



*Reluctant Press*

# Melissa Anne's Stories

Melissa Anne Rogan



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS

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**A 'YOUNG ADULT' NOVEL**

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## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

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# MELISSA ANNE'S STORIES

## A MODERN FAIRY TALE?

By **Melissa Anne Rogan**

In a modern, rational world, where science rules, there is no place for magic. After all, magic is only the way that the superstitious explain what they do not understand. Isn't it? Or is it? What scientists cannot comprehend is that belief is all. Magic exists, because people *believe* it exists. True, our modern way has forced that belief into more isolated parts of the world. But still the power is there, waiting...

People believe that people make stories. And this is true. But where there is magic, a story can take on a life of its own, independent of the people who made it. And if the tale and the power are strong enough, then the story repeats and repeats, imposing control on the environment, and perhaps even the people involved. Is this the reason for some of the weird and wonderful events that science has never come near to explaining? Who knows?

### ***Once upon a time.....***

Paul and David Richie ran laughing through the forest, dodging the trees in an ebullient game of tag. Paul was twelve; his brother, David, almost fifteen. In all of their short lives, they had never experienced country like this. Born and bred in the suburbs of London, they were city folk, through and through. In the city they had been born, in the city they had grown up. Their knowledge of the countryside was slim.

Their father, George Richie, was a very important business man and, by most standards, extremely wealthy. Business was his first love, his family coming in a poor second. So obsessed was he with business that, unlike many other wealthy men, he did

not buy a big country estate, preferring instead to live in a mansion in the city, where he could be near his business. However, while he had shown little outward affection for his family, he actually cared deeply, and they had wanted for nothing. David and Paul, were spoiled terribly. Brought up by a series of nannies and educated by a series of governesses, they had had little contact with other children. While their educational development was above average, their social development was poor. Used as they were to ordering servants about, their petulant response to not getting their own way showed that they were more childish than they should be for their age. Their mother had become increasingly concerned, though her husband was rarely there to support her. Unfortunately, like most children their age, they were totally unresponsive to the wishes of their loving and caring, but weak, mother. The more she gave in to them, the worse they got. What they needed was some good, old-fashioned discipline. In their favor, they were devoted to each other. After all, each was the only playmate the other had ever known.

It was only with the untimely death of a close colleague that Mr. Richie realized how important family was. He too had been a workaholic who neglected his family. He too had spoiled and uncontrollable children. He determined that he would change his life and participate more in the upbringing of his children. To that end he brought them with him to Freiburg, in southern Germany, where he was involved in negotiations for a very important contract. This contract with the German government, would, if obtained, mean the launch of his business into the multinational league. Millions of dollars were at stake. If he won this, he could sell his company for a fortune and retire to some country paradise where he could be with his family and watch his children grow. Maybe have some children? A little daughter would be nice. When he discussed this with his wife, she was overjoyed.

To win the contract, he must be available for weeks, so commuting from England to Germany was not possible. Besides the many business meetings, there was the unofficial agenda, the rounds of parties and other social events. The ability to entertain ministers in the style to which they were accustomed was paramount. He had rented a small, remote schloss in the Black Forest for the summer. To him, it was a base from which to launch his campaign with almost military precision. To the boys, this was the holiday of a lifetime. The small castle was not only luxurious and fully staffed, but the whole air of the place was like something straight from the Brothers Grimm, with its towers and spires, stony battlements and drafty banquet halls. It even had a moat and a dungeon. To young boys, it was an explorer's paradise. Within a matter of days, they had explored every nook and cranny of the castle and its immediate surroundings. Next, they turned their attentions to the forest.

The forest itself gave off at once an air of brooding depth and fairy-like surrealism, as if aware of all that happened within its borders. The Black Forest was the land of legends and faeries. This was the playground to which the boys had been brought and they threw themselves into the exploration of their new neighborhood with an energy and enthusiasm sustainable only by children. Nothing in their life up to this point had prepared them for this and they were both awestruck and fascinated.

“Are you sure you know where we are going?” asked Paul as they ran down another path taking them deeper into the forest.

“Of course I do. Trust me,” replied David with the confidence of the young and unwary. He was less confident three hours later when they turned onto yet another trail which he didn’t recognize. The whole tone of the forest had changed. Where before it was fairy-like, now it was dark and shadowy, almost malevolent. It seemed as if it were alive, as if it were watching them, and waiting, waiting.

Paul was starting to whine. “I’m tired. I’m hungry. David, are we lost? I want to go home. David...David...” David tried his best to reassure his kid brother, but he was starting to feel desperate and irritated and, if the truth be known, just a little scared himself. Despite his best efforts, his brother could sense that something was not quite right. “Don’t worry, Pauly, we should hit the main road soon, then we’ll be back at the castle in just a few minutes.” The use of Paul’s child name was meant to reassure. The reassurance sounded as hollow to him as it did to Paul.

Onward they trudged, ever deeper into the forest, feeling ever more concerned. David was most unhappy at the thought of spending a night under the trees. Did Germany still have wild wolves or bears? What about Rabies? Rabies had been eradicated from Great Britain decades ago, but the news programs on television still had reports from the continent of horrible, painful deaths. He tried to remember his European geography lessons. Until now he had never shown the slightest interest in the subject. He was more interested in motorbikes. David looked at his watch. It was after six and sunset was not that far away. Suddenly, through the trees, he saw a flash of light. As hope built up, he increased his pace. “Come on Pauly,” he yelled, “I think there’s a house or something through here, perhaps we can use the phone.”

The view they found when they reached the clearing, was, to say the least, unexpected. “I don’t believe it!” said David. Paul just looked, speechless, from the shelter of the trees at the edge of the clearing. In the middle was a little cottage, but not just *any* little cottage. It appeared to be made entirely of sweets and candy, cake and bread. The walls were of multicolored sugar candy, the roof of plaited loaves of apparently fresh bread, the door and window shutters of some kind of biscuit, the sills of cake. This was a fairy tale indeed. They watched, both amazed, and wary. The place was obviously inhabited; there was a thin plume of smoke coming from the chimney. But there was no sign of movement.

After ten minutes, David plucked up his courage. “Come on, Pauly,” he said, eventually. “It’s getting late, lets just knock on the door and ask for help.” Paul made no attempt to move. He just stared, and stared. In exasperation, David grabbed his arm and yanked him, protesting, towards the cottage. “Please, stop,” cried Paul. “David, I’m scared. Let’s go somewhere else.” “Don’t be stupid,” replied David. “There is nowhere else and it’s getting late. Besides, what’s to be scared of?” “The witch.” “What witch?” “The witch who lives here. It must be a witch’s house.” “There’s no such thing as witches,” laughed David, “This is reality, not some story from your books of fairy tales You’re getting too old for them anyway.” But still...he felt some lingering doubts as he surveyed the scene before him. It couldn’t be possible; could it?

They stopped at the cottage and carefully looked around, through the windows and knocked on the door. No reply. “If there’s no such thing as witches, then how come the cottage is edible? Just like the witches house in Hansel and Gretel?” asked Paul,

reaching up and breaking off a piece. "Don't do that," snapped David. "It must be some publicity gimmick. Probably for the tourists."

"Well, I'm a tourist, and I'm hungry," replied Paul around a mouthful of windowsill, using the unerring logic that only children have. David looked around for a few more minutes before agreeing. "Well, you do have a point," he laughed, "and it is pretty good cake." Both boys were silent as they stuffed their faces. It had, after all, been several hours since they had last eaten.

David looked up at the sky, apprehensively. It was already dark. His watch now showed it to be after nine o'clock. They would never find their way back to the schloss now. He tried the door to the cottage. It was open. Slowly, he entered, calling out all the while. There was no answer. "Well, we'd better stay the night here."

Paul was not convinced. "Look, at least we'll have a roof over our head and we won't be a temptation for any wild animals that may be prowling out there." That persuaded Paul. He almost ran through the door, the look on his face a picture of childhood terror.

David laughed. "Just teasing," he said. "I hope," he finished, though this last part was under his breath.

David was able to search the small cottage very quickly. He soon confirmed that it was, in fact, empty. The more he saw, however, the greater the feeling of unreality he felt. All of the furniture was Olde Worlde, just what you would expect in a cottage from a fairy tale. There was no electricity. Lighting was by candle, heating and cooking by the fire in the grate and the attached range. The fact that a fire was still slowly burning, though low down in its embers, confirmed that someone lived in the cottage. A phone was out of the question. There wasn't even running water, but there was a pump in the kitchen. Needless to say, toilet and bathroom facilities were also lacking. The privy out back. Despite the fact that they were intruding, David felt justified by the fact that they really had no choice. Tucking the totally weary Paul into the one single bed, he spread some blankets on the hard floor and prepared himself for a much deserved sleep.

"If the owner returns," he reasoned, "I'll just have to explain and offer to pay for any inconvenience." Sleep came quickly to the exhausted boys.

"Well, well, who's been sleeping in my bed?" The voice awoke David with a start. Incongruously, his first thought was, "That's not the right fairy story." Then, "What am I thinking of?"

Looking up, he saw the owner of the voice. She was a little old lady, dressed in a long, flowing dress with a shawl over hair, head and shoulders. Almost inevitably, she was just what you would expect in a fairy story.

As David started to stammer out an explanation, she continued, "You're late you know. I expected you two days ago, and I spent most of yesterday looking for you in the forest." She looked, first at David, then at the now alert Paul, myopically. "You're not even dressed correctly. This modern clothing is so unbecoming to children. Now come."

Turning, she started down the rickety stairs, muttering to herself, "Girls in trousers, whatever next? Boys in skirts?" "Come on, Pauly, let's get ready to leave," said David to his younger brother, before following in the obviously short-sighted old crone's footsteps.

"Now where did I put the dratted thing?" continued the old woman, obviously looking for something. "Ah, yes, there it is." With that she picked up what appeared to be a twig, about a foot long. "Come in, come in, times a wasting, we must get on."

"I think there's some mistake," David spoke. "I don't think we are who you think we are. You see..."

"Yes yes," she continued, ignoring him completely. David and Paul, now totally bemused, stood silent, watching. "Now, to begin, we'd better get you properly garbed. Now where was I? Oh, yes."

The old woman pointed the twig at David, muttering in some arcane language that the boys didn't recognize. As she finished, a beam of blinding white light burst from the stick and enveloped David. When it cleared, he looked, and felt, different. Paul, seeing his brother, howled with laughter. David was now a golden, curly-haired, cherubic-looking boy of about twelve, dressed in lederhosen, those leather shorts with the bibbed front, so beloved of Bavarians. As David looked down, he squeaked in alarm. What had happened to him? His voice was higher, his body lower. Looking in a fragment of mirror nailed to the wall, he saw that he looked just like the picture of Hansel in Paul's book of folk tales. He tried to talk, to protest, but he was speechless. All that came out of his mouth was a high-pitched squeak.

"That's more like it," said the crone, "now for your sister."

