that the girls in the house could get so giddy about a dance. It was almost as if it was a wedding. Babs included me in her preparations so I got to go into a women's beauty shop for the first time. It seemed like half the girls from Hubbard were there, getting face packs and hairdos, makeup, pedicures and manicures. Soon I was joining them, having my skin massaged and oiled from the tip of my toes to my face.

My padded bra was set aside and it didn't flummox the girl who attended me, certainly not as much as it flummoxed me. Babs just laughed and took off her bra as well; she was padded almost as much as I was.

"Basketball players," Babs said to Susan, the girl attending us. Only my panties covered the tucked-away parts of me. My hair was in a towel after it had been washed and my roots done, whatever that meant. My hair looked as blonde as it had before to me. "You can't be an athlete and have big boobs."

"You-you've got some boobs," I squeaked at her. Babs had me say it again in a lower, more feminine tone. When I was nervous, I tightened up and went all squeaky.

"We've got much better padded bras than these," confided Susan as she poured oil on my back and thighs. She massaged it in, turning me over and smiling as she did the same to the front of me. "There are a lot of girls like you two about. Let me show you how you can make it appear like you have real cleavage."

Babs insisted that I be fitted for a push-up bra with gel inserts that Susan said moved like the real thing. By pressing on a little spring, the bra gripped me tighter and tighter. The constriction on my chest made real cleavage appear just as Babs' bra did on her. Susan showed us how to lightly shadow the cleavage with makeup to make it appear that we had much more than we really had.

Standing next to Babs and looking at myself in my panties and new bra, red silk to match my dress, I looked just as much a woman as Babs. I felt proud of myself that I had survived stripping off in front of other girls. It was silly and thrilling as well that I was accepted by them as a girl.

Susan's friends arrived then and my toenails were worked on and painted red. My fingernails were given a lot of care and shaped femininely. Then acrylic nails were applied to me and it was absurd how female the long nails made me feel. I looked at them and tingly, feminine, feelings swept over me. I hardly needed the makeup session and my hair to be teased and curled and lengthened with hair extensions to feel womanly. I just had to look at my hands and a shudder would go through me.

We got back after spending almost half the day in the beauty shop. I had put on a waist cinch, a short skirt with a little, matching jacket and a black singlet. Now my outfit showed off my chest and the cinch, pulled tighter by Babs, made my waist seem tiny and my hips curvy.

"Oh," I gasped as I looked at myself with the line of curls across my forehead, my eyelashes thick, curled and dark where they had been added to as well. My eyebrows were the thinnest of lines but my lips seem to have grown and they glistened with a dark red

gloss that matched my fingernails. My legs looked shapely as well. I felt my skirt about me and looked at my reflection where I could. What a pretty girl I look like, I thought in exhilaration.

I clutched Babs' arm as we walked over to the cab. Some guy walking across the way walked right into a lamp fixture while looking at us. Babs thought it was really funny.

"It's you, Margie, he was looking at," she giggled as the cab driver stared at me in the rear view window. "You're the blonde and I'm just the girl with the blonde."

"I think he hurt himself," I murmured to her and Babs took my hand and squeezed it. We had a fair walk from where the cab dropped us off back to the dorm. All the guys in the university seemed to be out to ogle the girls returning from the beauty shop. I was whistled at and called after. I was surprised by how many knew my name.

I held onto Babs' arm, terrified at all the attention, and tried to walk in my high heels like a girl. Babs had flats on, of course, so we were closer in height. She waved to lots of boys and danced down the pathway while I just sashayed and tried to smile, pretending that I liked all the attention.

"It's just like a basketball game," Cathy had said to me when I worried about so many people looking at me. "You're dribbling the ball down the court and all eyes are on you, hoping you are going to hit the three-point shot."

"What is the three-point shot off the court?" I asked her. My nerves quivered as I imagined myself doing the basketball play as a girl.

"Off the court," Cathy said, "men like you to look at them and smile. They'll usually look away if you do. Haven't you noticed yet that girls always look people in the eye and check them out while men don't?"

It was another thing I had to practice and I did as I walked with Babs. Most of the guys didn't look away, they smiled right back at me. Some even waved. I was sure that they were waving to Babs.

In the Hubbard Building, there was panic on every floor. Girls with rollers in their hair were dashing about. The hallways were jammed with half-dressed girls.

"Where have you been, Babs?" scolded Cathy. She wore a gorgeous long black gown, tugging it up as it was strapless. She saw me then and smiled. "Oh, Margie, you are so cute. I want to hug you." Which she promptly did and I felt foolishly proud of myself.

"I'll help Margie dress," Cathy said, "while you get ready, Barbara. We only have thirty minutes until our escorts arrive."

"Our escorts?" I asked her tentatively, wondering if I was supposed to have done something about that.

"Don't worry about that," said Cathy with a grin. "We only had about three hundred boys asking if they could escort you to the Founder's dinner. We decided, Rhonda, Babs and me, that one of your classmates should take you. Alex Gregory won the draw to be your partner."

"You organized a draw for me?" I asked, not knowing if I should be pleased or angry with her.

"Alex was offered five hundred bucks by Dean Gomez, we hear, for his ticket to the dinner," said Cathy with a smile. "Rhonda told him that if Alex chickened out on taking you, then we'd have to do the draw all over again. And Dean wouldn't be in it since he didn't take dancing this term around."

"I, I hardly know who Alex is," I said nervously.

"Tall, six oneish, black hair, wavy, thick glasses, kind of stooped over a little," Cathy said.

"Oh, I know," I said, thinking of the guy who matched that description. He never said a word to me when we tried to dance as Madame instructed us. It had been rather nice in a way not to have to whisper or croak as my voice was so unfeminine at times. I wouldn't have noticed the guy if I hadn't had to dance with him. He should be an inoffensive date, I thought. I didn't want to think more about what I was doing, going out on a date with another guy.

I thought nothing, however, of taking off my female clothes in front of Cathy and getting new pantyhose for the red dress I was at last going to wear. I found my breath coming in faster and faster spurts as I put on a long underslip, then the red dress. The shoulder straps were so tiny that all of my arms and upper chest and my back were exposed.

Cathy zippered me into the dress; it fitted tightly over my waist and hips, my breasts were really prominent in front of me. "That's such a good idea," said Cathy with a smile. "Did I see that Babs is enhanced as well?"

I nodded. I could do little as I stepped into the red high heels I had not yet worn. Then there I was, as pretty a girl as any I had seen getting ready for the ball.

Cathy made me wear a very thin necklace with a red stone that hung in the middle of my chest. Then I had to wear black and red dangling earrings as well. Cathy screwed them into the holes that had been kept open by the studs I wore all the time.

I even put on bracelets and a red stone ring. "Wouldn't it be great if your jewellery was real?" asked Cathy with a laugh. "I think we picked out some nice-looking pieces but it's all glass, you know. Don't worry if you lose any of it."

"How would I lose any of it?" I asked, mystified.

Cathy grinned at me. "A walk in the Rose Garden isn't obligatory," she said, hugging me. She avoided spoiling my makeup as she pretended to kiss me as girls do. "But if you get the chance, you should take it. Leaving an earring in a guy's pocket tells him you're interested in a date as he has to return it to you. He has to see you again at least once. Most of them get the message."

"I'm not sending out any messages to boys!" I told her hotly.

Cathy smirked at me. "But you are a girl now," said Cathy, "and it's allowed. You won't have any trouble with a geek like Alex anyway. He's more scared of you than you are of him. You'll see."

I swished my way through the halls and complimented excited girls on their dresses which they held up just as I did. We congregated in the lower foyer; the babble of girls' voices almost deafened me. I saw Rhonda in a blue gown. She looked gorgeous and I told

her so. She was startled at what I said. Then a guy came up to us, he was six nine or something and claimed her. She went off with him.

They were a striking couple; he wore a black tuxedo and bow tie. Then I saw a mass of guys outside, dressed just like the guy who had come in and claimed Rhonda.

"There's my date, Ron Meade," said Cathy with a smile, leaving me. A muscular guy jerked his head at her and she went clicking away on her high heels, as tall as he was.

Guys came to the doors and the number of girls about me went down as each was claimed by an escort. I was left with two other girls, one of whom was furious with the two boys who ran up to the door and stood there staring in. "I've a good mind not to go," said the blonde in a black dress. "It would serve Alan right if I stood him up."

"Come on, Trish," said the brunette taking her arm. "Margie, who are you waiting for?"

"Alex, I think," I said nervously, wondering what had happened to him. Had he found out all about me? I thought nervously. Had he gotten cold feet about taking another boy to a dance? I would be mortified if someone pointed at me and called me a boy in a dress.

"We can't leave you here alone," said the brunette whose name I didn't know. "Tell them to wait, Trish."

Trish went out through the glass doors. A tall, dark-haired guy came up and Trish pointed inside. I stared at the guy in the tux coming into the foyer which was 'For Women Only'. This guy was not Alex Gregory.

"Hi, Margie," Lance Irvine said with a nervous smile at me. He spoke to me but the words came out a babble that I barely understood. "I hope you don't mind me filling in for Alex. But he really wanted to go with Emily Robinson. I had a couples' ticket and I hadn't asked anybody. He asked Emily a week ago; she changed her mind and said Yes, which he didn't expect. He didn't know what to do when he won you in some kind of drawing he'd entered. I said I would swap with him. Alex is a good friend of mine."

The two girls outside stood there, clearly waiting for me to join them in the walk up to the Students' Union, a parade of sorts, past all the students who weren't going to the ball for various reasons.

"You look devastatingly pretty," said Lance, reaching out and taking my arm. I shivered and looked right at him. He kind of looked away then, pointing to the other girls. "We should join Stu and Mike, shouldn't we?"

I went out into the open air. Cathy had said that I shouldn't bring a wrap. If I got cold, my escort would lend me his coat. It was a tradition at Founders that we walk up to the ball and join the 'cotillion' as she called the parade we students would make into the dinner and dance.

Lance groped for my hand and I let him take it. He noticed my nails right away. "These are not real, are they?" he asked, his voice amused.

"How would you know?" I asked. I minced as quickly as I could beside him as he hurried me to catch up with the others.