Paul stopped laughing instantly and David stopped squeaking. "Now hang on," began Paul, backing towards the door of the cottage. But even as he spoke, the witch was aiming her wand, which, like before, emitted a beam of blinding white light, this time enveloping the younger sibling. Again, when it cleared, Paul looked and felt different. He too was now younger and smaller, but there was something else. Looking at his ruddy-cheeked older brother, he saw an expression of wide-eyed amazement in his face. Paul too, looked in the fragment of mirror and saw to his horror, how he now



looked. Where David looked just like Hansel, from Paul's book, Paul now looked like Gretel. The blond-haired girl looking back at him was about eight years old, her long hair tresses arranged in two thick braids held together with large yellow bows. She was dressed in nothing less than a yellow Dirndl, a full peasant dress straight from the pictures in Paul's story book, with a tightly laced bodice and flowing white lacy petticoats peeking out underneath, contrasting the white hose and black ballet-type pumps. Now it was Paul's turn to squeak, speechlessly and David's turn to howl with laughter at the metamorphosis of his brother.

"Now that," said the old woman, distracting them, "is how Hansel and Gretel should look." David responded first. "But we're not Hansel and Gretel," he yelled, "we're just a couple of tourists. Two boys who got lost in the forest." "What?" she replied, looking for her spectacles which she pushed onto her nose before examining them closely. "Two boys you say? But you called her Pauline." She indicated the now feminized younger brother. "I said Pauly, not Pauline." "Humph, sounded like Pauline to me." "Then you must be as deaf as you are short-sighted," replied the irate younger brother. "Don't take that tone with me, young lady. Besides, it's too late now. The power of my wand is limited and needs time to recharge. The story must go on, so you will have to do. Now come!" With that, she started to wave her wand one last time.

"Wait, wait!" cried David, realizing that the twig in her hand was more than just a simple stick. "What do you mean, 'the story must go on'?" The hag stopped her waving, startled. "What? You mean you don't know?" "Would I have asked if I did?" replied the exasperated little boy. She pushed the glasses back up her nose and stared at them intently. "Well, well," she mused, at last. "It would seem that you are telling the truth. How unfortunate." The converted brothers stood, looking at her in expectant silence.

"Very well, " she continued. "You have accidentally crossed into the Land of Faerie. Here are magicks and deep mysteries. And stories. Yes, the stories. This is a land which occupies the same physical space as your own, but a different, parallel, dimension. Occasionally, if conditions are right, it is possible to cross from one to the other." "Then send us back, please." "No, it's too late. The story must go on." "What story?" "The tale that you have entered, of course. You know them as fairy tales. But all stories are based on truth. The story is all. It cycles, on and on, for ever. Now, enough chatter. Let it begin!" With that, she waved her wand one final time and the two boys found themselves falling into a whirlpool of darkness.

Hansel and his younger sister, Gretel, looked in wonder at the cottage made of candy and cake. They had been stuffing their hungry little faces with bits of it ever since they had discovered it, some ten minutes previously. They had been in the forest a long time. Their poor woodcutter father had abandoned them because he could no longer afford to feed them. They had laid a trail to follow back, but in vain. The bread crumbs that Hansel had dropped had been eaten by the birds. Now they were lost.

The door to the cottage opened. They looked up, startled and frightened, to see a kindly-looking old lady peer from the door. "Who are you, little ones?" she asked, querulously.

Hansel, the older of the pair, answered politely, apologizing for their rudeness in eating her home, and explaining how they had managed to lose themselves deep in the

forest. The old lady showed naught but kindness and concern. "Come in, you poor poor dears," she gushed, opening the door wide.

Soon, the children found themselves settled in front of a welcoming fire, drinking a rich broth, hot and nourishing. The heat of the fire and the richness of the food conspired with the length of the day to make them sleepy and yawning. The kindly old lady led them to a bed and soon had them snuggling down beneath warm blankets.

The children awoke to find things were amiss. Hansel was in a wooden cage. The kindly woman was peering at him, only now she did not look quite so kind. She soon explained to them the reality of their situation. She was, in fact, a witch and used her cottage to lure children to their doom. Hansel was to be fed until he was fat, with rich and nourishing food. Then he would be invited to dinner, with himself as the main course. Little Gretel found herself cleaning and skivvying around the cottage. If she tried to escape, then Hansel would be killed instantly. She had no choice!

Each day, the witch asked Hansel to poke his finger through the cage. She would then feel it to gauge how fat he was becoming. He was a clever lad though, and rather than hold his finger out, he held out instead a chicken bone given to him by Gretel. The shortsighted old crone couldn't tell the difference.

After a week, she was becoming impatient at his lack of progress and determined to eat him anyway, fat or not. "You, girl," she snapped, "light the fire in the oven, we'll sup well tonight." Now Gretel too, was bright and knew that if she lit the fire, then her brother would die and, most probably, she would soon follow. "I cannot," she replied, "I don't know how." "You stupid creature," the witch snarled, "Get out of the way, I'll do it myself." As she spoke, she opened the door of the ancient range oven, and leaned in to put spark to the kindling inside. Quick as a flash, Gretel, seizing her moment, applied her boot to the old hag's rear, pushing her into the now lit oven, quickly slamming the door locked behind the startled and screaming crone. "Quick," she called to her brother, opening the cage, "we must be gone from this evil place." So saying, her plump brother jumped from the cage and the two children ran, laughing with relief, back into the forest.

As they ran into the forest, their minds started to clear. The further from the strange cottage that they got, the more normal they felt, in mind at least. "Whew," exclaimed Paul, slowing down, winded. "What was all that about?" "I don't know," replied David, panting also. "Some kind of hypnosis?" "Well, I feel bloody ridiculous in this damned dress. It comes off, first chance we get."

"Don't do that," said David.

"What?"

"Think, Paul. We're still lost in the forest. Who knows how cold it will get? You can't go shedding clothes until you've got something to change into. Besides, you can hardly go parading through the woods in your petticoats. What would the squirrels think?" Even Paul had to laugh at the absurdity of the image this conjured up.

"God knows how much weight I've put on," complained David, out of breath. "I've never felt so bloated. It must be pounds." "More like stones, oh fat one," Paul teased back.

It was some hours later when they stumbled, first onto the road, then into the search party. The leader of the party was confused, to say the least. He had been searching for two boys, aged fifteen and twelve, not a younger boy and girl. However, the children insisted that they were the two missing Richie children, so he was happy to pass them on to those in higher authority. After all, they had been searching for over a week and were getting rather pessimistic about their chances of finding the children alive.

It goes without saying that their parents were overjoyed to find their children safe and sound. So relieved were they that they didn't even comment on the absurdity of their offspring's' mode of dress. At least, not at first. Although their children were in some way changed, it was obvious who they were. The one seemed much fatter in the face; the other, despite his girlish look, appeared to be somehow younger. All was irrelevant in light of their safety. Finally, however, their hugs and greetings were exhausted and Mother took command of the situation. "Come along, Paul," she said, "Let's get you into some proper clothes. You look like something from one of your old fairy story books." She smiled at the darling image of her youngest, in his pretty frock and braids. She had always wanted a daughter, but nature had decreed otherwise.

As his wife and youngest son left to go into the bedroom, Mr. Richie sighed and turned to his oldest son. "You too, David," he laughed, "time to get out of your fancy dress costume and into something more appropriate for your age." Suddenly, there was a high-pitched scream from the bedroom. It was his wife. He immediately responded, running to the bedroom door.

"What is it, dear?" he asked, entering the room. His wife was hysterical. Speechlessly, she pointed at her now naked son. Paul was sobbing uncontrollably, his small hands covering his exposed groin.

"What is the matter, Pauly?" asked David, who had followed his father in. Paul didn't reply, just sobbed louder. "Look at our baby!" cried Mrs. Richie, grabbing Paul's hands. What they saw left them all without words, for what lay between Paul's legs was not what one would expect to see on a twelve-year-old lad, but on an eight-year-old girl.

"Who is this? Where is my son?" Mr Richie could not accept the evidence of his own eyes. Mrs. Richie knew, with a mother's instinct, that this girl was her son, fruit of her womb. Something had happened to him, and to David, in that deep, dark wood. But What? And how?

The story told by the two children was beyond belief, yet what reason had they to lie? And who were they? True, they looked like the Richie kids except for their age, and the younger child's obvious difference in gender. A full strip down search by a doctor had confirmed both, to the young girl's extreme anguish. Why did she insist that she was a boy? Mr. Richie denied all he was told, preferring to immerse himself in his business meetings, leaving, as is always the way in family crises concerning children, the mother to cope. She, of course, dealt with all in a mother's matter-of-fact way. First priority was to soothe and calm the children, now clad in modern clothing appropriate to their age and sex. Funnily, Pauly was calming down rather faster than the older boy. How were they to know that the witches spell was total, changing not only

Paul's body, but also his mind and emotions, from boy to girl? As those feminine feelings became more and more dominant, so Paul became more at peace with what he now was. Content not only in pretty dresses and petticoats, but finding strange comfort in cuddling his new doll. Mrs. Richie, though if asked she would deny it, was overjoyed to be able, at last, to pamper a pretty young daughter, and lavished both time and money in outfitting her 'little girl'. How fast she forgot that Pauline was once Paul. David also became content with his lot, though, as the changes to him were less far reaching, he was less quick to accept them.

Two weeks later, all four Richies sat in the office of the senior police officer placed in charge of the case, Inspector Müller. The family now accepted what had happened and were, except for the father, quite happy with the situation. Even he, affected by the magic, was less belligerent than he had been. Mrs. Richie had already decided that she had been granted a second chance to bring up her children and this time they were most definitely not going to turn into spoiled brats. And her husband would be much more of a father this time, whether he agreed or not. Business was one thing, but family was everything. Mr. Richie, affected by the spell, was also coming to the same conclusion. He was extremely wealthy and did not need to work as hard as he did. He needed to spend more time with his family and be a father to his children. He would make sure he did just that.

"Hrmph". Inspector Müller cleared his throat, ending the reveries of the two adult Richies and gaining the attention of the children. He opened a file on his desk, removing and sorting a sheaf of official documents. He quickly read through them, confirming the details in his mind. "We have now concluded our investigations," he announced. "Firstly the DNA tests prove that the two children are most definitely your offspring. There is less than a one in three hundred million chance of them belonging to someone else. They also confirm that David is male and Pauly is female". The Richies murmured but did not interrupt. "Secondly, we have searched the forest extensively and can find no sign of either the cottage or the little old lady described to us by the children."

This time, Mrs Richie did speak, objecting to this apparent slur on her children's integrity. Inspector Müller held up his hand to stop her.

"Please...", he interrupted, " I am not trying to cast a shadow on your children's honesty, merely pointing out that we can find no evidence to support their story. We also find that the staff at the castle when questioned, were not sure whether the two children playing there where two boys or a little boy and a little girl. They were also vague about the children's age. Given the nature of your work and the reason for your visit, Herr Richie, any scandal would have most unfortunate consequences for your business and my country. Given the circumstances, if I were you, I would draw this unhappy event to a quick and discreet close".

After further discussion, mainly between Mrs. Richie and the inspector, the Richies reluctantly agreed and left to make arrangements to take the children home. First on Mrs. Richie's agenda was clothes shopping for the children, especially Pauline. She had seen some darling little dresses in the children's departments in the big stores last time she had gone to Munich. She always checked the girl's section when she went shopping as she had always wanted a little girl. Now, she had one!

As the door closed, Inspector Müller sighed as he reassembled all the papers on his desk. Giving them one last look, he placed them back into their folder, which he stamped "Investigation closed". Taking a key from his desk drawer, he opened a locked file in his store room, hidden from prying eyes. Placing the file with the other files of unexplained events in the forest, he re-locked the door and muttered to himself, "I really must have a word with Granny. This time I must insist that she curb her strange behavior. It's going to get us noticed. Then where would her fairy tales be?"

# NAVY BLUE SCHOOL KNICKERS

By **Melissa Anne Rogan**

Author's note.

Unlike the United States, where children usually wear ordinary clothing to school, it has long been the tradition in the United Kingdom for children to wear school uniforms, a practice still enforced by the vast majority of schools. The reason given is that if all children are in uniform, then there is no distinction between children of rich and poor families so the disadvantaged can't be discriminated against because of their dress. In fact, the price of uniforms can itself be a strain on the poor. In the case of girls, the uniform consists of a blouse, usually white, often with a tie in school colors, skirt, blazer and white ankle or knee-length socks. The skirt is usually pleated, and most often navy blue or gray, though bottle green and maroon are common, and brown and purple are occasionally seen. Younger children may wear a gym slip or tunic. Some schools allow a summer dress of gingham, in red, blue, yellow, green or pink. In the UK, therefore, the school girl and uniform is a figure of crossdressers' fantasy, just as French maids and nurses are. On the other hand, cheerleaders and prom queens are not part of our life so are not figures of fantasy here. The focus of this schoolgirl fantasy are the navy blue school knickers, which are the epitome of girlhood. They are by no means pretty, being a plain, full panty brief of hard wearing flannel with strongly elasticized legs and waist. They are not always navy blue, with white, bottle green or maroon also being found. They have largely gone out of fashion now. Nevertheless, in any schoolgirl fantasy, it is navy blue school knickers that take center stage.

LET THE STORY BEGIN.

"It's not fair. It's just not fair. Just because he's the youngest, he always gets his own way. And just because I'm the only girl, I have to run around after him. He's a spoiled little brat, that's what!" Nine-year-old Becky Wilson stamped her foot in petulant anger. The object of her venom was her seven-year-old brother, Kevin, and he sat there watching her with the most infuriatingly smug expression on his face. His sister's complaints were true. Once again he had managed to get her into trouble by making a mess and blaming her. He was always believed. He was the apple of his mother's eye. His two elder brothers, David, seventeen and nineteen-year-old Frank were less easily deceived so he usually stayed out of their way. Not that they were ever in much.

Both had serious girlfriends and spent much of their time with them. His mother, after chastising Becky, comforted the “upset” boy and sat down to resume reading her magazine. She couldn’t concentrate, though, for she guiltily realized that she was being very unfair to her only daughter and much of what she said was true. Maureen Wilson was in her middle forties, still in fine shape, despite a hard life. She had married fairly young and had two fine sons before resuming her career. She was a top flight psychologist, specializing in hypnotherapy for behavioral modification and had been successful in many varied cases, though she tended to concentrate on helping drug abusers rehabilitate. After a gap of nearly eight years, Maureen and husband Philip had decided to expand their family. They hoped for a couple of girls to round off the family. Becky was first and strictly to plan. Two years later came Kevin. Philip was very disappointed that the fourth baby was another boy. Although he tried not to show it, he was less fond of his fourth child than the other three. Although Maureen sensed this, she, too, was disappointed. They couldn’t afford a further child. Besides, at thirty-six years of age, she was getting a bit old for child bearing. It was two years later that Philip was killed in a tragic and entirely avoidable accident at the petrochemical factory where he worked.

The distraught woman had to hold the family together as best she could, and strong woman that she was, she managed to do so. Financially, she was quite well-off. The compensation she received from the company, along with his pension, and payments from his life insurance policies meant that money, at least, was not a problem, thankfully. In the five years since his death, she had come to accept her loss with fortitude, and pulled her life and her young family back together. It was a blessing that the two older boys were at an age when they could understand what had happened and help the two younger children. Filled with remorse and guilt at the rejection by both herself and her late husband of the youngest, it was perhaps inevitable that she would overcompensate and he was soon a very spoiled little boy, who wanted for nothing and always got his own way.

The fact that she had wanted a daughter was pushed to the back of her mind. It did not help that, unlike his physically sturdy older brothers, Kevin was quite small and sensitive, with a slender body and finely-shaped face with a light dusting of freckles on his cute little snub nose. His long blond hair gave him an angelic look that few adults, especially women, could resist. They would never believe just how spiteful and manipulating he could be, a fact that he used to his advantage at every opportunity. On more than one occasion, Maureen had thought to have his hair cut short, but he did so hate going to the barber shop, and he did look so angelic. Besides, long hair was perfectly acceptable on a boy these days. Even on a seven-year-old. Wasn’t it?

In the past couple of years, Maureen Wilson had opened up a small office in her spacious home and had started taking on a limited number of patients on a part-time basis. Though she didn’t need the money, she needed an interest outside her family, especially as the older two were almost ready to leave the nest. Her professional training forced her to reevaluate her relationship with her two younger children. Sighing, she put down the magazine, and went to find Becky. Becky was in her room sobbing, her bottom still smarting from the spanking she had just received. In truth, it was as much for the temper tantrum as for the mess she had been blamed for making. Mau-

reen took her daughter in her arms and tried to calm her, but she had underestimated the depth of bitterness in her little girl's heart. "It's not fair," she sobbed, "you never believe me. You *always* take Kevin's side. I get punished for his wrongs and he gets rewarded for doing nothing. I have to tidy up for him. He's just a little brat." "Don't use words like that, young lady, or you'll feel my hand again."

"See?" sobbed the child, "I'm never right. Well, I'm fed up. I'll pay him back. You see if I don't." So saying, she ran out of the room into the garden.

"Oh dear," murmured Maureen, "I've built myself quite a problem here. But what am I going to do? If I suddenly come down hard on Kevin, he won't understand. He's too young. If I don't, I'll unfairly alienate my daughter. I must talk to her, but for now it's best I leave her to cry herself out and catch her when she's in a better frame of mind." She returned to her magazine, though she found it impossible to regain her concentration.

Two days later found Becky wandering around the house, bored. The older boys were out with their girlfriends, and her mum had taken Kevin shopping for some new clothes, leaving her to amuse herself. She was calm now, but inside the anger and the feeling of injustice were still there. Her mum had talked to her as promised and tried to explain, but to a nine-year-old, even one so unusually bright as Becky, it's hard to explain why one child is spoiled at the expense of another. Despite all promises to the contrary, Becky knew that her normally perfectly reasonable mother had a blind spot when it came to her darling younger brother, and the chances of things changing were slim. To a child, things were always simple. To Becky, the only way for things to change was for her to do it. But how? How would she get even with her brat of a little brother without getting herself even deeper into trouble in the process?

She was bored. She had tried her games; they were boring. She had tried her dolls; she was too old. She had tried her books; she had read them all before, many times. What to do? She wandered around the house, in the kind of bored mood that nothing would shake off, futilely looking for something, anything, to occupy herself. Finally, she found herself outside her mother's office, where she saw her patients. She tried the door and to her surprise, it opened. It was usually locked. Knowing she was forbidden to enter, nevertheless, she went in. She wouldn't touch anything, just look. Actually, there wasn't much to see. Just a couple of comfortable armchairs, her mother's desk, a filing cabinet for case notes, locked, a drugs cabinet, locked and a bookcase with her mother's textbooks on. Even the drawers of the desk were locked. Turning in disappointment to leave, she chanced to glance at the tomes on the bookcase shelves and looked again. They were text books on clinical psychology but it was the ones on hypnotism that caught her eye. Reaching for a starter called "Basic Hypnosis in Behavioral Modification", she flipped through the pages. Many of the big words were beyond her, but she was the offspring of two highly intelligent parents and she had inherited their intelligence. She quickly grasped the gist of what she read. As she immersed herself further into the subject, she became fascinated. She was very excited but careful enough to replace the book, after making copious notes and leave the office well before there was any danger of being caught. She would be returning as often as possible. This was a subject that she wanted to learn as much as possible about. And

who better to teach her, even unknowingly, than her mother, one of the country's leading practitioners?

It was some weeks later. Becky had found several opportunities to enter her mother's office and peruse the various books she found there. The more she read, the more fascinated she became. She even tried, with some success, to hypnotize some of her friends, to her gratification and their amusement. She was very careful not to do any harm, and swore her friends to absolute secrecy. Her relationship with Kevin continued as before; that is to say it was strained. Despite her mother's promises to the contrary, Kevin continued to get his own way and Maureen continued to put off taking him in hand. Whenever possible, Becky simply kept out of his way. Although she was no longer suffused with such anger, deep down she still resented him deeply. Becky was playing in her room with a few of her friends. Her mother was with a patient, her older brothers out. She neither knew nor cared where the brat (as she now constantly called Kevin, to his fury) was. Two of her friends, Allison Berry and Debbie O'Brien, were school chums the same age as Becky. The third girl, Susie, was Debbie's five-year-old sister, who they had been told to mind. They were humoring little Susie by playing doll's tea party with her, with Susie being mother of course. They sat, cross-legged on the floor, each with a doll, while Susie dispensed make-believe drinks into tiny china cups with matching saucers and plates so their dolls could dine in style. The older girls were quite content to participate in this fairly mindless, and to them, babyish activity. As long as it kept Susie quiet, they were amenable.

Kevin walked through the door. Although annoyed at his failure to knock on her bedroom door, Becky ignored him. "Becky, I'm bored. Play with me," he whined. He never asked, never said "please".

"I can't," she replied primly, "we're looking after Susie. Go away." She turned back to the game in hand.

"But I've got nothing to do," he continued. She knew that this was untrue. He had plenty to keep him occupied. He just wanted to butt in, to be the center of attention. Again she ignored him.

"Let me play with you," Kevin said.

"Don't be silly," she replied, "We're playing tea party, it's for girls only."

"If you don't let me play with you, I'm going to tell mum that you smacked me." Becky conceded defeat. Her mother did not like anyone to hit her little darling and would always take his part over hers. She thought for a moment. Suddenly, a glimmer of an idea entered her mind. Perhaps there was a way to let him play, maybe she could extract some revenge as well.

"Very well, you can stay. But you must do exactly what we tell you to do."

"OK," he smiled smugly, pleased that yet again he had asserted his will over hers. If he knew what was in store for him, he may not have been so eager. Becky quickly whispered her plan to the older girls so they would know what to expect. They giggled with glee when they realized what Becky was planning.

"We are going to play a new game. Sit down in front of me," she instructed, as Debbie and Allison closed the curtains, leaving the room in semi-darkness. Becky mean-

while, removed a silver locket from around her neck. She arranged her bedside lamp next to her and, holding the locket up in front of Kevin's eyes, started to swing it slowly to and fro. It caught and reflected the light of the lamp into his eyes. "Now Kevin, I want you to concentrate. Keep your head perfectly still, but follow the locket with your eyes, don't take your eyes off the locket. Concentrate. Keep your eyes on the locket." Kevin obeyed, his little body seated absolutely motionless, only his eyes moving, to and fro, to and fro. There was absolute silence in the room.