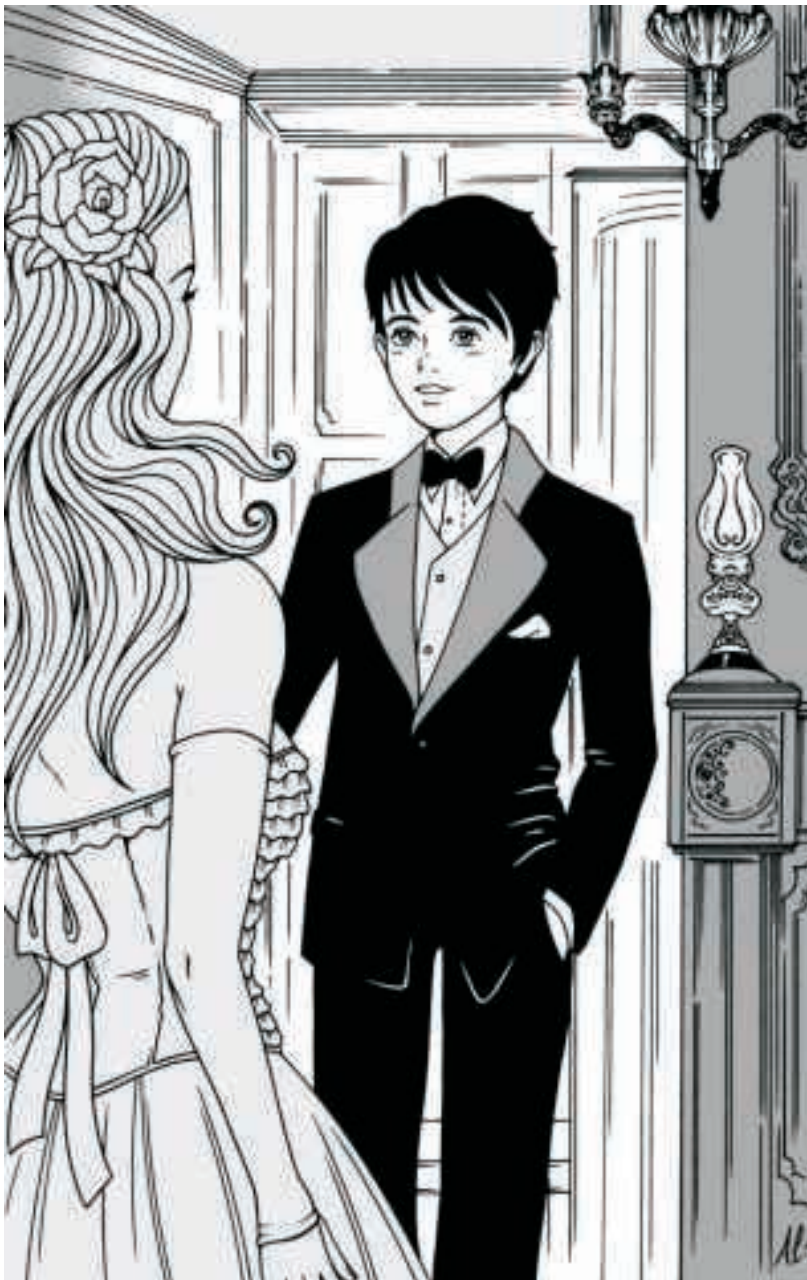
"You could never play basketball with lovely nails like these," Lance said, stroking my hand.

"They're acrylics," I admitted. "Babs and I had them done at Trends downtown this afternoon."

At last as we were just behind the others; there was a line ahead of us of gorgeously dressed and colored girls all partnered by men in black suits and bow ties.

The line began to move. Lance grinned and waved to friends who sat on the grass berms or cement railings, commenting on all of us 'plutocrats' going into the ball.

"You beat out Dean for that one, Lance," one husky guy called out and Lance smiled broadly. "How much did you pay Alex?"



The football guys, sitting and laying in the grass, all laughed then and I felt weird.

"How, how much did you pay?" I asked him.

Lance squeezed my hand. "It wasn't," he began. He stopped and gave me a shy, sheepish look, the kind I had used often when I was talking to a girl I liked. "Eleven hundred dollars," he finally said. I didn't know how to react. I was partly pleased that someone would pay that kind of money to go out with me and partly not. Did paying for me make me out to be some kind of girl that I didn't want him to think I was? I asked myself in panic.

"I don't think it means anything to you," said Lance quickly. "But Dean was going to pay Alex eight hundred. He was trying to borrow a hundred from me to make it up to Alex. Alex wanted his money up front and that's why I'm late. I had to go to two different bank machines and use a credit

card to get that much in cash. Just because I paid Alex really doesn't commit you to anything."

"It was just a story about Alex and Emily then," I said to him. My nerves were all a-jingle as we went in through the main doors and across the cement floor. My heels reverberated as I swished femininely on Lance's arm.

"No, it's actually true," Lance said. "I'd already promised Alex my ticket as I'd decided not to come tonight. I didn't know he'd won another in some kind of drawing. He was just making sure he got the one from me before he sold the other to Dean. That's how I found out that he was supposed to escort you. It's been a rush." He smiled wryly down at me as we entered the large, decorated ballroom. A swing orchestra was playing, couples were parading about the tables. The girls were all smiling and the men looked pleased with themselves.

"It's been a rush getting myself a suit, getting the money, getting the ticket from Alex and avoiding Dean," said Lance, taking my arm more formally as other guys and girls were doing. "Dean's really mad with me. I thought he might be outside the Hall ready to give me heck. He had it all worked out how to be your d-, escort tonight."

"You must be independently wealthy," I whispered to him. We passed tables where older people, many from the university, were watching us parade. I saw Coach Smith watching us. She was smiling and talking to a big man next to her; he was watching me with interest. It made me feel all queasy inside.

"Nah," said Lance with a grin. "I'll have to plead with Mom and Dad and tell them my books cost twice as much as I thought. Anyway, I worked over the summer, driving road equipment. Boring but very profitable. I heard that you were a camp counsellor."

"Boring and not profitable," I said to him nervously. He laughed and squeezed my arm.

"Honored founders," boomed a voice from in front of the band, startling us all, "honored guests and members of the student body and faculty. May we ask that you all find your seats now. We will begin this evening's festivities? Chaplain Kellard will lead us all in Grace as soon as you are seated."

Lance led me to a table where Lucy and her escort and other members of the basketball team were being seated with the help of their escorts. Lucy looked at me in astonishment when she saw who was escorting me. Then her face broke into a big smile. That only made me more nervous than ever.

"Well, hello, Lance," Lucy said loudly. "What a pleasure to see you with Margie."

"Hello to you as well," said Lance smoothly, grinning back at her. I smoothed my dress beneath me and Lance assisted me by pushing in my chair behind me.

"Wasn't it Alex?" asked Melanie. She was one of the black girls; she had a grinning black football player beside her, a friend of Lance's, I gathered.

"He's with Emily," said Lance cheerfully. "So I came with Margie. It saved the ticket from going to waste."

"Oh, it wasn't going to waste, man," said Melanie's escort, smiling broadly. "It wasn't going to be wasted."

All the people at our table seemed to be staring at me.

The Grace intervened as the guys stood; we girls got to remain seated and bow our heads. "Never thought we'd get to Founders' Day," said another of the guys with a sigh. "You know what this means, guys, a home game at last and cheerleaders cheering for us, instead of the losers."

"Three and oh, baby," said another of the guys. "All the way to New Orleans this year!" He lifted a glass of water. All the guys clinked glasses and drank to that.

I had to look at Lance. I couldn't look down at what was in front of me on my chest or beneath them. I could scarcely look at the red folds of silk that caressed my legs either.

"Everyone's convinced we'll play in a major bowl this year," Lance told me as he sat down after the prayer.

"We're going to!" said the guy beside Melanie. "Panthers rule!"

I remembered when I had said such things, joined in toasts like that and excluded the girls in any group I was with. I found myself smiling noncommittally as girls had when I had done boorish things like that in the past.

"So we finally get to see the new cheerleaders and new uniforms," said one of the guys. I thought about what that would mean. I would have to prance around the field like a girl in my short dress, guys hooting for me to do high kicks as I used to when I was a boy. "I hope you got some new, sexy moves this year, Lucy. We need to get inspired, you know. A blonde, sexy cheerleader inspires me every time."

Lucy pointed at me with my platinum hair and I felt humiliated. I wished there could be a fire or something so we could all get out of there. No such luck, though, as the guys grinned at me and started talking about cheerleading.

That led to arguments about boys' and girls' cheerleading, who was best, etc. The waiters, other kids from school, scurried about the hall serving us all. I was one of the few who noticed how Melanie's escort waited until the soft drinks had been served before he put something from a flask inside his coat into his and Melanie's drink. It quickly passed around the table.

Lance looked at me, an eyebrow raised as the flask reached him. I shook my head and he returned the flask to the girl beside him.

"Helps loosen you up," said Melanie with a smile, leaning towards me.

I shivered. "I, I don't need it," I told her. If I had been a guy, I probably would have taken the rum or vodka or whatever it was. But I was a girl; who knows what I might do if I got drunk. Worse, what might my escort try to do to me if he got drunk and his inhibitions were lowered? That wasn't something I wanted to think about, not dressed as I was and with my hair the way it was.

That wasn't the last flask passed. The after-dinner speeches, lauding the founders of the university whose families still funded many programs at the university, were quite dull. Flasks were passed from table to table; even the coffee was spiked.

Lance took one from his inside pocket and passed it around. "Ooh, schnapps," said Lucy with a gleam in her eye. "I love shooters of schnapps." She poured a generous measure in her empty water glass and passed on the flask.

"That's Donaldda Merryweather," said Melanie in awe as a tall, black woman in a striking white dress accepted a plaque from the Founders' Committee, then talked about life in the pro leagues. She went back to a table where Rhonda sat along with Babs and Cathy. Rhonda saw me looking, then they all turned to stare at me and point at Lance and frown. That didn't help my confidence about passing as a girl.

"Your team's going to be crap this year without her," said Melanie's escort, Dwaine. "Did you see the rankings in Sports World? You'll be lucky if you win five games this year, it said."

"Don't worry. I think they put us at one hundred and eleventh out of one hundred and twelve they ranked," said Lance, squeezing my hand. "We should drink to Sports World and how wrong they always are."

I sipped on the pop cautiously but I couldn't taste anything but cola. Other awards were made. Donations to the university were applauded, then the tables were cleared and the dance began. I stood nervously beside Lance, clutching the pop I was not going to finish. I did not want to have to go to the bathroom, not when it would be filled with girls doing whatever girls do in bathrooms together.

The music began. Lance took my drink out of my hand and put it beside his on the small table that had replaced the large tables to allow a large dancing area to appear.

"I took 109 last year," Lance said, putting his arm about my waist. The number was that of the dancing class. I felt my temperature rising as he held me and tried to get me to relax like a girl in his arms. He spun me about so that I was dancing backwards. Then he whirled me off in a quickstep that left me gasping as my dress swirled about me. He held me comfortably, directing my high heels to move in rhythm with him, as if I was still in Madame's class.

Lance could dance very well. He waltzed me and made light conversation, telling me who all the people were at our table and among the professors. That was how I found out that the tall man with Coach Smith was the coach of the men's team at another university. I almost said, "Oh, goodie, she can get me a tryout then with a real team." Of course, I didn't dare say that.

Lance said regretfully that he was going to have to let me go; many other guys wanted to dance with me. He would find me later when the orchestra took a rest.

I didn't really want to dance with anyone but Lance, especially since we seemed to be able to move so well together. The moment he led me from the floor, one of the guys at our table grabbed my hand. From then until the band's intermission, when a series of drawings and other presentations were made, I was in someone else's arms on the dance floor. My feet were kicked and trodden on something awful as a couple of the guys who danced with me were drunk.

Finally, I retreated to the sides of the hall where others of the team were standing. I didn't notice Lance until I felt a hand about my waist; there he was smiling at me. My heart jumped and I smiled without even thinking about it, so pleased was I to see him.

I put my hand over his and he took it and held it.

Lance had brought me my drink. I didn't even have to taste it. I could smell that it had been spiked.

"Something else in it?" asked Lance and I nodded. He looked furious. He edged me over towards a plant rack and poured my drink into one of the pots. "Let's find you another," he said, keeping his arm about me possessively, fending off a couple of guys who tried to get me away from him.

Lance took me out in the hallway to get a soft drink from a machine. I had barely put his coin in when I saw his face stiffen.

Dean Gomez and a couple of his friends were there, looking angrily at Lance.

Dean stared at me. Instinctively, I clutched at Lance's hand. He tightened his grip about my shoulder, pulling me protectively into him.

"You better watch yourself at practice, Irvine," hissed Dean then. "Injuries happen all the time in football."

He reached into the machine and presented me with the bottle of root beer. He had leered on his face. "See you on the field, Barbie," Dean said to me. His tone made me glad that Lance had his arm around me.

"He, he doesn't lose very often, does he?" I asked Lance, who looked startled as I said it.

"Dean never loses," said Lance shortly. "If the team does, it's always someone else's fault." He looked down at me. "Has, has he lost you this time?" Lance asked me. "You seemed to be saying ..." His voice trailed off.

"Oh, he lost me the first time he met me," I told Lance.

Lance smiled brilliantly then. His arm squeezed me, making me shiver as my dress played around my stockings. "Good," he said. "Very good."

Oh no, I thought desperately. What have I done? What signals have I made to Lance? I could barely stand and walk. I was suddenly conscious of my bare shoulders, my tightly-held chest, my hair and my earrings, and all the femininity into which I had plunged without holding back.

I didn't doubt that Lance saw me as a girl. Worse, he saw me as girl friend material, I had no doubt. I would have to stop that right away. But when we left our drinks and went back on the dance floor, it was marvellous to dance with him. His feet were in sync with my high heels and swishing skirts. In the slow waltzes, he slowed me down and held me, encouraging me to put my head on his shoulder as so many other girls were doing with their boyfriends.

Other girls. There it was again. I was a girl. I had girly feelings. I almost wished that I was a girl so that I wouldn't disappoint Lance as he was to be disappointed in me. Eleven

hundred dollars! To do this, to dance with me! I could not believe that he would think that this was worth it.

After the last dance, Lance walked me back to Hubbard. It wasn't a long walk. All about in the doorways, couples said goodnight. As one couple moved out of an alcove, Lance pulled me in. I was shaking all over. Eleven hundred dollars!

Lance turned and drew me against him. I knew what he wanted for his money. I wanted to tell him No, and I didn't want to as well. I felt the restrictions and the swaying of my female clothing acutely as his lips descended on mine. I let another man kiss me.

Lance's hands were about me, pressing my padded bosom into him, as his lips took very firm command of mine. I've always like firm kisses and this was the firmest I had ever been kissed. I struggled with the feelings running through me as Lance kissed and kissed me. I finally put my arms about his neck, gave in and kissed him back. Thrilling and wonderful sensations ran through me.

I loved being kissed by Lance. I felt womanly and wished desperately that I could be the woman that he thought he was kissing. I opened my mouth a little and he explored my mouth tenderly with his tongue, doing to me what I had done with girls earlier in my life.

Lance's hands massaged my back and strayed from my back to my derriere, pushing me into him. I loved feeling him so hard against me in my soft, silky dress. Security called us late ones in. It was a disappointment to have to let Lance go, to have him let me go, to walk, my hand in his, to the entranceway to Hubbard. Finally I kissed him again, hurriedly, then I had to go in.

The blonde girl in the wall mirrors was beautiful. I longed to be her, wishing that she was real. If she was as real as she looked, then she and Lance... The thought began, but I chased it away.

"You and Lance Irvine," said Lucy as we reached the basketball team's floor. "Did he say what he paid Alex to get the date with you?"

"No," I said. "I don't think..."

But Lucy didn't care what I thought. She went screaming over to join her friends in the common room and I slunk quickly into my room. I got out of my beautiful gown, hating to cream my face and remove the wonderful makeup I wore. I must go back to Trends again, I thought. Or maybe I could find out in Fashion Studies how to do my makeup like that again. And how to get my hair as beautiful as it was.

I had no trouble switching to my nightie and panties to go to sleep with my hair extensions in. I wondered how Lance would like seeing me as a cheerleader. Lucy said that the new uniforms were a scandal. Once, I had dreaded wearing them. As I lay in bed after Founders' Day, however, I looked forward to being a cheerleader for Lance.

VI. CHEERLEADER

I thought that I could manage it. I thought that I could manage to be a cheerleader, just like the other girls who were just as nervous as me.

"You have to wear the stunning bra you wore to the ball," Cathy told me as she painted panthers on my cheeks and put gold and dark blue ribbons in my hair.

"I can't do the high kicks," Melanie was protesting to Lucy in the hallway outside my room. Cathy went on to paint my lips, making them appear soft and appealing.

"So switch with Margie," said Lucy at last. "Make sure Margie has her panties on, Cath, as she's going to be in the front with me. Mel's on the wing."

"No," I quivered. I didn't want to be in the front row. I wanted to hide in the back corner away from everyone. Lucy had said I could as I was the most inexperienced of all the girls. It showed.

Cathy lifted my skirt, checking that I had on the pink panties with the Dove emblem. "Marge has her panties on," she sang out. Lucy went down the hallway calling out to the other girls to assemble in the common room with our pom-poms.

"I can't do this," I trembled as Cathy took me by the hand. She wore a Panther uniform just like mine. Babs saw me, grinned and grabbed her boobies; she was wearing her bra just like mine. I wanted to leave the gathering as all the girls came in. They were all like me, made-up heavily, smiling broadly, excited to be performing at last in front of a full stadium.

The best thing was that I wore pink sneakers, a short, pleated dress and a skimpy top just like the other girls. The worst was how I had to change position at the last moment. Lucy told me to smile and smile some more. I would be the one nearest the cameras. I would be up on the big screens and everyone would be looking at me, the platinum blonde. I couldn't help the goose bumps that broke out all over me.

"Don't frown or give us that frozen look like you're doing now, girl," Lucy told me. "Be loose. Come on."

I tried to be loose and Lucy was disgusted with me. "You're practising for a loss," she scolded me. "Shake it up, girl. Be happy. No one wants to see a grumpy cheerleader. So put it on, all of you, ham it up. Margie, you follow me and do what I do." Lucy was such a flirt, such a vamp, taunting the crowd at our practices as much as leading them in cheers.

"Remember how it was when you were a little girl," Lucy reminded us all, as if I could. "If a player grabs you, Margie, even if it's not your boy friend, after he's done something good and kisses you, you have to go along with it and pretend you love it. Smile and waving these things! You can even swoon if you like. But don't do it too convincingly."

There was laughter all around then. "The defense picked up Lucy and carried her to their bench last year," Cathy told me, patting my fanny, tickling my bare legs with her pom-poms. "Then they all had to give her mouth-to-mouth."

"It was so funny," said a pretty, smiling, red-haired girl, Marianne, whom I hardly knew.

"It was stupid," said Cathy, putting her arm through mine and leading me after Lucy. We emerged from Hubbard. People on the pathway cheered us. Lucy decided that we had to run and dance along the path to the stadium, our pom-poms held high as we called out "Panthers! Panthers! Go-o-o Panthers!" The early birds smiled at us and went to the ticket lines outside the stadium.

We sat in a dressing room for a while. Lucy walked round and checked us all out. I begged her not to make me change with Melanie and she laughed. "I should have done it before and not listened to you," Lucy laughed at me. "You do much higher leg kicks than Mel. You are the blonde half the guys are coming to see."

We did a routine like chorus girls and even had to do splits which, since we were all Phys. Ed. majors, wasn't too hard to do. Babs grimaced when I had tried the splits before and nodded approvingly. "You're really flexible," she said.

"More than you know," I muttered as I sprang up. She laughed at me.

"It's great to see you have a sense of humor about these things," Babs said.

"I have to," I said to her, "now that I've passed the sex test."

It was a con. I'd sat in the cubicle and peed in a cup. I retucked and put my panties back on. The technician breezed in, talked to me about my period, and took my blood. Behind her, stacking the samples in trays for her was Rhonda McKinnon. I didn't see her do it but Babs told me that Rhonda would do the old switcheroo on the liquids and the swab they took of my cheek.

A couple of girls had to see the doctors about pills they were taking but not me. I was clear and clean. I was a girl. I was allowed now to play in Girls' games.

Lucy took my hand and went out first, jumping up and down in excitement, waving her pom-poms and smiling at the top row of the cheering crowd. I followed her and squealed just like she did. She did a high kick, smiling and screaming and I did one as well, following her exactly.

We made two lines on each side of the paper Panther's mouth as the players burst through it and ran out onto the field. Lance came out and I could tell he was looking for me. He looked down the wrong side first but then he slowed and found me, next to Lucy, jumping up and down in faked excitement. He smiled and my heart did a few flip-flops.

Lance ran down the field to join the team and I lined up with the other girls and listened to the National Anthem. A guy with a TV camera was crawling around in front of us. I saw myself, my feminized self, on the big screen as the director switched from camera to camera. My blinking eyes, thickly made-up, showed my agitation as the director held the shot much longer than the others. My heart beat fast as I looked at how girlish I was with my hair curled and set in pigtails.

Finally it was over. Lucy barked out orders and held my hand. I was right there, facing a crowd of students who cheered us as much as the game as we led them all in a cheer for the Panthers. I smiled, I waved and I didn't miss a move; I cheered and applauded the audience with a big smile for their efforts. Well, that's what it looked like on the outside. Inside, I had never felt like such a fraud or been so ashamed of myself in my entire life.

"It's your job for the afternoon," said Lucy. "Do anything you like but don't just stand there. Jump and squeal and be six years old again in your excitement! Don't let the camera catch you without a smile on your face!"

It was a long afternoon and my face was aching from smiling. I was cheering away when Dean Gomez threw one last pass. Someone on our side caught it and the crowd went crazy as we won the game. I was standing there, jumping up and down and clapping my hands together like a little girl, when a player, picked me up, swept off his helmet and planted a wet kiss on my lips. The sweat from his uniform made me want to throw up. Of course, it was Dean Gomez, the hero of the hour.

I had to smile and pretend that I liked it. The other girls piled on and patted Dean on the back as if he had done something well. "You need a real boyfriend, Barbie Doll," he said to me, smiling and bending me over his knee. I panicked that he would drop me. He pulled me to my feet, kissed me lightly again and ran back to the bench.

Lance looked at me and shook his head as he trudged off after the team. I don't think that he got into a play in the whole game. The crowd was chanting "Dean! Dean!" as the team left.

"See me tonight?" Lance asked me as he went by. I nodded that I would.

Lance knew what Dean was like. He didn't blame me for being up there on the screen kissing Dean and smiling as if I liked it. As I prepared for my evening, I realized that I had a date with a boy and I had arranged it myself.

I wore my new bra and a waist cinch as I put on stockings and a garter belt with my lined, flirty blue and gold dress. I asked Cathy shyly to help me do my makeup and get the hair extensions put into my hair. I changed my earrings and my shoes. Cathy teased me about my heavy date.

"So now you're a girl," Cathy laughed at me. "You behave like any pretty girl does and that means going out on a Saturday night with your boy friend. Is he taking you dancing?"

"I don't know," I told her. I recognized the rightness of her words. I was going out on a date with a boy. I only hoped that he liked the girl that he saw.

The front desk guard called the room and announced that my date was there. All the girls in the common room seemed to know that Margie had a date; they waved goodnight to me and wished me a good time.

I smiled back. My stomach was full of butterflies, the good kind I hoped for before each basketball game to make me play well.

Lance was there in the foyer with a lot of other guys. Several gaped at me. I stopped and signed out a key as I didn't know when I would be back to the house. I saw the looks of envy that Lance got when I took his hand. He smiled down at me.

"Isn't that the cheerleader?" one of the guys asked. Lance held the door and I minced through it on my high heels. I wore four-inch heels and still wasn't as tall as Lance.

"I was going to take you to the movies," Lance said to me. "But you look like you are dressed for dancing."

"No," I said nervously. "I-I just didn't know what you had in mind so I just tried to dress to go anywhere."

"Just a minute," said Lance as we eased up the pathway. It was still light out but he pushed me into the alcove we had shared before. As I looked up in puzzlement, he took me in his arms again and kissed me, right there where anyone passing by could see me. Oh, I loved the feel of his lips on mine. I loved the fluttery, feminine feelings that went right through me and made me love his hands about me, pressing me to him. I put my arms about his neck and kissed him back. His kiss wiped away all the awful things that had been going through my mind since Dean had taken his kisses from me.