"Listen to my voice," Becky continued, swinging the locket slowly. "Concentrate on my voice. My voice is the only voice you can hear, concentrate on the locket, listen to my voice," she droned rhythmically and Kevin complied. Becky continued. "Your eyelids are getting heavy. You feel sleepy. You cannot keep your eyes open. You are so sleepy. Watch the locket, concentrate. My voice is the only sound you can hear. You are getting sleepy, sleepy." This was continued for several minutes until, finally, Kevin sat on the floor, eyes closed, apparently asleep, actually deep in a hypnotic trance.

"Kevin, can you hear me?"  
Becky asked.

"Yes," he replied monotonously.

"Listen carefully. You must obey me. Everything I ask you to do, you will do. Everything I tell you will be true. Do you understand?" Again he replied. "I want you to open your eyes now, but you are still under my control. Do you understand, Kevin?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Open your eyes." Kevin opened his eyes. They stared blankly. He acknowledged nothing except the sound of her voice. "Do you still want to play with us, Kevin?"

"Yes." "Even though we are playing girl games?"

"Yes."

"Only girls and sissies play with dolls. Are you a sissy, Kevin?"

"No."



“Then you must be a girl. Are you a girl Kevin?” “No, I’m a boy.” “But boys can’t play girl’s games, can they, Kevin?” “No.” “But you still want to play with us?” “Yes.” “Very well, Kevin, you can play with us. But you will have to do exactly what you are told. Will you do that, Kevin?” “Yes.”

Becky signaled to the other girls, who giggled and went to find the things they needed. “Listen carefully, Kevin. You must obey me. Everything I tell you is the truth. You will obey everything I tell you to do, won’t you Kevin?” “Yes.” “In a minute I am going to count backwards from ten to one. When I reach one, you will awaken. You will believe that you are a five-year-old girl named Caroline. You will strip off those nasty boy clothes and dress in the clothes we give you. You will be very happy dressed in these clothes, for they will be soft girl clothes and you are a girl. You will play with Susie and she will be in charge. You will do what she says. When I snap my fingers three times, you will be in a deep sleep again. Do you understand?” “Yes.” Becky counted. “Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.” As she said “One”, Kevin’s eyes opened. Looking down at his clothes, he was repulsed. Why was he wearing horrible boy clothes? He immediately began to strip. Allison and Debbie giggled again as they opened the curtains and brought over the clothing they had found stored in Becky’s wardrobe. They were old, too small for her, but they would fit their new playmate perfectly. Soon they were dressing the naked boy. Pink satin panties first with rumba ruffles on the seat, matching vest tucked into the panties at the waist. Then a full slip with a lacy bodice, followed by a pink party dress. It had been Becky’s favorite once, but now she found such sugar and spice “so babyish”. White ankle socks with lace trim and black Mary Jane shoes completed the outfit. Allison quickly did his hair, sectioning the long blond tresses into two bunches which she secured with pink ribbons.

“That’s better,” laughed Becky, hugging herself with glee. “What’s your name, little girl?” “Caroline,” was the reply. “Isn’t it Kevin?” “No, of course not, silly. That’s a boy’s name, and I’m a girl. I’m five. Do you like my dress?” In short order, Caroline was happily playing dollies with Susie who was quite content to accept this unexpected playmate. After all, she was in charge. While Allison and Debbie looked on, laughing, Becky took snap after snap with her little camera. These were going to be worth a fortune in Kevin’s class, if he didn’t do what she told him.

So intent was Becky on photographing her new found “sister” that she didn’t notice that her two friends had suddenly become very silent. Both were standing to attention, staring at the door. When Becky finally noticed, she too turned to see what they were staring at. Her mother was standing at the door with a very surprised expression on her face.

“What,” she asked, “is going on here? Becky, why is your brother dressed in your old clothes?”

Becky felt the heat of embarrassment on her cheeks as she blushed furiously. Looking down at her feet, Becky was silent. She had to think fast or, knowing her mother’s bias towards Kevin, she was in deep trouble.

Kevin, meanwhile, carried on playing, oblivious to what was happening.

“I’m waiting, young lady.” Her mother’s remark brought Becky out of her reverie.

She gulped. "He wanted to play with us, mother," she said.

"What? He wanted to be dressed like that?"

"Well, he demanded that we allow him to play with us. We said that we were playing girl games so if he wanted to join in, then he had to dress like a girl and play properly. We didn't force him, he wanted to do it." As she spoke, she crossed her fingers, to excuse the fib. Her hands were behind her back, out of her mother's view. Her mother turned to her son. "Is this true? Do you like being dressed like that and playing with dolls?"

"Yes, mummy," the young boy replied, "I love wearing soft things and looking pretty." With that, he turned back to his play. Maureen was speechless, to say the least, but what could she say? She turned back to her daughter. "It's almost time for supper. Please tell your friends it's time to go home and start to tidy up your toys." So saying, she turned and left the room.

Once outside, she had time to mull over what she saw. There was no doubt that Kevin made a perfectly darling little girl. His angelic looks and long blonde locks were far more feminine than masculine. So realistic did he look that she, his own mother, hadn't recognized him at first. She had thought he was one of Becky's friends. As to his mode of dress, well, at least he and Becky were playing together and not at each other's throats. Besides, a bit of petticoat training could be just what was needed to break him of his increasingly selfish habits. Although she wouldn't admit it, the knowledge that deep down she had always wanted Kevin to be her second daughter was still there. Perhaps that was why she so readily accepted seeing her son dressed in a pink party dress with his hair in ribbons, playing with dolls.

Becky, meanwhile, complied with her mother's wishes. First she saw her friends to the door and wished them goodnight. Then she returned to her room to see to Kevin, or Caroline, as he presently thought he was. The young "girl", in accordance with his posthypnotic instructions, was still playing with the dolls. Becky went up to him and quickly snapped her fingers three times in his ear. His face instantly took on a blank expression as he returned to the trance she had previously placed him in. "Can you hear me?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied in a monotone voice. "When I count down from ten to one you will awake. You will again be Kevin, a boy, and you will remove your girl's clothes. You will be sorry to do so however, because you still enjoy wearing soft and pretty things. You will dress in your boy things but you will be unhappy at their rough feeling. If I snap my fingers three times, you will return to this trance. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Ten, nine, eight..." When she reached "one", Kevin awakened. Looking down, he was surprised and embarrassed to find himself wearing a pretty party dress and immediately started to peel it off. As he removed his soft and silky panties however, although embarrassed, he felt sorry to be losing them. As he put on his undershorts, T-shirt and jeans, he couldn't help but feel that they were rough on his skin compared to the pretty things he had just removed. The conflict in his mind between knowing he was a boy but feeling sorry for losing his pretty, feminine dress and underwear confused him greatly. So much so that he forgot that his sole purpose in life was

to make the life of his sister a misery. He was very quiet as he ate supper. Maureen watched him surreptitiously. For the first time she openly considered just how dainty and girlish he actually looked. His long blond hair was down past his shoulders, far too long for a boy. She was reluctant to get it cut, however, after just seeing it tied in ribbons. The markings they had left were still visible in his hastily-brushed hair. She too was confused at the conflict in her mind, knowing that he was a boy but secretly being pleased to see him as a girl. She decided that at this point it would be best not to say anything. Both mother and son needed time to sort out their minds.

Becky was highly pleased with her newfound power over her erstwhile tormentor. At last she had the means to pay him back for all of the times he had been horrid to her, all of the times *she* had been punished for *his* misdemeanors. Better, she could punish him in a way that he would willingly assist in, thanks to her newfound talent. At nine, she was far too old for the frilly and pretty little dresses and underthings that her mother had kept from her younger days. Now, of course, she would never be seen dead in such icky things. But Kevin was seven, and “Caroline” was five; the perfect age for such dainty pretty garments. Becky intended that he would enjoy them to the full—at every opportunity. The fact that her mother had not instantly dragged him out of his dress at first confused Becky, but the clever little thing soon realized that maybe her mother didn’t mind her “Little Angel” being dressed in so angelic a fashion; maybe she *wanted* him to be a girl.

And so it was. Kevin often found himself playing “dress-up”. And Mummy didn’t mind, as long as he was happy. Of course he was happy, he had no choice. Maureen secretly approved of this feminizing activity; it quieted down his selfish and sometimes violent moods and seemed to make him both more selfless and more content. His older brothers? Well, they had always thought that he was a sissy and found no surprise in the fact that he was now dressing the part. Each time she returned him to his trance, Becky reinforced his growing femininity. One day, as he was sitting, playing with his doll, Maureen sat beside him. Becky had left the room for a moment. She was impressed with the demure and modest way in which he sat, skirts properly arranged over his knees and properly tucked under him to reduce creasing. Becky was certainly taking that aspect of their little game very seriously and was teaching him to be a proper little lady, just as she was taught at the same age. She had to admit, he looked the epitome of femininity. No stranger, on seeing him, would suspect he was anything but the pretty and demure little girl he appeared to be. “Do you like wearing your sister’s clothes, Kevin? she asked.

“Don’t call me Kevin, My name is Caroline.”

“I’m sorry, Caroline,” she replied, smiling. She had to concede that Caroline was a more appropriate name than Kevin when he was dressed the way he was. She repeated the question. “Do you like wearing your sister’s clothes?”

“No,” he replied, softly. This was a surprise, not at all what she expected to hear. “I thought you liked to be in a pretty dress, Caroline,” she said.

“I do,” replied the boy, “but they’re hand-me-downs. Why can’t I have my own pretty dresses and things?” Maureen was again surprised. She did not expect to hear her son beg her to buy him a dress regardless of the circumstances. This required

some serious thinking. Making her excuse, she left him to his play. She could hear her true daughter returning anyway and didn't want her to see the confusion in her eyes.

It was some days later. Maureen was out shopping and Becky was in charge. Inevitably, Kevin was in skirts. They were playing school, with Kevin as the pupil, sitting at Becky's toy desk and Becky as the teacher, at her toy blackboard. Kevin, or Caroline, was dressed in one of Becky's old summer school dresses, a yellow gingham shirt-waister with thin belt, white frilly ankle socks and white sandals. His hair was braided into two pigtails with a yellow ribbon tied into a bow at the end of each one. This image had particularly amused his mother as she left. Kevin, even at the age of seven, was obviously not cut out for school books. Although he had the intelligence, he had neither the patience nor the attention span. Caroline, however, was a different matter, being both neat and studious. If Becky's little games served to improve Kevin's reading and writing, then Maureen would be well satisfied, no matter how unorthodox the lesson. While Caroline was carefully copying out the exercise Becky had set, Becky was rummaging in her drawers. Holding up a garment, she called to Caroline. "Do you know what these are?"

"Yes," the boy replied, blushing. "What are they?"

"They are girl's navy blue school knickers," he replied. Becky snapped her fingers three times and Caroline's eyes glazed with the induced trance. "Can you hear me?" "Yes." "Who wears navy blue school knickers?" asked the girl. "School girls," replied the entranced child. "Anybody else?" "No, only school girls." "Do you wear them?" asked Becky. "No."