I would have loved to stay there and kiss Lance all night but people passing by looked at us and made snide comments to Lance.

"If we go to the movies," whispered Lance to me. "We could go on doing this in the dark."

"All right," I said to him and we unclenched. My boyfriend put his arm about me and I strolled as femininely as I could with him to the theater. "Oh no," I gasped as I saw what was playing: Tootsie, and another Dustin Hoffman movie.

"You don't like old movies?" asked Lance in concern. "We can go downtown if you like."

"No, this is fine," I told him, reaching for my purse. "I want to treat you, though."

Lance gave me a crooked smile. "I'll let you," he said. "But I'll buy the tickets."

I shivered as I realized what he meant. The only seats in the back row were way over in the corner. The couples already in the row smiled at us as Lance led me there, holding my hand. From there it was a distorted view of the movie. But that didn't matter. I don't think that Lance cared what movie was on. I know I didn't.

The lights went down. Lance's arm went about my shoulder, we kissed and kissed until our jaws and mouths ached. He wanted to caress me and I let him. Rockets and fire-crackers went off inside me as I tried to tell myself how silly I was, letting a man do that to me.

Later, during the second movie, after we had talked about the miserable week he had had with Dean and his friends, I let Lance's hands wander a little more onto my stockings and my legs. It wasn't compensation for the slights he had received but it was partly my fault, I felt, that Dean was so jealous of Lance.

I got really heated with his hands stroking my thighs, playing with my garter belt and the tops of my stockings. My heart was beating a hundred beats to the minute as I kissed him. His tongue was in me, his hand was almost on my panties. I kept him away from that and he accepted it but he didn't relent on kissing my upper chest or my neck. That was enjoyable enough, as was the way he put his arms about me and hugged me. I felt weird

about liking it so much, liking the way my nylons made me feel as they rasped when I crossed my legs as a girl should do.

I had to remove my earrings when he caught one swinging. He took it from my hand and put it in his top pocket, smiling in the semi-dark. He lowered his head and we began to kiss again.

I had to go to the Ladies' Room before we left and redo my makeup, especially my lips, as several girls around me were doing. Several were hitching up their dresses to adjust panties while others adjusted their bras. I was learning just what it is that girls do when they go to the bathroom together.

I had let Lance caress my breasts. I really was quite flat-chested which he would find out soon if he kept on the way he was going.

"This is all padding?" Lance whispered to me.

"Yes," I told him. "Babs and I bought them at Trends on Founders' Day, for the dance."

"I thought when I saw her that she'd had implants," said Lance. "Not that I go round noticing girls' breasts, of course."

"No, of course you wouldn't," I said to him. I cuddled close to him, kissing him, then I realized that I was initiating that with another man.

"You're so lucky that I'm a leg man, not a breast man," Lance whispered in my ear. His hand began an assault under my skirts and on my stockings and I loved him doing that. He didn't get too far as I had my legs crossed but he really made me feel good as he stroked me and played with my stocking tops. He made me wish I could be the girl he wanted me to be.

We strolled back hand-in-hand to the alcove again where we had to stop. My whole body started to tremble as we approached it. Lance took me in his arms and kissed me fiercely. I could sense my breasts rising against him and pushing into him.

"I can't say when I'll be free at night this week," Lance whispered to me. "But, after the game on Saturday, I'll come for you if that is all right with you and we'll go dancing. Wear a flirty dress. This one will do."

"All right," I told him shakily. I felt a surge of excitement as I realized that I would be going out with Lance again. I kissed him lightly in front of the stern night guard and went into Hubbard just on the stroke of midnight.

Cathy was sitting there with a bunch of other girls, reviewing the game, when she looked up at me swishing in. "Where's your earring?" she asked me.

"In Lance's pocket," I told her. Several of the girls smiled.

"It worked out well with you in the front row today," said Cathy. "We all think you should stay there next week. The camera operator seemed to love putting you up on the screen."

"S-Someone else sh-should get a turn," I stammered.

"We don't want a turn," said Janine, another of the true cheerleaders. "I don't want Dean Gomez slobbering all over me. No thanks. You have much better taste than that too. I like your boyfriend. You can lend him to me any time."

"N-no," I said nervously. "I-I think I-I'll keep him m-myself."

I went to bed with the smiles of the girls stuck in my mind. I was a male. Why didn't I fancy one of them? Janine was very pretty. Cathy was nice, now that I had gotten to know her. But I wasn't looking at any of them. All I was doing was dreaming about Lance Irvine, and longing for my next date with him.

VII. SEASON OPENER

The next home game was just like the first. Dean won it again on a last-second throw. This time, I didn't stand and wait for him. I hid behind Rhonda and all the girls jumped on Dean, squealing and kissing him. I was saved as I hung onto Rhonda and smiled, laughed and squealed like all the others.

"Five and zero!" said Lucy as we walked into the dressing room. "They're doing really well, aren't they?"

"They've only played patsies so far," said Rhonda over my platinum, wavy hair. "Now their schedule gets much harder. London beat the team we saw today by fifty points and Dean couldn't make a pass, even at me." That made us all smile. The idea of Rhonda, so tall, with Dean was just silly. "Dean threw what, three interceptions before he got that last drive going. He has to play a lot better if this squad is going to beat London in London."

"Margie's boy friend will have to take over if Dean is really bad," Lucy said, teasing me.

"You'd better hope not," said Rhonda to me. "Lance is a nice guy but he hasn't played a down yet this year. This team will rise or fall on Dean Gomez's passing arm."

I smiled. All I cared about was going out dancing with Lance after the game. I hurried back to the dorm and dressed as Lance had told me to, in a flirty, red and black dance dress, wearing pantyhose under my panties. They would look much better if Lance twirled me about.

As a cheerleader, I had had to dance earlier in the day. The class' training came in handy as I gyrated for the crowd with the other girls. My picture was up there on the screen again even though I was in the third row back when the camera spotted me. I didn't realize how feminine I looked as I arched my back as Lucy had made us practice. I danced like crazy, my hair flowing about everywhere like the other girls.

Lance came for me with a taxi. We went downtown but we couldn't help running into lots of people who knew us both. I was glad that Lance had taken the opportunity to kiss me in the car, even though he spoiled my lipstick. I snuggled up against him, loving his kisses. Lance's hand found my thigh and he stroked my crossed leg. I thrilled to all his attentions.

I loved dancing with Lance. I loved slow waltzes and fast dances, gyrating my hips for him which he couldn't imitate. He loved me doing it, especially when I backed into him as so many girls did to their boyfriends. I loved hugging him after each dance. And the kissing, well, that was out of this world.

"We're away next weekend," Lance said as he held me in 'our' alcove. I was thoroughly kissed by my boy friend. "Then it's Halloween. It gets totally mad around here and it will be worse with a football game here as well. I'll bet Lucy has all you girls dress up as Princesses or something. She did last year. How about you skip one of your practices and meet me some time in the week?"

But I couldn't do that. "I can't wait two weeks to see my girl friend again," Lance protested. "But I guess it's only through the first part of December. Then I'll be able to see you every day."

'My girl friend' Lance had called me. I gave him kisses that should help him remember exactly who I was if we weren't able to see each other for two weeks. I danced into Hubbard happy with myself. I went up to my room and there on my bed were two parcels, both addressed to Miss Barbara Watson.

Babs was there in the morning and asked me directly how my affair with Lance was going. "You're getting real hot and heavy with that guy, aren't you?" she asked me as I sat in my nightie and she opened the parcels addressed to her. She said that she was wondering why I hadn't opened them. "They are for you after all," said Babs. "Stuff your boy friend is going to love to see you wearing."

I blushed like crazy when I saw what was inside them. "You expect me to wear those things all the time?" I asked with a shudder at Babs who nodded to me.

"Oh, yes," Babs said. She took out the first vagina prosthesis and held it up to view it critically. "I think these are going to fit you perfectly. You'll be able to prance about the locker room and no one will know that you aren't real. Even your boyfriend won't know that you aren't real."

"It has strings," I pointed out. My mouth was dry as I thought of Lance seeing me in one of those vagina things.

"With makeup or a little ingenuity with a maxipad holder, we can account for that," said Babs, studying the instructions, learning how to use the things. "This other one is supposed to be like wearing panties. You pull them on and fade them in with skin-tone makeup and no one looking at you will have a clue.

"You need these, Margie, not for your boy friend. You've got him fooled enough already. No, you need one of these for when we go on the road to play and we're in close quarters as girls. It's Lucy and Melanie and Janine that you have to fool and that isn't going to be easy. Which one do you want to try out at practice today?"

By the week's end, the absurdity of walking about as a woman had worn off. I half-wanted someone to claim that I was Morgan Miller. Then I could whip down my panties and there it would be, evidence that I was a woman. I felt so womanly as I walked along in one of them, the horribly named 'Super Master Bait R,' the simple 'FemT' or the 'Femme Triangle'.

Only in a quiet moment did I wonder how such devices could have been invented. The claims that they made about feeling real to the touch of a lover couldn't be true but I wasn't going to try to find out.

"I think the Super one is best," I said when Babs asked me.

Babs looked at the packaging with interest. "You wouldn't have to be tucked to use this," she said with a frown as she read the blurb on the package. "That should make you much more comfortable than the taping you have to do now."

"Nothing is comfortable down there," I told her miserably.

"But you're used to it now," said Babs. I agreed that I was.

The parcels had arrived just in time as we went off to Rosemount to meet a privately-funded university in our opening game. I shared a room with Babs and she made sure that I was ladylike all the time. The team struggled through the first half as Coach kept me on the bench and only used players who had been on the team the previous year. At the start of the second half, she put me in. We were eight points down. I stole twice and fed Rhonda each time for layups.

By the time of the fourth quarter, we were twenty points ahead and Rhonda had her thirty. I hadn't hit a perimeter shot. I didn't need to. I just kept Rhonda and Babs fed with the ball, the backdoor alley-oop working like a charm. Coach took me out five minutes before the end. I didn't even have a point to my name and yet we won by twenty-four.

We did the same the next day to Western State, though I didn't get in until we were down by twelve. Rhonda had forty points. I had fifteen assists and scored my first baskets as we won by twenty again.

Rhonda hugged me as we came off the court. "This is going to work," she said, her arm about me as I smiled up at her. "Did you hear about the injury and what your boyfriend did in London?"

I shook my head, aghast as I thought of Lance hurt. Rhonda laughed at me as Babs came in reading a local weekend paper. "Dean is going to be out for at least a month," Barb said with a big grin on her face. Then she read aloud. "But understudy Lance Irvine gave the Panthers just the spark they needed, completing eighteen of nineteen in the fourth quarter, pulling back a twenty-one point deficit with four touchdown passes. Where have the coaches at Paloma State been hiding this guy?"

"What did it say about our win last night?" asked Rhonda eagerly.

Babs skimmed through several pages before she finally tossed it to the garbage. "It said the usual," she said with a grin. "Center Rhonda McKinnon led a fantastic comeback charge by the Doves. Her thirty-three points were of epic quality. She ..."

"It said that?" asked Melanie from the lockers opposite me.

"It said the usual," said Lucy, sitting on the bench, taking off her singlet and then her bra. "That means that there wasn't a word anywhere about what we did as a women's team. Feel free to make up any storyline that you like. How about, 'The comeback was led by new guard, Melanie Gibson, whose two points on the last play of the game were vital in determining the outcome'."

"Margie Smith played twenty minutes for zero points," said Cathy with a grin, forgetting my sixteen assists and six steals.

"Lucy Paretzky showed just how to sit on a bench gracefully so well that the coach extended her sitting for all of the second period," said Babs.