"Why? You are a school girl, aren't you?"

"No, I'm a boy." "But you're wearing a school girl's dress." Kevin/Caroline didn't answer. His young mind couldn't work out the apparent paradox. Becky, sensing that this confusion could be harmful to him, decided to help, in her own special way. "Kevin, listen to me. It is your strongest desire to wear navy blue school knickers because it will mean that you are a school girl. But you can't wear them because you are not a school girl. You can never wear them unless an adult orders you to put them on. If that happens, then you will be a girl forever. Do you understand? Say it back to me." "I can only wear navy blue school knickers if an adult orders me to and then I will be a girl for ever," was the monotonous reply.

"Good," said Becky. "From now on, if you hear the phrase 'navy blue school knickers' said twice by the same person, you will become Caroline, stop what you are doing and go and put on girl's clothes and play with your favorite doll. When I count down from ten to one, you will wake up as Caroline and we will continue with our lessons. Is that clear?"

"Yes."

"Good. Ten, nine eight, seven..."

Meanwhile, Maureen was downtown, shopping. Having parked her car in the multi-story car park, she made a beeline for Henley's. Henley's was the biggest and most exclusive department store in the town and she loved going there. She could wander around its many floors for hours. For her, it was a way of relaxation, a chance to be

away from the kids and her work for a brief time. She could well afford the prices though it was the looking as much as the buying that she enjoyed. As she made her way to the ladies fashions, she had to pass through the children's clothing department. A new display immediately caught her eye. The new summer fashions were on show, including a host of the most darling little summer dresses. She was enchanted. One reason why she had wanted another daughter was so she could shop for such pretty clothes.

"Oh well," she sighed. It was not to be. Or was it? Maureen remembered her conversation with Kevin some days ago. No! She couldn't buy a dress for her son, no matter how pretty he was. Pulling herself away, she carried on to the ladies department and immersed herself in some serious shopping. Two hours later, laden down with packages, she again passed through the children's department and again she was caught by the display. One dress in particular caught her eye. It was a floral design in blue and pink, with a lace Peter Pan collar, rosebud sleeves, a ruched bodice and a wide pink ribbon around the waist. Underneath, she could see the lace hem of a net undershirt peeping through. In her mind's eye, she could see her little angel dressed in this frock. It was perfect for him. Her willpower slowly dissolved and she found herself selecting one of the dresses in Kevin's size from the rack. Once the first item was selected, the dam burst and she found herself again indulging in a shopping spree, this time for her son. A pretty dress needed dainty underwear. She found a darling pair of panties, snow white satin with a lace front and a lace frill around the elasticized legs and full waist. A matching camisole and full petticoat completed the set, along with pink lacy anklets, pink patent Mary Jane shoes and a pink Alice band with a built-in bow for his long blond hair. The thought of the expression on his pretty little face when he opened the packages filled her with joy. She couldn't wait to see him.

When she arrived home, laden with packages, only Becky was in sight. "Have you bought me anything?" she asked. Maureen never went downtown without returning with something for the children. She had felt guilty about spending so much on Kevin so she had to buy Becky something, a fairly expensive pair of earrings to fit in her recently pierced ears.

"Of course I have, darling. Where is Kevin?" She was actually surprised that the two were not together. In fact, Becky had become bored playing school and had gone for a root in her mother's study, her second favorite occupation.

"He's on the field, playing soccer with his chums," she answered her mother. "Be a dear and go and get him while I bring the rest of the shopping from the car, please. I've got a nice surprise for him." Kevin was reluctant to leave his football game. After all, with his sister, he didn't get that many opportunities to be a boy. However, the promise of presents gave the rather selfish child sufficient impetus to overcome his reticence and the two siblings raced back to the house. "Hi mum, what have you got for me?" he blurted breathlessly as he ran into the hall ahead of his sister. When he saw what was in his mother's arms, he stopped dead. "Do you like it?" she asked, holding up the dress. "Who is it for?"

"Why you, of course. You wanted a dress of your own and pretty underwear." He went red with anger. "They're girl things," he yelled, "I'm a boy. I don't want your stupid dress!" So saying, he ran out of the room. Maureen was now totally confused.

Hadn't this same boy complained to her that he didn't have a dress of his own, only the other day? Now he threw a tantrum when she had spent a fortune fulfilling his wishes. She stood there stunned, a tear running down her cheek. "Don't worry, mum," comforted Becky, "I think he's just a bit shy, yet. Give me the packages and I'll talk to him. I'm sure I can calm him down." Inside, Becky was delighted that her mum had bought such a dainty frock for her sissy brother. Maureen reflected on the change in circumstances. Not so long ago, Kevin was a mummy's boy who fought constantly with Becky, now he seemed to do anything his sister asked.

"What are you doing, upsetting Mum like that, Kevin?" Becky asked, carting the carrier bags of shopping into his room.

"Go away, if you know what's good for you," snarled the brat.

"I'll soon settle your hash," Becky replied. "Navy blue school knickers."

"What did you say?" asked Kevin, feeling a shiver go down his spine. "Navy blue school knickers." As soon as she uttered the phrase for the second time, her post hypnotic suggestion took effect. Kevin's eyes glazed as Caroline's persona came to the fore. Within seconds he was naked. "Here," said Becky, stopping him, "Go and take a nice shower first. You don't want to put your pretty new clothes on with that dirty body. Don't forget to use plenty of that nicely scented talcum powder when you've finished." As Caroline did as ordered, Becky started to open packages. She was taken aback by the sheer femininity of the contents. "God," she laughed, "Kevin will be a proper little princess with this lot on." And he was, only fifteen minutes later, when Becky fixed the Alice band into her sweet-smelling little sister's hair, and straightened the bow in the small of her back. "OK, Caroline, let's go and show mummy what a sweet little girl you are. Don't forget to curtsy and thank her for all the pretty things that she so kindly bought for you. And don't forget to show her your dainty little panties and frilly under-skirts." How could he resist her commands? He couldn't, he was hypnotically compelled to obey.

Becky led the sweet-looking Caroline back into the living room by the hand. Maureen looked up hopefully as she heard them enter. Her heart sang with joy at the beautiful sight of her feminized little boy. Caroline in her turn ran to her mummy, giving her a big hug and a kiss, and thanking her profusely, and oh-so-little-girlishly, for her beautiful new dress and the pretty underthings which she just adored. Again, Maureen was aware of the marked dichotomy between her son's aggressive behavior of a few minutes before and the vapid femininity he showed now. Again, she allowed her concern to be submerged by her joy at finding her latest little daughter. "I've got something else for you, Caroline," she said, reaching for yet another package. "What is it mummy?" asked Caroline, jumping in excitement. Taking the parcel, she ripped off the wrapping paper with trembling hands. Inside was a huge baby doll, fully eighteen inches high and dressed as sweetly as she was, with a full set of clothes, from frilly baby dress right down to spare nappies, for this was a wetty doll. "It's your very own little baby girl for you to play mummy to. Her name is Lucy." Thank you, mummy, she's adorable and I'll treasure her forever and ever." Caroline was already starting to play with her new toy, sinking ever deeper into her hypnotic life. Becky was highly amused at this latest turn. Not only was her little brother dressed in the most amazingly pretty little dress and things but he was now playing with his very own dolly. Oh,

this was just too, too delicious. Wait until she saw Allison and Debbie. They too would be thrilled, for they too had been on the receiving end of Kevin's venom, at school.

And so the summer wore on, with Kevin being less and less, and Caroline being more and more. Even as Kevin, the feminine training showed through and his (male) friends were sure that he was becoming a sissy. Alas, all good things must end and so it was with summer holidays. The new school year was imminent. Kevin (not Caroline), was sitting reading a book. Becky was out with her friends. Maureen was busy sorting out the kid's school uniforms, deciding which items were still wearable and which needing replacing, too worn or small for further use. Sorting though Becky's gear, she was saying each item out loud, to herself, as she placed it into the appropriate pile. "Skirt, that's OK, blouse, too worn, navy blue school knickers..."

"Navy blue school knickers," muttered Kevin, giggling unconsciously. Maureen looked up at her son, frowning, but he was still engrossed in his book. "What a funny thing for the lad to say," she thought, "now, where was I? Ah yes." "Navy blue school knickers," she repeated, getting back into her stride. Kevin looked up, his eyes glazing over with the critical repetition of the posthypnotic key phrase. Instantly, he stood and walked, zombie like, to his room. A couple of minutes later, Maureen looked up again, wondering at Kevin's odd behavior. "I'd better check that he's all right," she thought, following him to his room. When she entered, Kevin was already climbing into a dress, having stripped and donned appropriate female underwear and petticoats. He ignored his mother's questions, fitting his hair into a pony tail, held with a ribbon, and calmly fetched Lucy, his favorite doll, and started to play. Studying him, Maureen finally allowed her intelligence to win over her emotions and recognize the hypnotic trance. Immediately, she realized that this was how Becky controlled her little brother. "Why, the little madam. Wait until I see her." She was appalled that her daughter could impose her will in such a way, but also surprised at how clever her daughter was to teach herself something so difficult and use it so effectively.

Yet again, Becky was sobbing, her rear red with the spanking she had received. Along with the corporal punishment had gone a severe talking-to, a lecture on just how wrong it was to impose one's will on another for our own selfish aims. It was one thing to change behavior for medical or social reasons, quite another to change it for personal reasons. Of course at nine, Becky found it difficult to distinguish between the two and was somewhat resentful, especially as she had also been grounded for a whole month. Further, she had lost all hold over her horrible little brother. Maureen had taken pains to point out to her what would happen if she ever found her practicing hypnosis, either on Kevin, or on anyone else. Just to be sure, she had not only removed all the posthypnotic keys and suggestions that Becky had implanted but had used her far greater experience to ensure that Kevin would no longer be susceptible to such manipulation in the future.

So, life returned to normal. That is to say, Kevin reverted to the unbearable brat that he had been, selfish, demanding, unpleasant. In fact, he seemed to be worse than ever. At least some of Becky's feminine training had taken so he sometimes, unconsciously, reacted as a girl would, when he sat and crossed his legs, for example, or when he sat upright, knees together, hands demurely held on his lap. His school chums were very quick to pick up on this and gave him much grief, calling him pretty

and sissy. Kevin was far too aggressive to accept this abuse, however, so when Maureen was contacted by his school teacher to talk about his behavior, she was not surprised to learn that he was constantly fighting and becoming increasingly unruly. "In fact," his teacher, Miss Leslie, told Maureen, "if he doesn't show improvement in both his school work and his behavior, quite soon, then the Headmaster is considering recommending to the school governors that he be expelled."

Maureen was mortified. That a son of hers could bring such shame on the family was unconscionable. Yet, when she broached the subject with him, he was surly and impertinent. She had to do something and soon, but what? She almost regretted interfering with Becky's activities. At least then he had been well-behaved, polite and studious. But no. Becky had to be shown the error of her ways. Now, how could she show her spoiled brat of a son the error of his ways? It was at times like these that she missed her late husband. He had helped rear their two older sons and they had never had the same problems with them. He had been very firm, but fair. Now she must fill those shoes, find a way to undo the harm that spoiling the lad had already done. But what?

A glimmer of an idea came to her some days later. She was seated at her desk, in her office, sorting through her mail. Amongst the usual junk was an advertisement for yet another new wonder drug. RECTINOL, FOR ALL YOUR BEHAVIORALLY DIFFICULT PATIENTS, ran the headline. She usually consigned such trash to the waste paper basket, but for some reason she looked at this one again, reading the smaller print. Rectinol, it said, allowed the clinical psychologist to modify the behavior of even the most recalcitrant of patients, useful in criminal and drug rehabilitation programs. Each 1ml injection contained 50mg of the drug aminopheryl benzoate, a powerful psychotropic drug which opened the deepest recesses of the patient's mind, leaving them wide open to suggestion. "CAUTION! To be used in the most serious of cases only. The dose must be strictly observed, no more than three treatments per patient. Not to be used on children." Apparently, the effects of this drug were cumulative and so powerful that if too much was given, or a child were treated, physical as well as psychological changes could occur.

"Now what do they mean by that?" Maureen wondered. "Perhaps a few calls to some colleagues are in order." And that was what she did. She learned that the power of suggestion under this drug was so strong that you could actually use it to cause mutations in the body, to mold the body as well as the mind. The evidence was scarce because researchers had been frightened off, but in principle, the possibilities were mind boggling. "I wonder," mused Maureen, thinking again about her problem child. "Do I dare? Nothing else I've tried seems to work." She thought long and hard, before reaching for the phone to place a provisional order for a small supply of the drug.

Just like her daughter, Maureen must be subtle in her approach. As a professional, she had been trained to always seek the advice of experts when confronted with a difficult problem. And who was the expert in Kevin's field? Why, Becky, of course. Softly, softly, was the approach. First she had detailed talks with her young but bright daughter about her plans to reintroduce his feminization. A little petticoat training had worked before, it would work again, and the Rectinol would be the means of bypassing the hypnotic block she herself had placed in his mind. First, they must find a way of

getting Kevin to accept the drug. No child liked to be given a hypodermic needle. Psychology would help, and psychology was her profession.

“Are you feeling all right, dear?” Maureen asked, when next she saw her son. “Fine. Why?” “Oh, nothing. I just thought you looked a little peaky, is all.” “Gosh, you look pale, Kevin,” said Becky. “You’re not sick or something, are you?” “For the umpteenth time, I feel fine. OK?” yelled the boy. After two days of constantly being asked how he felt, he began to doubt if he was OK. After inspecting her “sickly” son, Maureen announced, “I don’t think anything is seriously wrong with you, but perhaps you are run down. I’m going to give you some vitamin injections. They should do the trick.” Kevin, of course, resisted the thought of having a needle, but his mother was adamant. “It’s only a tiny little jab. Tell you what, I’ll give Becky some as well.” Becky was not pleased at this turn of events and looked anxiously at her mother. Kevin agreed, but only if Becky had hers first. Of course, Becky’s jabs really were vitamins.

Within minutes of the first small injection of Rectinol, Kevin was in a sleep-like trance, totally open to suggestion. Maureen was most impressed for she had never in all her years of practice seen a trance so profound. Again, Becky was able to impose her will on her brother. Maureen was quite content to let her daughter lead in this vital part of her son’s rehabilitation. Again, she implanted posthypnotic commands into his mind. Again, he spent hours as Caroline, clad in frilly dresses, playing with his dolls. Again, his behavior improved dramatically. So much so that his teacher commented on the improvement to Maureen. “I must say, Mrs. Wilson, I don’t know what you said to young Kevin, but the change is dramatic. His grades are much improved as is his behavior and general demeanor. He is a much more pleasant child. If you could bottle what you did, it would be priceless!” “If only she knew,” smiled Maureen to herself.

It was inevitable that Becky would seek to experiment with her newfound and now official (i.e., approved by her mother) authority. She started to suggest to Kevin that even when he was a boy, he should wear pretty panties and vests, and so he did, even to school. His chums who used to tease him for being a sissy, were now convinced that he was. On more than one occasion had they seen the hem of a lacy pink camisole under his shirt when it had come adrift of his belt, or the outline of lacy panties through his pants. So they no longer called him names but treated him almost like a girl, with respect, and by keeping him at a distance. He was not invited to participate in any of their rough activities, he was too delicate. The fact that he no longer picked fights with them merely served to prove their point, or so they reasoned. Besides, he no longer felt quite at ease with them. He seemed to gravitate towards the girls, finding their topics of conversation and play more interesting. For their part, the girls accepted him quite readily, seeming to sense his femininity. Becky’s friends Debbie and Allison had played with him before, of course, so they were quite at home with their new playmate.

The pressure exerted by Becky was relentless, with the blessing of her mother. The brothers were at best indifferent. While they saw their new sissified young brother, they also saw that the spoiled brat that they detested was little in evidence. In fact, Kevin’s own personality was pushed more into the background as the more feminine Caroline began to dominate his life ever more. Not content to have him just wear panties and vests, Becky encouraged him to wear girl’s outer clothes. After all, pants were

pants, she reasoned and what was the difference between a blouse and a shirt? One T-shirt was much like another. Kevin had to agree. His friends noticed the difference immediately. The pants had no fly, the blouses buttoned up the wrong way and were made of softer material than the average boy's shirt. Kevin didn't care. They were comfortable and he liked the feel of the satin smooth material next to his skin.

Time went by and Christmas arrived. All of Kevin's presents were for a girl, from pretty party dresses to soft underwear. He now had a complete wardrobe of girls clothes. He hadn't needed to wear Becky's hand-me-downs for some time. Even David and Frank acquiesced and bought him a doll's pram and baby doll. Their girl friends were delighted to help with the choice. After all, they too had detested the pain of a kid brother and thoroughly approved of his petticoat training, though of course, they did not know the complete truth.

After spending the entire holiday (four whole weeks) as Caroline, it was quite a wrench to go back to being a boy. Kevin felt less and less comfortable in his boyish guise. Once again, he was sitting, reading, while his mother sorted out the school uniforms. Stopping, she looked at him, an odd expression on her face. "I wonder..." she thought, trying to picture her little angel in a school girl's uniform. "Why not, he's worn every other kind of girl's attire." Selecting some items, she turned to her son. "Kevin," she said, "do you like being a girl, wearing pretty girl's clothes?" "You know that I do, mummy," he replied. "Would you like to try on Becky's uniform?" Kevin didn't reply. "Go on," she encouraged. "Just to see what kind of a school girl you would make. Please, just for me?" Kevin shrugged, taking off his clothes. Once naked, he donned a cotton vest, but when his mother held out the next garment, he froze. He was not allowed to put on navy blue school knickers. "What's the matter?" asked his mother. "I can't" he replied. "Why not?" "I don't know, mummy. I just know that I mustn't put them on." Maureen lost her temper. "Don't be silly. PUT THEM ON!" she ordered.

Just at that point, Becky walked into the room. In an instant, she saw what was happening. "No mummy, stop." she yelled. She was too late. Kevin was already responding to the order by an adult and pulling the offending panties up over his legs, tucking his vest in and settling the elasticized waist. As he did, the conditions of the long-ago-implanted posthypnotic suggestion, the one that Becky had forgotten to mention, were being met. Kevin had been ordered by an adult to wear the navy blue school knickers and in doing so he became a girl, in his mind, forever. Because of the drug that they were using on him, his body would follow his newfound beliefs. In a matter of months, it would mutate. He would be the young girl named Caroline that he had been programmed to be. Becky had some serious explaining to do, and her mother was waiting. Regardless, there was no going back.

"I must admit, I have mixed feelings," confessed Miss Leslie, Kevin's primary school teacher. "On the one hand, Kevin's behavior and grades are now exemplary." "And on the other?" prompted Maureen, offering a cup of tea to Miss Leslie. "Kevin's increasing use of girl clothes is a little disconcerting, to say the least. The other parents are bound to comment. After all, their own children will talk and gossip can be bad for a school. Scandal can be disastrous."

“I have a confession to make,” replied Maureen. “As you know, my husband died when Kevin was only two. Now, Philip was never good with girl children. He preferred boys as he could relate to them. You know, play football, baseball, go fishing, that kind of thing. When Becky was born, he was pleased, but left her to me. He didn’t much like the idea of another girl, so when our fourth child was born a girl, I kept it from him and pretended that she was a boy. After he died, in honor of his memory, I continued to raise her that way.” “Are you trying to tell me that Kevin is really a girl?” asked Miss Leslie, incredulously. “Yes,” Maureen replied, her eyes downcast. “I’m ashamed to say that it just seemed easier to continue with the charade. Recently, however, Caroline’s true nature has shown. Caroline is her actual name. Her femininity has started to express itself. The confusion in her mind was what caused her bad behavior a few months ago. Only by allowing her to take up her proper life as a girl was she content and well-behaved.”

Miss Leslie sighed. “Well that certainly explains a lot. I always thought Kevin was too pretty and should have been a girl. It seems that I was right, even if I didn’t know it. What do you plan to do now?” “When school resumes, Caroline will be attending as herself, as a girl. I asked you here to seek your advice. I need to know how you will react to that. I would prefer her to stay at the school she knows and loves, where her big sister can keep an eye on her. If it creates any problems, please tell me now, so I can arrange another school.” “No, I think you are right. She should stay at our school. We can deal with any problems as they arise. Her records can be amended when term starts.” “Thank you, you’ve been very considerate,” replied Maureen, helping the teacher into her coat.

“How did it go, Mum?” asked Becky. “It went fine. Miss Leslie accepted my story. I can use my medical contacts to get Caroline’s birth certificate altered. After that, you will officially have a new sister. What do you think of that?” “It’s kind of scary,” Becky replied, “But I love her dearly and it’s gonna be all right.” “I agree,” smiled Maureen, “Now go and get your sister, she’s going to need a new uniform.”

# SUGAR 'N SPICE

By **Melissa Anne Rogan**

Betty Hughes stood by the wrought iron gate, staring indecisively up a long driveway which passed through a well-tended garden to a large well-kept house. Should she? Shouldn't she? Summoning her courage, she opened the gate and started up the drive. Reaching the door, she hesitated once more before again pulling herself together and pushing the doorbell button. The chimes rang loudly in the house and within a very short time, she heard footsteps. The door opened to reveal an extremely pretty young girl of about eight years of age. She had long, golden tresses in two plaits held by ribbons, a pretty face with a cute, freckle-covered snub nose, large blue eyes and Cupid's bow lips. She was dressed in a light green dress, covered by a white pinafore. On her feet she wore white anklets and black T-strap shoes. Looking at the lady, she curtsayed daintily and smiled, before opening her pretty mouth to speak. "Good afternoon, may I help you?" "Obviously a very polite, well brought-up young lady," thought Mrs Hughes to herself, approvingly.

"Good afternoon, young lady," she replied, equally politely. "My name is Mrs. Hughes and I have an appointment to see Dr. Wilson. Is she your mother?"

"Yes," replied the young girl. "My name is Caroline. Please take a seat in the drawing room and I'll tell Mummy that you are here." Betty thanked her again and accepted the offer. "Is this the one?" she asked herself as Caroline left the room.