"Barbara Watson led the team in hawks," said Cathy then. "She had sixteen in the second half alone including a monster triple hawk that took her the length of the court to throw up. When it hit the floor, the front row of sitters had to be evacuated as the phlegm threatened to stick them all to their seats."

All of the team contributed accounts of the game and their individual achievements, from Most Shoelaces Tied Together, by Lucy, to Most Panty Flashes On The Bench, which Janine said was done by me.

"Got those two out of your system?" scowled Coach Smith when she came into the locker room. "Well, Wednesday, before football and Halloween, it's LaSalle-Brentwood on our court and that means the seven-foot African girl, Satiembe. She had twenty blocks in her first game and she's got sixteen with a quarter still to go in Hollywood. You girls will have to play a lot better."

"Hey," said Babs to me. "It's your boy friend for you."

"Lance," I said shakily, wondering how he had got Babs' cell number.

"I hear you won both your games," Lance said, sounding really happy for me. "Congratulations."

"Thanks," I said, "and the same to you. You kept the unbeaten season going."

"I was lucky," Lance said. "They didn't know me and they let down. Our defense was great in getting the ball back. You must have had a ton of points."

"I didn't get any in the first game," I told him, "but I did have two shots go in in the second."

"Hey, that's a great start," Lance said heartily. "It took me three years to get where I am today. I'm sure you'll improve quicker than me. I wanted to see you so much this week but Coach Doherty says that I've got a curfew all week. I have to be with Assistant Brett during all my free time, learning the game plan for Saturday. I really want to see you, and hold you and kiss you."

"Me, too," I said unsteadily.

"Margie," said my boyfriend then, "I know it's way to soon to say it but I'm going to say it anyway."

"If it's too soon, don't say it then," I said. Babs and Cathy sat opposite me, smiling away at me.

"I love you," said my boyfriend huskily. I felt all the hairs on my head stand on end.

"No," I said desperately. "Don't say that. Please."

"Why not?" asked Lance. "Look, my parents are going to come up for the Homecoming game and the dance afterwards. They both used to go here. I want you to meet them."

"I can't, Lance," I said to him. I could feel a sob coming on. The girls were looking at me curiously.

"Just tell him you love him and you'll see him back in Paloma," said Babs with a quick grin.

"Yeah," said Cathy, grimacing at me. "Tell a boy you love him and he'll take off like a bat out of hell."

"Tell Cathy she's wrong," came Lance's voice in my ear. Then there was a pause as neither of us knew what to say. "I came on too quickly, didn't I?" he said. "Okay, I'll step back a bit. But I'm going to see you some time this week even if it's only for five minutes at lunch. And you are going with me to the Halloween dance, right? I'll be the Johnny Depp pirate captain. What are you going to be?"

"I-I don't know," I murmured. My emotions were in turmoil at the situation I had placed myself in.

"What is he asking you?" asked Babs. She reached over and took my bag. The bus driver began to load them and the girls started getting on the bus.

"He wants to know what I'm going to be for Halloween," I told her unsteadily.

"Marilyn Monroe!" yelled both Cathy and Babs in unison, smiling.

"Marilyn?" asked Lance. "Wow! You'll look great! I



know you will. Dean will be green with envy when he sees you. The poor guy's on crutches."

"I've got to go," I said. The bus to the airport is loading."

"All right," said Lance. "I just had to talk to you. I miss seeing you so much this weekend. Are you all alone now?"

"Y-yes," I said before getting on the bus.

"You can say it and only I will hear it," said Lance. "Tell me you love me a little bit, Margie. Don't leave me hanging like this."

"Oh, Lance, I can't," I told him, my voice choking up. "I can't do that. I really can't. There, there are so many things you don't know about me."

"Hey!" snapped Babs, re-opening the door. She stepped down from the bus and took the phone out of my hand. "Your girl friend will have to call you back, Lance. Thanks for making her cry with whatever you said to her. If this was the way you break up with girls, you've got a real crummy way of doing it!"

Babs ended the call. "There!" she said sympathetically. "That's how we girls put guys like Lance in their place. He was breaking up with you, wasn't he?"

"No," I said, shivering. "It, it was worse than that." I shuddered as Babs put her arm about me and bent to look in my face. Her expression was one of great concern. "He, he said he loves me and, and he, he wants me to meet his parents."

Babs' mouth dropped open in complete shock. "Oh no!" she gasped.

VIII. HALLOWEEN

The days became a blur. Babs said that she would talk to Lance, apologize for what she had said to him and try to explain to him that I was far too young and inexperienced to get involved with a guy seriously. She said she would tell him to cool it until his season was over. I was too frightened of all that was happening to object or to tell her to tell him that I had broken up with him.

It sounded so strange, me breaking up with a guy who told me he loved me. But Lance was seeing me as a woman, as I actually saw myself now. It was nerve-racking and weird that I liked to have my hair curled and bouncy. I liked wearing a bra and the increasingly larger pads that Babs made me wear every day. I liked the way that girls envied the way that I looked. I loved the way boys looked at me and feeling all cutesy and girly. I was making gestures and swaying with my hips that I would have laughed at any other boy doing. But I wasn't just any boy. I was Margie. I saw myself each day in the mirror and smiled. Everyone called me Margie. I loved it and acted more girlish than any of the real girls I knew.

I had Women's Studies to attend that afternoon before Cheerleader practice in my short skirt. Then, there would be the extra practice Coach Smith was having us girls run. I would be all sweaty and wet and I wouldn't be able to wear makeup which made me pout a little. I liked smelling of perfume and having guys telling me they liked the way I looked and how fragrant I was.

"Lance says he's sorry for expressing himself like he did," Babs said, smiling as she took my arm. She shrugged. "He's very worried that he's turned you off on him forever. As if a little tiff like this is going to turn you off on him, right? I hear that the coaches weren't very nice to him at practice and told him to get his mind on his Saturday job.

"Lance said that he was very distracted, thinking of you all the time, so he wants to see you and apologize. He didn't believe me that you're even more distracted than he is. You were lousy in practice today, the first time I've ever seen you like that. So you two have to get together...and soon."

"I, I can't tell him," I began.

"Oh, not that!" snapped Babs at me in alarm. "Never tell him that! Just let him know that you want to keep being his girl friend. You do, don't you? You want to go out with him on Halloween and Homecoming and stuff like that. He's going to be at our game on Wednesday. He'll be one of those leading the cheers for us."

"I can't see him," I told her. My whole body shook as I thought about what seeing him might lead to. Babs was a girl; she should have understood what I was going through but she seemed to think that I could meet him and be friends with him and cool him off. I breathed deeply. It didn't help. I couldn't stop the wobbles from infesting me every time I thought of Lance and what he had said to me.

Lance loved the girl he saw me trying to be. I knew that that girl loved him back just as much. But she could never tell him. No, that would expose the real me, the Morgan Miller cringing in fear inside me, ashamed of everything that Margie was wearing and flaunting so outrageously.

Lance was right outside the gym after practice. Babs, Cathy and I followed the rest of the girls out in our sweats, meaning to jog around the campus.

We were to slow jog, go in to our showers in Hubbard, then go to bed in our nighties, if we wore them. Diane, the assistant coach, was going to do a bed check that night. I had to be ready in my nightie, with my hair pinned up by Cathy if she had the time.

"Go on," said Babs with a smile. Lance came sliding down the grassy hill to meet me. He looked at me very tensely. "You worked really hard in practice, Margie." Babs added. "You don't need the run but we do."

Lance took my hand and led me past the entrance to Hubbard to the alcove in the gym wall opposite where he had pulled me to him times before. "Gee," he murmured. His hands rested lightly on my hips. I squirmed and felt sick as he touched me. "You're so small when you're not in your high heels."

I was. I was small and I was sweaty and I was tensed up. I was devoid of makeup whereas he had showered and smelled nice, as he always did. My ponytail flickered over my neck as I tried to tell him that we couldn't be together ever again.

"I, I need a shower," I told him anxiously. I wasn't the pretty girl he had danced with, taken to the movies and brought to this very spot. His face was in my hair as he held me tightly against him. Surely my being like this should turn him off. But it didn't. He was smiling at me just as he always did.

Lance bent over me then. I knew what he wanted so I stood on tiptoe and kissed him as he kissed me back. I had no will power at all. I didn't tell him to get lost. No, I almost jumped up on him. I quivered and gloried in his kissing me. I didn't want it to stop. I kissed him again and again. His arms almost lifted me off my feet. I could hardly put my arms about his neck unless he bent his knees, so tall was he.

I kissed Lance with all the force I had promised myself that I wouldn't ever use again. He kissed me so gently and lovingly that he sent thrills running through me. I started to cry; it was so wonderful to be kissing him and to have his arms about me. Silly girl, I told myself.

Then I cried some more in fear of what I was becoming to Lance. I don't want to be gay, I thought, crying my eyes out. No, said another part of my brain. You don't want to be gay. You just want to be a woman.

Lance hugged me tightly, lightly kissing my tears away. "This is so fantastic, Margie, to hold you like this," he went on, between kisses. I trembled in his arms, clutching him fiercely as he had done me, Margie, so many times before. "I've missed you so much.

"No, I'm not going to say what you don't want to hear. I just want you to be my girlfriend and no one else's for a while, okay? I want to be your only boy friend. Can we agree on that until Christmas at least? I know your schedule will get heavy from then on but I'll be pretty free for a couple of months. I'll be a real student for a while. We can see if we still feel the same about each other then."

"All right," I said breathlessly. Inside, my mind was telling me to say No and break it off with him. But Lance kissed me again and I strained on my tippy toes to kiss him back. His mouth made my feminine feelings rise to boiling point. If the girls hadn't come back then and called for me, I would have gone with Lance anywhere he wanted me to and done anything he wanted me to.

I was quivering with unrequited passion as I went up in the elevator with some of the girls. "This girl has it bad," laughed Melanie. Babs and Cathy looked at me with real concern. Rhonda just snickered.

"Just so long as she doesn't get distracted on the court," Rhonda said. "You better play well even with him watching you," she added with a sly grin, "or we'll have to tell him a few truths about you, Margie Smith."

The butterflies were with me again as I dressed in the pink and white uniform of the Doves. I went out on the floor, seeing no one but Lance with a megaphone in his hands. I hated the fact that I had to wear a sports bra. It made me look flat-chested. I wanted to wear the special one I had worn on every date since with Lance but Cathy wouldn't let me. The gym was nearly full as Lance nodded and smiled at me.

We girls lined up and we saw just how big, how long-armed, was the girl from Africa on LaSalle-Brentwood's team, Satiembe. She decked Rhonda as if she was swatting a fly

and must have blocked eight shots in the first ten minutes of play. We were down by fifteen with just two points on the scoreboard when Coach took a time-out and sent in Melanie and me.

The football guys were so different from us girl cheerleaders. They went up and down the aisles doing rhythmic chanting; there wasn't much noise at all except for them when I entered the game. There were gasps when Satiembe barely had to jump as she dunked the ball over Rhonda. We were now down seventeen!

I brought the ball up over the halfway line; the big girl in front of me moved back as I feinted to drive. I had a good look at the basket and so I dropped the trey. The girl who was marking me glared at me, trying to intimidate me as her teammate fired the ball over the back line at her. I popped up out of my low stance and made the steal. The basket was wide open as I laid it in, getting hammered by a girl as big and strong as Rhonda in the process. I took the foul shot and we were six points closer.

I forgot about who I was then. The ball was moving and I was in my element. I knew what I was, a basketball player so I just played basketball. I did what I did in intramurals but here there were real referees and they called the charges as I took them under our basket.

I whipped the ball down the court quickly, making Satiembe run a lot. Several times, I caught Rhonda going backdoor. The bounce pass eluded the big girl time after time. The girls learned to kick it back to me and I sank three-pointer after three-pointer. We were tied at the half and won easily in the end; the big girl was hardly able to move as we just ran her off her feet. Rhonda had thirty-six points and I had twenty-eight. Babs had eighteen and we topped one hundred points. We deserved to be applauded wildly off the court, as we were. Well, not wildly perhaps, but we did get a lot of cheers.

I caught the look on my boy friend's face as he stared at me. Then Lance grinned and shook his head, no doubt remembering what he had said to me when he thought that I wasn't much of a player. I wasn't able to talk to him after the game as the guys had to leave to meet their curfew for their big game on Saturday. I would have loved to celebrate with Lance's arms about me, his mouth on mine.

I was very happy, though. It might not have been the game I had dreamed about but it was basketball and it was in front of a big crowd. There must have been seven or eight thousand. We were unbeaten and in twentieth place, as LaSalle-Brentwood fell from fifteenth to two places behind us.

I hardly recognized the cheerleaders for the Saturday game on Halloween. Mae West was there, and Britney, Paris Hilton with her little, stuffed dog, and Melanie was an incredible Beyonce. Two of the other black girls were equally impressive as the other members of Destiny's Child. Rhonda was imposing as Xena with Lucy as her friend, Gabrielle, while Babs seemed to have grown extra lips to be Lara Croft, Tomb Raider. Janine was a credible J-Lo while Peggy was Madonna. And I was Marilyn Monroe, a nervous, highly excited Marilyn, wanting to be recognized and afraid that no one would get the joke.

My hair was heavily styled and gelled, even cut in places, but it was my own hair. My curves were not my own. The white dress I wore and matching high heels were identical to the ones worn by Marilyn in *The Seven Year Itch*. Cathy, as Catwoman, had a tank of

compressed air that she kept letting loose at me so that when I least expected it, my dress would fly up. I had to grab at it frantically just as Marilyn had to in the movie and not let everyone see my white lace panties. I think it was the hit of the day's performance; every time my dress went flying, the crowd roared and roared.

I wore pantyhose as well but it was so thin that it didn't look like I was wearing any at all. My makeup was done by a man, the owner of Trends, who came in to do all of us cheerleaders. He came into my room as I was coming out of the shower with a towel about me. I shrieked and Barry looked annoyed.

"I'm only here to make you up," he said as I retreated in a panic. "You're Marilyn Monroe, aren't you? Just put on a pair of panties and I'll start on your hair."

Luckily, Babs came in then and drove Barry out for a little while. Then I had to go down to the common room in a bra and panties and sit there while Barry and his assistant, a laughing blue-haired woman, made us all look like the famous characters we were pretending to be. I had styled, shorter hair with a wave secured almost over one eye. I had red, red lips, thick eyeliner on my eyes and a beauty spot. I was sprayed from head to toe in Chanel Number Five. Then Cathy took me back into my room to dress in the backless white dress as if I was Marilyn.

I had artificial breasts taped to my chest; the dress affixed to my skin, so deep was the neckline of the halter top. It might look like I had impressive breasts but I didn't really. Barry did wonders with makeup to conceal any places where the latex of my bouncy breasts might show. I had thought I would look awful but I didn't. My throat was tight as I swayed in my mirror at the woman I saw there.

It was such a rush to look at myself. I could have been Marilyn Monroe! I loved the way I appeared. Babs made me try to talk like her as well and that made the other girls shriek in laughter.

"You girls should come into town tonight to the Laguna," Barry from Trends enthused, watching us giggling and prancing around the common room. "You would win cash prizes for sure."

"We're students," Cathy told him, putting the Catwoman mask over her eyes. "We can't afford hundred dollar tickets for a dance. Not when we get into our own for free."

"Nevertheless," said Barry. "You girls should come. You'd be the hit of the night, especially Marilyn there."

"Blondes do have more fun, don't they?" said Cathy letting the air go under my skirt. I jumped a foot in the air, trying to push my dress down.

"Wh-what was that?" I gasped and everyone laughed.

"Marilyn!" the girls all screamed, pointing at me. "Do it again, Catwoman!"

Cathy did. She did it as we walked up to the stadium and then again in front of the huge crowd. Lance ran onto the field with the bulk of the team, high-fiving us all. My dress billowed up on cue as he touched my hand and grinned at me.

"Later," Lance said. His eyes got large as he looked down at my apparently bare legs, then he was gone.

The team played as if it was inspired. In the papers, they said that the cheerleaders had inspired them so we had done our job well. The Panthers were ten point underdogs but Lance played an almost perfect game and our team won. I was jumping up and down with excitement just like everyone else on the field save for the Cardinals, the crestfallen opposition.

There was a buffet table set up in the ballroom but the much larger gym was where the dancing was taking place. The tables were swept back so that several thousand could fit into the place; the only requirements for admission were our university IDs and our costumes. A rock band was playing as we pranced excitedly into the hall. Lucy, Cathy and Babs lead the way. I found myself dancing with all kinds of guys, smiling away as I had become accustomed to doing on the football field.

The football team arrived and attacked the buffet tables, all except a tall Captain Jack Sparrow who had the worst English accent I have ever heard. He asked me to dance with him.

"Oh, mister," I cooed, batting my eyelashes at him. "Are you really an Englishman? I love Englishmen."

Bad choice of words. Lance's eyes lit up as I said it. He put his hands securely about my waist and hugged me to him. I loved being in his arms.

"Don't spoil my makeup," I told him. I wanted him to kiss me but I knew I would be smeared if he did.

"I won't," Lance said. "But you have to put your cheek on mine, Marilyn, and let me drink in my favorite perfume."

At that point, my dress flew up in the air again, a strand of my hair came loose and I wobbled on my strappy white high heels. I held onto my boy friend for support.

Lance jived me to the faster numbers, spinning me and making my dress swirl around me. I was ecstatic at the admiration I saw in his eyes as he looked at me. I loved the feel of his hands on my thin waist but mostly I loved how my swirling dress made me feel. I loved feeling womanly and having girlish legs and pretty panties to show off to those watching me.

Even if I hadn't been wearing panties, I wouldn't have been given away as not being a woman. I had my prosthesis on and I knew I looked exactly like a woman. I was scented like one and I felt like one in Lance's arms. I couldn't resist. I didn't care that my makeup was mussed. I kissed him and put my arms about his neck. He took hold of me tightly and I forgot where I was as we kissed and kissed.

Catwoman got me again. Light bulbs went off as I was photographed with Lance's arms tightly about me. The one of he and I kissing made the student's newspaper. Was I ever razzed about that. Lance was as well; he must have suffered a lot more than me because of what happened later that night.

IX. LATER THAT NIGHT

It was one o'clock before the dance ended. Lance walked me back to my dorm, his coat about me. I was looking forward to being kissed in the alcove but, as we came round towards the doorway of Hubbard, the couple sauntering ahead of us suddenly went scampering off across the grass behind the building.

The girl turned, a girl from a different floor than mine. She waved at us to follow her. "Is something wrong?" muttered Lance. His arm was about me, his pirate jacket was over my shoulders.

I didn't know. Reluctantly, I let Lance take me away from 'our' alcove and behind Hubbard. The girl who had waved at me turned with a big smile on her face, then she took off the high princess hat she had been wearing.

"The back way is open," she whispered.

"The security camera," I whispered back. She laughed and pointed up at the one covering the entrance. It had been spray painted black. She pointed at the building opposite and its cameras were also done.

"Quick," said the Sleeping Beauty princess. "The security will be here in seconds!"

I was going to refuse but Lance picked me up and carried me into the back Hubbard hallway just as a vehicle drove up on the grass. Its lights were shining on the doorway and the blackened cameras. There were other couples in the building already, giggling and hiding as well. We all got down and hid and listened to the men swearing outside.

"Stay here!" I heard someone yell. "I'll get Mary to come and check the rooms. I bet three or four guys got in."

Someone said something then and all the guys started laughing. "I don't care if they all get laid," shouted the same loud voice. "We've got to be sure that no one gets raped. That's your job tonight, Matt, and don't forget it!"

"I'd better go," whispered Lance. I snuggled against him. Girlish feelings rose inside me as he kissed me lightly in front of everyone.

"You can't go, man," a cowboy said, getting down low and heading deeper into the residence. "They've got a guy out there. Walk out now and they'll arrest you, no matter who you are. Come on. This way."

Lance put his arm about me. We followed the cowboy, my heels clicking on the passageway. "Take your heels off!" hissed the harem girl he was with.

There was a back staircase I knew nothing about. Lance held my hand. The girls began to giggle and hurry the boys up the stairs.

"Don't put him in the shower or closet," the harem girl said to me as we went past a door with a big '2' on it. "Get him under your bed. Mary can't get down to look all the way back there. Throw a suitcase in front of him and she won't find him for sure."

"You girls have done this before," said Lance with a grin, his hand tightening on mine.

I think the harem girl recognized him then. Her mouth fell open, she looked at me and squinted. I think she recognized me as well. "I think there were fifty couples waiting for the chance to get in," she said, smiling at us. "We're just five more," she said. "Mind how you go and, remember, enjoy yourselves!"

"We will," said Lance, cautiously opening the fifth floor door. A red Fire Exit sign gleamed over my head as I crept nervously into the hallway. Around a corner and there I was, just three doors down from my room. I fumbled nervously for my keys. In the distant common room, we could hear girls laughing and giggling over something. Lance took the key from my trembling hand, opened the door and pulled me into my own room.

Then Lance put the lock on the door, went over to the windows and closed my curtains before he turned on the little light beside my bed. He grinned at the nightcase on my bed and looked about the room Cathy and Babs had decorated for me.

"This room suits you," Lance said. "It's as feminine and pretty as you are."

"L-Lance," I murmured, hysteria about to burst forth from me. "You, you have to go!"

"And have you miss me clambering under the bed at the knock on the door?" he asked, giving me another wry smile. He lay down on my bed and beckoned me over.

I couldn't move. I wanted to. I wanted to fall into Lance's arms. I had dreamed of being in bed with him, having him beside me, kissing me, lying with me. Here he was, on my bed, his face tense, as he patted the covers beside him.

"Much better than that old alcove," Lance whispered to me. "Shall we turn out the light and open the curtains?"

"N-No!" I gasped. My skirt swayed about me, sending thrills up and down me as I caught sight of myself. It wasn't Morgan in the mirror at all, not with such red lips and such a shapely figure. It was Marilyn, her platinum colored hair was dishevelled but she was still very attractive for all that.

"Margie, Margie," said Lance then. "I am a gentleman, really I am. You can set limits on me and I will follow them to the letter. I haven't said what you don't want to hear and I won't do what you don't want me to do. But I really want to kiss you before I disappear under your bed. If they catch me, I want at least the comfort of having kissed you once or twice."

"Just kissing," I said. Every nerve in my body was on fire.

"Just kissing," my boy friend agreed so I lay down on the bed with him. Lance put his arms about me and drew me against him. We kissed and kissed and it was as wonderful as I had dreamed it would be. His hand stroking my hip sent waves of delight through me. He caressed my legs with my dress. I squirmed as I lay under him and let him kiss my throat and my chest, even between my phony bosoms which he seemed to enjoy very much.

A quick tap on the door and I froze into stillness.

"You'll have to answer it," Lance whispered to me. "They have pass keys."

I got up unsteadily, unlocked the door and opened it a crack. "Do you have Lance in there?" whispered Cathy, her face clear of Catwoman's makeup. "Security is going door to door."