In short order, Maureen Wilson came through and introduced herself, leading the nervous woman through to her office cum consulting room. "Please take a seat," Maureen invited, pointing to a comfortable armchair by the fireplace and seating herself in the identical, facing chair. "May I offer you refreshments? Coffee? Tea? A cold drink?" Betty accepted a cup of tea, gratefully, and quickly looked around the room while Dr. Wilson left to arrange the refreshments. It was comfortable and homely, but no different from many other consulting rooms she had seen.

"Now," continued Dr. Wilson, seating herself, "How exactly may I be of assistance? Your letter was a little bit vague to say the least. Something about your son?"

"Yes, that is correct," answered Betty, reaching into her handbag and retrieving a photo wallet. Handing a snap to Dr. Wilson, she continued, "This is my son, Thomas. He is fifteen years old, very nearly sixteen." Maureen was surprised at this. Looking at the photograph, she saw the image of a young boy with dark hair, large expressive eyes, also dark, and fair, ruddy cheeks. "Forgive me, Mrs. Hughes. Is this a recent

photograph?” “Yes, taken only a few weeks ago.” “I know it’s difficult to judge size from a snap, but from this I would have estimated that this young boy is no more than eleven years of age, twelve at the very most.” “I know,” sighed Mrs Hughes, “and that is the root of all my difficulties.” “Please explain,” encouraged the psychologist.

“Tommy has always been on the small side. Even now, he shows no sign of development. He has no evidence of manly hair and his voice hasn’t broken. I have taken him to specialists but they say he is normal, just a small person who is late developing.” “Where does this concern me?” enquired Maureen, “I am a psychotherapist, not an endocrinologist.” Mrs Hughes continued. “Over the years, Tommy has been the butt of many of his school chum’s jibes and pranks. He has compensated by developing an extremely aggressive nature. He will fight at the least provocation. The other boys soon learned that what he lacked in stature, he made up for in sheer viciousness. Very soon, he was the leader of the gang and a bully. Whenever anyone picked on the wimps of the class, or the girls, it was Tommy, or his cronies. He has spent most of his childhood getting into one scrape after another. He is well-known to the juvenile authorities. But now, he is almost sixteen. Soon, he will be treated as an adult. I am terrified that he is going to get himself into real trouble. He is already mixing with some very unsavory characters and I’m sure they use drugs. He says he doesn’t, but how can I believe him? He’s lied to me before. I feel sure that in the not-too-distant future he will either end up in jail or will cross someone much bigger and tougher than him and will end up seriously injured or worse.”

“I think that I understand your problem,” said Maureen, remembering the trouble she had once had with a recalcitrant son. “What exactly do you want of me? If it’s behavioral therapy you want for him, then I must be honest with you, there are child psychologists far better qualified than me.” “No, that’s not it,” replied Mrs Hughes, “he has already seen most of them with little effect. He just refuses to cooperate.” “If he won’t co-operate, then I can’t see how I can help. You say you don’t want behavioral therapy?” Mrs Hughes hesitated. “Some time ago, there were rumors...” “What kind of rumors?” asked Maureen, warily. “Some of Tommy’s school chums were talking about a little boy who became a girl, at their lower school. Tommy said she was always a girl, but her mother had dressed her as a boy for a while. One of his friends always maintained that this child was a boy but somehow he was transformed. I never gave this much credence, but now I am desperate.” “Go on,” Maureen said, tonelessly. “If the story is correct, then the little child concerned is yours. What I need to know is whether or not the story is true, and if it is, can you do the same for me?” Maureen didn’t reply, looking at the photograph of what appeared to be a delightful child, and then at this woman who had come to her seeking help but who stirred up the past. Finally, seeing in her eyes the haunted look of a woman desperate for the well-being of her child, Maureen relented.

“It was true,” she said. Just then, there was a knock on the door and Caroline entered, pushing a hostess trolley with freshly-brewed tea, cups and accessories; plates of biscuits and slices of freshly-baked cake. Normally the housekeeper did this, but it was her day off. Caroline was glad to help. “Is this the one?” asked Mrs. Hughes. “This is the one,” averred Maureen. “May I look more closely?” “Caroline, please come here,” asked Maureen. As the little girl came to her mother, she lifted her onto a chair. “Now

Caroline, I want you to stand perfectly still. This lady is going to examine you. I promise she won't hurt you, but she may probe in some delicate places. Don't be afraid." So saying, she signalled to Mrs Hughes who crossed to the child and gently lifted the skirts of her dress and pinafore to reveal pretty petticoats and white satin panties. Slowly she pulled the panties down and examined the poor child's sex most carefully. Caroline stood perfectly still, holding her skirts up, her face crimson with embarrassment at the indignity she was undergoing. Finally, the examination was completed and, satisfied, Mrs. Hughes pulled up the panties, carefully tucking in Caroline's vest to the waistband, and rearranging the skirts of her petticoats and dress. Thanking the child, she lifted her down off the chair. Caroline got out of the room as fast as was reasonably polite. She didn't know what to make of this strange woman.

"Well?" prompted Maureen. "You say this child was a boy?" "Yes, most definitely," averred Maureen. "He would be ten now, and most probably spoiled beyond all redemption, a younger version of your Tommy, perhaps." "As far as I can tell," continued Mrs Hughes, "she is a perfectly-formed little girl. You say there was no surgery?" Maureen nodded her head. "And she is a complete female, even internally?" "As far as we can tell, she is female in every way, right down to her chromosomes, a perfect eight-year-old girl child. We expect her to develop just like any other female, up to and including childbearing. Of course we cannot be absolutely certain, until these events actually come to pass. Several of my more learned colleagues are following Caroline's case with deep interest, though it will never be made public." "Can you do the same thing for my son? Turn him into a polite, well-behaved little girl, before its too late?" "Let's have some refreshment and discuss it further," smiled Maureen, waving Mrs Hughes back to the armchair, and pouring tea.

Thomas Hughes looked about the drawing room with feigned disinterest. It was against his tough guy image to show interest in things like decor or furniture. He did wonder why he was here though, and what was going to happen to him. His mother had explained that the house was owned by a specialist who may be able to help him with his height and development problems. He had been to see so many specialists and been disappointed that he refused to hope that this one would be any more successful. She wasn't even a proper doctor, by all accounts.

As he restlessly scanned the room, the door opened. In walked a little girl of about eight. She was so pretty that he was affronted by her very femininity. Her childish innocence caused his aggression to rise almost instinctively. Then she spoke to him. "Hello," she said. "What's your name? My name's Caroline and I'm eight. This is my doll. Her name is Lucy. She's my favorite. Would you like to hold her?" Thomas exploded with anger. "No, I wouldn't, you idiotic child," he ranted. "I'm a boy and boys don't play with stupid dolls." He snatched the doll from her and hurled it across the room. Caroline was stunned and confused by the sheer ferocity of the attack, and stood there sobbing.

Thomas felt a blow from behind, across his head, strong enough to set his ears ringing. He turned to see another girl, older than the first, and slightly bigger than himself. "You lout," she screamed at him. "She's only a child who was being friendly. There was no need to be so rude." Becky was normally a gentle girl but when her young sister was threatened, she was a hellion in her defense. Thomas, like most bul-

lies, backed down in the face of such ferocity. "I'm sorry," he mumbled. "I thought she was being sarcastic because I'm small." "She's only eight, you moron," Becky retorted, "she wouldn't know what sarcasm was if it came up to her and bit her. Now pick up that doll and apologize." She didn't need to say "Or else," the unspoken threat was obvious. Thomas quickly handed the bedraggled, but fortunately unbroken, doll back to the sobbing child, muttering his apologies until she finally stopped. Becky took Caroline's hand and dragged her from the room, glaring malevolently at the boy. He would regret crossing her, of that he could be sure.

Maureen carefully closed her office door. Both she and Mrs. Hughes had just witnessed the unsavory scene in the drawing room, silently watching from the office door, drawn by the commotion, but not, in the heat of the argument, noticed by the children. "Yes," mused Maureen, "I see your problem. A most aggressive, ill-mannered boy. I do indeed sympathize with your predicament" She thought back to the time, not so long ago, when she was experiencing very similar problems with her own unruly child. Thomas could very well be an older version of Kevin, though his approaching majority made his predicament a much more dangerous one, both for himself and for his mother. "Well," she thought, "same problem, same cure."

"I found these," said Mrs. Hughes rummaging in her bag, before handing a pile of photographs to Maureen. Maureen looked to see several snaps of a pretty little girl. "Very nice; who is she?" she asked.

"Why, it is Thomas," was the surprising reply. "I always wanted a little girl. When his rat of a father deserted me shortly after he was born, I hated men so much that I used to dress Thomas as a little girl, though I stopped when I was told that it might do him harm." "Does he know about this?"

"Oh yes, I kept it up until he was about five, so he remembers. I used to tease him with the pictures, but he's too violent for that now." "Hmm, we might be able to use these to our advantage. With your permission, I would like to involve my older daughter, Becky. She has a definite flair for the kind of humiliation we are planning." Mrs Hughes agreed, willingly.

Becky sat looking at the photographs, a huge grin on her face.



She had been put into the picture by now. She remembered well the sense of power she had felt when she had first become involved in feminizing her kid brother. She was more than happy to feel it again, especially as the target of her power was to be that bullying little wimp sitting outside, who she had so recently had a row with. Oh yes, she saw the chance to have some fun, at his expense. Her mother was talking, so she pulled her mind from its reverie, back to the job at hand.

“As I was saying,” said Maureen, noticing that Becky was again paying attention, “We will not be able to use quite the same approach with Thomas as we did with Kevin.” “Why is that, mum?” asked Becky. “Thomas is older and more streetwise than Kevin was,” Maureen replied. “He will almost certainly suss out a direct approach. No, we have to be subtler. We need to break his confidence, erode some of that arrogance before we can really get to work. We have to make him feel dependent on us for his well-being, so that he will willingly obey our suggestions. Perhaps we can use these photos to jog his childhood memories a little?”

“Why am I here?” whined Tommy. He had grown rather petulant. After all, he had been waiting for over half an hour. First, he had had a run in with the two girls of the house. Then he had had to wait while his mother, then the elder girl had been summoned to the office of this quack he had been brought to see. Were they talking about him? He had a strong feeling that they were, and an equally strong feeling that their discussions did not bode well for him.

“I thought you knew why you were here. We want to investigate why your growth and development is so retarded,” replied the smiling Maureen. “But I’ve already been to all sorts of doctors. And you’re not even a doctor. What can you do?” Maureen disliked the sneering tone to the child’s voice but held her temper in check. “I am a doctor, though not a medical doctor. As you say, there seems to be no medical reason for your lack of development. Maybe it’s something in your mind. That’s where I come in. I’m a psychologist, someone who can find and remove any mental blocks you may have.” “You mean you are a shrink, a quack?” “Boy, this is one hateful child,” thought Maureen. “Of course, if you don’t want my help, I can’t force you. Perhaps you like being so small. Why my twelve-year-old daughter is bigger than you. It’s up to you. What have you got to lose?”