Over Cathy's shoulder, I saw the female guard from the main door. She looked very angry. She saw what Cathy was doing and marched over. She pushed my door open and looked at my bed; the top was messy where Lance and I had been lying.

The woman, Mary I guess, marched into my room as if she owned the place. Cathy shook her head as Mary checked my closet and behind my dresses, then the bathroom and the shower. Cathy handed me my makeup remover and I nervously began to use it.

"Someone thinks that I can't see under beds," said Mary, dropping onto the floor as I looked on in horror. She pulled out the suitcase Babs had stored there and shone her light under my bed. She got up very slowly and looked hard at me. I wiped my face with trembling hands.

"I can have it back now?" Cathy asked, putting the lid back on the makeup remover. "Babs needs it as well."

"Okay," I said. Mary didn't say anything as she left my room and began banging on Babs' room. Cathy stopped in the hallway to look at me and smile.

"First time," Cathy whispered to me, "that I've ever seen you with your curtains drawn. Sleep tight, Margie. Don't do anything that I wouldn't do. And I do everything!"

I stepped back and locked my door again. I tiptoed over to the window. There, wedged on the ledge, was Lance. He unwound most athletically.

"Now, where were we?" Lance asked, turning off the light. I squeaked as he put his arms about me and put me back on the bed. He climbed on top of me; I was still in my Marilyn dress and feminine underclothes and pantyhose. "You look even better without the makeup," he said to me, kissing my almost bare lips to prove it.

It was ecstasy for me to kiss and writhe under him. I ran my hands over his hard, masculine body. Serious shivers went through me at what I was doing to another man, how I was tantalizing and arousing him.

"Just kissing," I reminded him as his hands touched my latex breasts.

"Just kissing," Lance murmured. "You just didn't say where."

I had to giggle as he caressed my phony breasts. "These aren't real," I told him as his hand split the adhesive between the dress and the falsies. "I told you I was flat-chested."

"My girl friend," Lance muttered. He ran his hand over one of the breast taped to me. He squeezed the nipple and I didn't feel a thing. What I did feel as he lay more on me was something very hard urgently pressing into my groin. He parted my legs with his, then he was right over me. My dress was pushed up and about my hips.

"Don't!" I babbled at Lance. "Don't or I'll scream and Mary will come running!"

Lance stopped my threats with the simple expedient of kissing me. He pushed my legs up against his hips, I struggled beneath him, feeling his manhood hard against me. He put his hand on the vagina prosthesis behind my panties and stroked the front of it, the fake little bush and the opening that should have led inside me.

"No, Lance!" I hissed, wondering what Mary would say if she came running into my room and found me under Lance.

"I won't get you pregnant, Margie," Lance said then. "But Margie, I can't do it. I can't keep my word. You have to release me. You do. You saw how in all those films at the start of the year, didn't you?"

All I could think of was the horrible film of the ways a woman could please a man without letting him in her vagina. "Please, please, darling," Lance whispered. "Can't you see what touching you has done to me?" He put my hand on his erection then, pulling his zipper down. I touched him and he wasn't wearing underpants.

I had known that it would come to this. "All right," I said unsteadily, lifting up my dress and pulling down my panties. I reached over and turned out the light.

"What?" Lance began, easing from me as with trembling fingers, I took my panties from myself, then took down my pantyhose. The vagina prosthesis was still in place and I rolled over on my fake front.

I got up on my knees as Lance got partly out of his clothes. He was stroking my fake breasts as he spurted a little wetness on my rear. Then I had to bury my head in the pillow to keep from screaming as Lance penetrated me. Oh, it was so difficult to relax and let him in as the instructional film had said to do. He touched the strings that ran about me; I told him to leave my tampon holder alone. He did. He pressed into me and began to fondle me about my breasts and slipped my halter neck from me.

I rocked for him as the video had said to do to achieve the greatest pleasure. Lance filled me, then rolled me so that I lay on top of him. My head was against him and he kissed me. The second time, with his hands fondling me and Lance kissing my neck and my face, was much better. I felt so womanly.

"I wasn't thinking of this," my boyfriend told me, hugging my dress to me. "I was thinking of your hands pleasuring me, Margie. This is so much better."

I was appalled at how I had misinterpreted what he had said. I was such an idiot. It had gone all right, though, hadn't it? I thought. It really hadn't been so bad. Being intimate with Lance had been wonderful. Then his hand fell on my vagina, his fingers stroking me. I pulled his hand away but the damage had been done.

"That, that's not real," Lance said shakily, reaching over and turning on the light. "What I felt, that, that's plastic!"

"Y-yes," I told him and burst into tears. I felt him pull out of me and turn me over to look at what he should never have been looking at.

"You have no breasts," Lance said unsteadily. "And you just took me in your fanny. You're wearing plastic breasts and a plastic pussy. What the heck are you, Margie? Are you a man?"

"I don't want to be man," I cried, pulling my dress down to cover myself. Lance tore it from me. I saw the horror-struck expression on his face. The straw house I had built came tumbling down about my overheated, female-dressed body.

"That means you are one," said Lance thickly. "How, how, did you ever get in here? They have tests!"

"And I passed them," I told him, shivering and pulling a bed sheet up about myself. I hadn't really, of course. Poor Lance! What a way to find out that the girl he desired so much wasn't a girl at all! He was staring at me as if I was the world's greatest mass murderer. I knew he was going to hit me. I could see the fury building up inside him. I wanted to take his hand and caress it but I didn't dare. He had said that he loved me. How his world must have been shattered after what we had done together.

I thought of Babs and Rhonda and Cathy and Coach Smith. Cathy had known that I had Lance in the room with me. She had encouraged me, hadn't she, to go ahead and have him in my bed? She could have avoided all of this by exposing Lance in my room. She should have known that I would never deprive Lance of anything.

"You passed the sex test," said Lance, his voice flat and grim. "The test that says whether you are a man and a woman. They take your blood for that. They said you were a woman after that?"

"I had the mouth swab and urine tests and they said that as well," I told him. I suspected that my samples had all been swapped somewhere along the line.

"You have a penis behind the plastic?" Lance asked me then.

I nodded. I had to. It was true. I did have a penis. "It looks like a penis," I said hoarsely.

"So, they are letting you play as a girl this year?" asked Lance.

"Yes," I cried.

We sat there for a while; he just looked at me. I cried for a very long time.

"I can't think," Lance said.

"I should have told you long ago," I said miserably. "Then this wouldn't have happened and you would never have said such things to me."

"No," Lance agreed and that sort of broke my heart.

"You want to get out of here?" I asked him. I was willing to help him to get away from me, to stop him looking at me the way that he was.

"Yes," Lance said. "But I can't, can I? Not with all the guards on the doors and all the guys getting arrested. Couldn't you hear that? I'll be arrested. Even if they just see me on one of the cameras, I'm in deep trouble with my coaches."

"But you can't stay here," I said, shuddering. Lance stood and took off his pirate shirt; his whole naked, manly body was exposed to me.

"I'll sleep on the floor," he said. "You can get into your nightie. Have you always been called Margie?"

I shook my blonde Marilyn hair. "I used to be Morgan," I said, "until, until ..."

"That's okay," said Lance hurriedly. "I don't need the details."

I got my nightcase and went into my bathroom. I looked awful. There were traces of makeup around my eyes and all over my face. I washed carefully and I douched my derriere. I had never thought I would ever use such a thing on me. How right Cathy had been. I had needed it after all.

I took off the plastic breasts, the vagina prosthesis and undid the partial tuck Babs had made me use. It felt much better not to be constricted by anything but panties. I put on my nightie, tied my hair back and put lotion on my face, hands and shoulders.

I got back to the bed and flicked on the light. Lance was fast asleep against the wall. I could take a sheet and lie on the floor. I shivered and got another pillow. I put it between us and lay on my bed, under the sheets. It was tight and uncomfortable with Lance beside me. I turned out the light, wondering what he would do about all the things he had found out about me the next day.

Well, whatever Lance decided, he could never take away the thrilling feeling he had given me as he kissed me. I would always remember that, even when I was old and a grandfather. I would remember the games I had played and the training. I would miss being a girl and being treated as a girl. Halloween had been fantastic until we got to the end. But I would always remember it. I would never forget how womanly I felt as my white dress blew up about me and my shapely legs were exposed along with my pretty panties.

I went to sleep, rocking, dreams of me as a woman and Lance kissing me and telling me how he loved me were foremost in my mind.

X. GETTING IN DEEPER

I was having such a wonderful dream. Lance was holding me and kissing me and I was snuggled into him. I was smiling and happy as he whispered that he loved me and I was his woman always.

The hammering on my door woke me. I turned to tell Lance to hide and there was just a pillow at my back. I got up, my nightie cascaded around my legs, reminding me to put on panties before I opened the door. Groggily, I looked in the bathroom as the pounding continued. I looked under the bed and in my closet, then I unlocked the door. The handle twisted and Cathy and Babs burst in.

They looked everywhere in my room, opening the curtains. Daylight flooded in, blinding me. "Where is he?" asked Cathy, getting down and looking under my bed.

"Where is who?" I asked, staring at my reflection. My hair was ultra blond and messy. I still had my hoop earrings in my ears and there was definitely makeup on my eyes and lips. The thin nightie didn't conceal how flat-chested I was.

I was no one's sex goddess now, I thought miserably. The tin foil covering the football player made the trophy I had won earlier gleam in the lights of the dance floor. I wondered what had happened to it.

"Where's Lance, the guy you had in here with you last night?" asked Cathy petulantly. "The guy you were making love to all night."

"I wasn't," I said. Babs took hold of my arm but not in a nice way.

"You didn't, did you?" Babs asked me. "You didn't surrender your virginity to Lance Irvine, did you?"

I blushed again. I shook my short wavy hair. "Don't believe her," said Cathy flatly. "He went out with Vince Raines, Ron and a bunch of other guys this morning at eight o'clock, before the dayshift came on. There must have been twenty guys going out and scattering like rats. Lance wouldn't have been with anyone else but her."

"I should have stuck to you like glue at the dance," said Babs angrily.

"You'd have been no good," said Cathy. "You were far too drunk and draped all over that Arizona kid. What was his name, Bobby?"

"Bobby Ross," groaned Babs. "Oh geez, was he the one who dumped me in the entrance at whatever time it was this morning?"

"Must have been," said Cathy. "Get dressed and throw that nightie in the wash basket," she said to me. I looked down and there was evidence that I must have had a wet dream overnight. I almost ran into the shower, taking off my nightie as quickly as I could.

"There, I told you," Cathy said and Babs sighed.

Cathy brushed my hair into a fringe that she curled with her heated curling iron. The back of my hair was tied into two little girl pigtails at the sides of my head. I had studs in my ears and I wore my inflatable bra and a tight, red top that would definitely make boys stare at me.

I lined my eyes and put on lipstick, touching my face lightly with powder. Cathy put perfume on me and checked to be sure that I was wearing the vagina prosthesis in my panties. "Nice," she said. I put on the tight skirt that only came to the top of my knees. I slipped my pantyhosed feet into my new grey and black heels.

I looked so small and girlish as I walked beside Cathy out of Hubbard. She made sure that both of us checked our look and our makeup before going out.

"It's nice to have no practice today," said Cathy, grinning at the tire tracks of a car that had gone up the grass on the side of the building. "Is that where you and Lance went in?" she asked me. I nodded, blushing.

"I'll show you a safer place," said Cathy. "One that's a lot more private. Ron will show Lance if he's coming back. He is coming back to have you again, isn't he?"

"I don't know," I said. I was amazed that my having made love to another man didn't seem to be fazing Cathy at all.

We had brunch in the Union. Half the team joined us; the talk was about the shenanigans of the day before and who had been busted. "I've got a call to go to the Dean's office," said a shaky, crestfallen Melanie.

"She'll just shout at you and tell you how disappointed she is in you as a woman," said Lucy, with an impish grin. "Somehow, you'll be sabotaging the whole feminist movement," she went on. "Barker is like that."

"Barker?" I asked. I thought of the woman who lectured me and gave me so many papers about women's liberation to read.

"Yeah," said Janine sourly. "Dean of Women. I bet that woman doesn't even know what an orgasm is. How come they didn't find Lance in your room, Margie? I saw Mary going in there and getting down on the floor. Where did you hide him?"

"Maybe he wasn't there," I said and all the girls laughed at that.

Lucy said, "Everyone noticed when you cut out and when you went in the back way ahead of the campus cops. But where did you hide him?"

"Behind the curtains," said Cathy as several other girls joined in. "He sat on the ledge and the curtains hid him. Mary didn't think to look. Now, don't go blabbing that to the other floors. Someone tipped her off to the under-the-bed trick and she copped twelve guys that way."

"What do we get if they catch us a second time?" asked Melanie.

"Community service," said Lucy with a laugh. "You watch and see who's trimming bushes and digging out flower beds in the next few weeks. Some of the hunkiest boys in school will be doing that, you watch."

I shuddered. I would hate that. I had seen Lucy and some other girls in the first week of term, straightening up the pathways and flower beds and now I knew why. I had seen boys going by, teasing the girls. It would be awful if I was made to do that. Everyone would look at me and know what kind of girl I was.

I didn't see Lance in the Library or in the student cafeteria that day although most on his team were around, accepting congratulations on their win.

I didn't see him at all for the next three days, nor did I hear anything about him and I couldn't ask. That would have given away my interest in him and I couldn't do that. He had left me. I knew that for sure and I couldn't blame him. I would have liked to tell him again how sorry I was for what I had led him to do.

I should have told him. I should never have led him on, never have given way to him, or I should have found out what would have satisfied him. I shuddered as I thought of the crudity of a hand job or, even worse, a blow job. I might shudder but I knew that if Lance did ever hold me again and say that was what he wanted, I would do it for him.

Coach Smith called me into her office on Wednesday, before our next game. I was dressed in my short skirt, with my hair in pigtails again, thanks to Cathy's expertise.

"You look very pretty," said Coach Smith with a smile. "You seem to be fitting very well into your role here at Paloma State, wouldn't you say, Miss Smith?"

"I, I think so," I said nervously.

"You look like a girl," said the coach with a friendly smile. "You sound like a girl and definitely," she took my hand and sniffed the Chanel on my wrist, "you smell like a girl. Now, I hear that you really are a girl."

"No," I squirmed on the chair. "I, I know what I am."

"Lance Irvine doesn't," said Coach Smith flatly. I felt a cold wave rush over me. "I've just had Babs and Cathy in here. How could you have been so careless, Miss Smith?" she went on. Her face lost its friendliness. "I couldn't believe it when Babs and Cathy told me that you have a serious boy friend. There is nothing in Morgan Miller's record that suggests that he is gay."

"He's not," I said wretchedly. "I'm not. It's just." I broke off. How could I ever explain the way I felt to Coach Smith?

How could I tell her how Lance made me feel? How could I tell her how much I loved dressing like a girl? I couldn't even find the words to thank her for what she had done to me.

"You have revealed yourself to a man," said Coach Smith angrily. "But you have him convinced that you are a woman. He seems to think that you passed the sex tests last month so you must be a woman. He wanted to know if I knew. He wanted to know how you could seem to have the genitalia of a man and yet be a woman.

"I gave him some pseudo-scientific story about you being a rare genetic mistake that was hidden away by my sister until she died. I told him I had special permission to play you so long as no one ever found out. After this next summer, and your big operation, no one will ever be able to think you're a man.

"Lance was eager to believe that you are really a woman. Not a transsexual, a man trapped in a woman's body,



but a real woman. He asked me why you were wearing that artificial vagina. I told him that the doctors would operate on you only on condition that you were not notorious. If anyone found out about you, I will deny any knowledge and say that you falsified all your records. Even your doctors will not do the surgery that you need to tuck into you what should never have been hanging out."

Coach smiled at me. "I was a little crude," she went on. "But he told me that you and he had, how shall I put it, intimate relations after Halloween. I didn't think that you would betray me like that, Morgan. I have to tell you what I told Lance. I am going to rescind your scholarship. You are not going to play again for Paloma State and I am sending you back to your grandparents. Let them sort it out with you. You won't be getting any money for your operation and you won't be going to any college any time soon."

Her words hit me like a sledgehammer. I looked at her and could barely see Coach Smith through my tears. I uncrossed my legs and tried to speak. But there was nothing I could say. I was done. I wouldn't ever play basketball again but that wasn't what hurt the most. I no longer cared if I ever sank a basket again. I would have to get out of my girls' clothes, my inflated bra, my panties and my lovely shoes and hose. I would have to dye and cut my hair. How awful I would look until my eyebrows grew back.

"You can keep all the clothes and makeup that has been bought for you," said Coach Smith, sinking back in her chair. "I told Lance I would do that much for you before I kicked you out. You can guess what he called me."

"That's very generous of you," I said, wondering how I could ever get my voice back again to the register it should be for a man. In the meantime, I would have to endure being sniggered at for being gay. I didn't know if I could find a job. Perhaps as a waitress or something.

"Your boy friend didn't say I was generous," said Coach Smith. "He called me a bitch. He told me that I was abandoning you when you needed me the most. He said he was going to pay for your operation himself." She smiled at my dumbfounded expression. "The Irvines are very wealthy and important financial contributors to this university.

"He stomped out of here, swearing he was going to find you. He was quitting football and I could go to hell. It took me ten minutes to stop him at the door to the complex and get him to come back. It was quite a spectacle. I'm sure the girls on the team will have heard about it by now.

"I promised Lance that I will not rescind your scholarship and I will not report you to the authorities. He will not quit football and, after the bowl game football season, if he still feels the same way, he is going to move off-campus and set the two of you up in an apartment which I will approve of. If you are still a couple in the summer, I am going to let him pay for your sex change operation. If you come back to play for me again next year, wherever I am, it will be as a real girl."

"I, I'm not having my sex changed!" I stood up and grabbed my purse from Coach Smith's desk.

Coach Smith laughed. "Take that up with your boy friend," she said. "He doesn't think you are changing your sex, just having corrective surgery to look like the sex that you should be. I promised him you could go with him downtown to a hotel to sort things out

after the game. Lance has it bad for you, I can see, as bad as Babs and Cathy tell me you have it for him."

"I can't," I began. I sat and crossed my legs again. My pantyhose rasped, my fake breasts wobbled. "I'm not a woman."

"Sort it out with him," said the coach with a smug grin. "Just keep him happy until the end of football season then you can put him off, Margie. Make love to him and he might change his mind, though I doubt it. I'd advise you to try to enjoy yourself, be Lance's woman."

"At the end of the year, you can leave him. You can cut your hair and become male again. He'll hate that, I'm sure, if you do it in front of him. You'll be able to break up with him easily. Next year, we'll handpick some boys for you for your second year as Maggie, boys who will know all about you. You can decide if you want to let any of them get into bed with you."

"I'm not playing next year!" I said vehemently.

"We'll see," said the coach, waving me away. "Now, go and get your game face on for tonight."

XI. PLAYOFFS

Lance's parents came to Atlanta for the finals and cheered the Doves on to the championship. It was the most memorable school year ever in Paloma State sports' history. Lance was the star of the men's team's Bowl win and I played my part in the women's team's win, giving Rhonda the ball whenever I could; she scored fifty-two points. She hugged and hugged me after the game and gave me all the credit as she got the medal around her neck.

Did I feel that I was a cheat for being a man on a woman's team? Sometimes I thought so. I cried to Lance about it; he kissed me tenderly and began to laugh at me. "Darling,

darling, darling," he told me. "I've seen you play basketball and you know what? You play like a girl. Didn't you know that? You play delicately, not at all like the rough and tumble you see in a men's game. That's what you are, Margie. You are a girl. There's no cheating going on in you playing with other girls."

I left the dressing room; my hair was in a blonde ponytail as that was quick to do. Lance threw his arms about me as I came dancing out to meet him. I held up my face. He kissed and kissed me. I pressed my body into him, the breasts he had paid for over the Christmas break bounced against him. I wasn't wearing a bra, something he loved very much.

Lance was a breast man after all. He was also a leg man, a derriere man, a kissyface man and every other kind of man. I was no kind of man at all. He didn't want to wait until I got my operation to make love to me and he didn't. I was far too much of a girl to do anything but what he wanted me to do for him, the man I was in love with.

Lance had given me a huge diamond ring. It had taken me a while to figure out that he meant it as an engagement ring. I shuddered when he told me that and I sat up in the bed we shared in our apartment in town. He stroked my bare breasts and what could I do but squiggle under him, with my legs over his back and let him penetrate me fully and love me as if I was his compliant woman, which I most definitely was.

Lance knew I was concerned about the operation and told me not to worry about it. He loved me as I was; we could get married and carry on as we were. Later, when I was ready, I could have the complete operation. It would be fun. It would be like us getting married again. I could do it after we adopted our first child.

It was the first I had heard of that idea. Lance had been talking to my aunt, Terry Smith, and was arranging my life for me as a woman. Lying in bed with him, I would started to object weakly. He would caress my legs or my breasts and I would give in to him as I always did.

Lance had arranged for me to marry him at his house in the summer, then we were going on a long honeymoon cruise. I might not get back to play basketball the following season, he said.

Not that I wanted to. Coach Smith was moving to the largest school in the East to coach. Babs was graduating and going with Terry Smith as her assistant. Rhonda was drafted to play pro and Cathy was going to Europe to play right after the last game of the season.

"I don't care about you changing," Lance said to me after a wonderful dinner with his proud and affectionate parents. They seemed to like me. Lance hadn't said a word to them about my unusual situation. "If I want a little frontal penetration," he said, putting his hands on my bare breasts and stroking me until my nipples hardened, "I can always come in through that pocket thing you have."

We spent a lot of nights like that. He loved it that my 'clitoris' could get hard and ejaculate. The hormones I was taking was going to end that, I heard from the doctor Terry Smith had me see. Everyone presumed that I wanted to be a woman and have a real vagina.

As I clung to my future husband, his kisses reducing me to jelly, I slipped off my panties in our apartment bed. He got on top, riding and riding me, his manhood against mine in the sheath of the vagina I wore. It wasn't like the real thing, but once Lance kissed me, I didn't care. He could do what he wanted to me. I was his woman.

"I said I would never say it to you," Lance whispered, "but I am going back on my word," he murmured, out of breath from his exertions to make me feel how much he loved me. "I love you, Margie. I love you. I love you. I love you."

My feminized body arched and thrilled to his words. "Oh, Lance," I murmured. I put my legs about his waist to let him penetrate me fully as if I was a woman. "I love you, too."

Those words set him off. He couldn't kiss me enough, stroke me enough, caress my feminized parts enough.

"Mrs. Lance Irvine," he whispered in my jewelled ears. He was always buying me wonderful, feminine gifts. "That's what you'll be in two weeks."

"Mrs. Irvine," I breathed, loving the sound of it. He knew what that would do to me. He knew that I would react to every suggestion he made. He knew that I would beg him to love me harder and harder. He loved me going into convulsions and having spasms under his lovemaking. He knew that I was different from him. He knew that I was really a woman.

I would have the operation, yes I would, no matter how much it hurt. I would be Lance's woman, Lance's wife. I would let him know that I was a woman, ready to have him as a woman should for the rest of my life

*****end*****