Despite his outward air of bravado, Thomas was scared, very scared. He always went against his mother’s wishes, just to prove his independence, but he knew she was right. The crowd that he was now involved with contained some seriously bad people. They were not the kind of people you crossed. At least not if you valued your health. Once he became involved with them, he found himself being drawn ever deeper into their web of evil. He could not just stop seeing them, they wouldn’t allow it. No one left their gang unless they wanted you to. Thomas was desperate to distance himself from them, but while he could bully younger kids and fight with his peers, these were different. These were people who would as easily stick a knife in you as not. Perhaps, if he were bigger and stronger? But then, he had been to all the doctors with no luck. Perhaps this one could help. “OK, what do you want me to do?” he sighed.

“Now, Thomas,” smiled Doctor Wilson, “I’m going to give you a small injection, just to make you relax, then I’m going to ask you some questions about your childhood, to see if I can find any problem which may have affected your growth.” Thomas didn’t like

injections but he had to maintain his macho image in front of his mother and that girl sitting in the corner. Why was she here anyway, and why did she have that stupid, knowing smile on her face? Maureen pushed a small dose of Rectinol into the lad's arm and waited while it took effect. Soon, he was breathing slowly and calmly as he entered the expected drug-induced trance.

"Can you hear me, Thomas?" "Yes," he replied, monotonously. "I want you to listen carefully to me. Anything that I tell you will be true. You cannot lie to me, do you understand?" "Yes." "Good. Now, Thomas, we are going on a journey, a journey into your past. You are becoming younger and younger, you are ten, you are eight, you are six, you are four. You are now four years old. Tell me what you are doing."

"I'm playing." "What are you playing with, Tommy?" "I'm playing with my new doll. Mummy bought it for my birthday. It was a secret present." Maureen smiled to herself at the image. "What are you wearing, Tommy?" "I'm wearing a pretty blue party dress, with matching ribbons in my hair. My anklets and shoes are white." "What about your underwear, Tommy?" "I'm wearing white satin panties and vest and a full, lacy petticoat with three layers of net to make my dress stand out." Maureen was now really grinning. Becky was giggling with joy. "Do you like wearing pretty girl's clothes, Tommy?" she asked. "Oh yes. I like wearing soft and dainty things." "Why is that, Tommy?" "Because it makes my Mummy happy, and when she's happy, she loves me lots and hugs me and buys me pretty things."

Maureen turned to Mrs. Hughes. "This is very good. He obviously has fond memories of his preschool years when you treated him as a girl. We can use that to help us. First we need to reinforce his memories." Maureen nodded to Becky who left to get some of her old clothes, just as she had for Kevin.

With the aid of the drug, Maureen deepened Thomas' trance and soon had him acting out his life as a four-year-old, again dressed in the prettiest of dresses and petticoats. The bemused Caroline was invited to supervise his doll play, which she did with relish, remembering how he had made her cry only an hour or so earlier. Caroline was young enough and innocent enough not to be surprised at anything that grown-ups did. If a boy wanted to dress as a little girl and play with her, then she was happy to oblige, glad to have a new friend to show off her dolls to.

It was early morning, the sun was streaming through the open bedroom window. Thomas awoke. He felt rested but rather odd. He remembered very little of his visit to the new doctor after she had injected the drug into him. He remembered that more than two hours had passed when he awoke. The little girl seemed very friendly, the older girl seemed to be laughing at him for some reason. When he and his mother returned home he had wanted to go out with his friends but at his mother's suggestion, had decided to have an early night instead. His head was still full of the dreams. He didn't know why, but he had dreamed of when he was very young, and remembered for the first time in years how his mother used to dress him as a girl. He blushed at the thought. Now, why had he suddenly remembered that particular part of his life after all these years?

Jumping out of bed, he quickly showered and dressed, not thinking it odd that he pulled on a pair of lacy panties instead of his usual boxer shorts. He quickly break-

fasted and left for school. If his mother was surprised that he was early for once, then she didn't show it. Besides, she didn't know that the real reason he was early was that he was meeting the gang; they had business to discuss.

"What's the matter with you?" snarled Brad Cooper, the leader of the gang. "Pay attention, Hughes, you dork. If you make a mistake, you're in deep shit, OK?" The threat was enough to bring Tommy back from his daydream. For some reason, he couldn't get the dreams from his mind. They gave him a strange kind of feeling; a warm feeling, of a time when life was simpler and he was innocent and safe. Nevertheless, he concentrated on the plot to bring drugs into school, to sell to some of the kids. He didn't like it but he was scared.

The same distraction stayed with him throughout the day. Could it be due to Dr. Wilson delving into his mind, into his past? He'd better ask her when he saw her next week for the results of her examination. When he went to the toilet and pulled down his jeans, he was totally shocked to see the feminine fripperies he was wearing. He was confused and alarmed. Why was he wearing them? Where had they come from? Why did he get a strange feeling of comfort when he stroked the silky material and felt the snug fit of the elastic on his legs? He had nothing else to change into so he had to keep wearing them, didn't he? Now he was determined to speak to that doctor, and quick.

The week couldn't pass fast enough for Thomas. He tried to phone Dr. Wilson to see if he could move forward his appointment, but she never seemed to be available. His mother just seemed to ignore him, which was unexpected as she usually fawned all over him. Meanwhile, the dreams seemed to get stronger. Although he resisted putting the panties back on, he couldn't get them out of his mind.

"Let me get this straight," said an amused Dr. Wilson, the following week. "You can't stop thinking about your childhood and found yourself wearing this pair of very pretty panties, and you think it's my fault? Well, the panties belong to Becky, my eldest daughter. She has been looking for them for a week. I can only conclude that my delving into your past has awakened some deep seated longings and you picked them up unconsciously, on your way out. Do you like wearing panties?"

"Yes. No, No," replied the confused boy. "Well, which is it, yes or no?" "I'm not a sissy." "Of course you aren't," she soothed, "there's nothing wrong with wanting to have the feel of soft material next to your skin. Anyway, just relax and we'll continue with our investigations. I'll try not to disturb any other memories. We wouldn't want you to wake up wearing a nappy, would we?" she laughed. Thomas flushed, but smiled at the joke, which served to break the tension. Injecting a further dose of the drug into him, she soon returned him to the trance of the previous week and continued delving into his subconscious. He was returned to femininity and dresses while Caroline was again invited to take him in charge, while Becky masterminded his conditioning.

"She needs a girl's name," Becky explained, "We can hardly call her Thomas dressed like this." "How about Thomasina?" asked Tommy's mother. "Yuk!" was Becky's simple reply. "How about a more feminine, pretty name?" suggested Maureen. Betty thought for a few seconds. "Sarah is a nice name. If I had had a daughter, I was going to call her Sarah, and that's the name we used to use when we played dress-up

all those years ago.” Maureen picked a book from the bookshelf and opened it. It was a compendium of names and their origins and meanings, used by parents trying to decide what to name their new offspring. Suddenly, she burst out laughing. “According to this, the name Sarah means The Princess. I think that makes Sarah a perfect name. After all, she is going to be our little princess.” So it was decided and Becky soon implanted the desire to be called Sarah into Tommy’s subconscious. Just one more idea to confuse him and help erode his harsh, masculine ways.

And so it continued. Just as in Kevin’s case, Thomas was increasingly exposed to the life of a twelve-year-old girl, on the verge of puberty, but still a child, at an age commensurate with his diminutive size. Of course, he never suspected that they were tinkering with his mind. He thought that his new feelings were due to the awakening of old memories, coupled to a desire to return to an age of innocence. Nevertheless, he found himself becoming more obsessed with feminine attire, and a girl’s way of life. At school, he was less ready to fight at the slightest thing, more likely to be good mannered. When he looked at a girl, instead of imagining himself making out with her, he found himself more likely to be appraising what she was wearing, imagining how he would look in that dress, or that skirt, with that particular shade of lipstick, or that specific brand of perfume. Of course as a child, he could never wear makeup to school, thought he. “What am I thinking of?” he thought, trying to shake these strange ideas from his mind.

His school chums noticed the difference in his attitude, as did his teachers. They were just relieved that he was getting into trouble less frequently, though they didn’t know why. At home, his secret trip into femininity continued. Now, when he woke, he was wearing a cute set of pink baby dolls, complete with frilly rumba panties. The fact that he found the feel of the silky material so comforting frightened him as much as the fact that he couldn’t remember putting them on! Of course he confided all of his fears to his psychologist. In her turn, she expressed concern and tried to reassure him, while all the time increasing his conditioning, looking to the day when he would be given a massive dose of Retinol, and his trip into genuine girlhood would be irrevocably started. But first, his masculinity must be broken.

Brad Cooper was becoming a bit concerned about a certain member of his gang. Tommy Hughes may be small, but he had always been more than capable of carrying out the wishes of the gang, had never shirked from a fight, even if he was obviously scared of Cooper and his lieutenants, two thugs who were low on brain, but big on brawn. Recently, however, Hughes had changed in some indefinable way. He still did as he was told, but seemed to have lost his nerve. He was almost sissy-like in some of his actions. Had his nagging mother been giving him a hard time? He must talk to him, and soon. He wasn’t sure that Hughes was right for the image of the gang, anymore.

“What is this?” Tommy asked his mother, intrigued. “It looks to me like an invitation to a birthday party,” she replied. “But why would Becky Wilson invite me to her birthday party? And why would she think I would consider going? She’s just a little girl.” “She will be thirteen next week, so she is no longer so little. Besides, the invitation is not addressed to you.” Tommy looked again at the envelope. It was addressed to Master Thomas Hughes, so his mother was wrong. He looked at the dainty little card.

It said," Miss Rebecca Wilson requests the presence of Miss Sarah Hughes on the occasion of her thirteenth birthday at 3 PM of Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June at 23, Acacia Avenue. RSVP" "Well, who the hell is Sarah Hughes?" Tommy continued. His mother rounded on him, slapping his face, hard. "I've told you before, I will not tolerate such language from you." Tommy, flushed with embarrassment and muttered an apology. Only a few short weeks earlier, he would have flushed with anger and given his mother another mouthful of abuse, so in that, at least, he had improved, she reflected. "As for Sarah, why that's you, also." Tommy squirmed as he again remembered his childhood and the vivid dreams he had been experiencing recently. He thought also of the soft, silky panties he was wearing under his jeans.

"I can't go to a girl's party," he protested, weakly. "Besides, it's not as if I have anything to wear." Betty smiled and led him to a closet, which she threw open with a flourish. Hanging there was the frilliest party dress he had ever seen. Made of white taffeta, its skirts were flounced out by layers of net underskirts. The Peter Pan collar, rosebud sleeves and hems dripped with lace and a wide pink sash enclosed the waist in a huge bow. It was just like a large size baby dress of the kind mothers often like to dress their unfortunate female offspring in, as if to try one last time to recapture their babyhood. The daintiest of underwear served to reinforce the image, white satin rumba panties with row upon row of lace on the seat and matching satin training bra and petticoats, to make the skirts of the dress stand out even further. Tommy was horrified at the sight, but as he eyed it, his posthypnotic training cut in and he found himself fondling the soft material, picturing himself in the pretty garment, imagining wistfully how it would feel to have those petticoats brushing his legs. He was trying it on in short order, checking the fit, admiring the view in a mirror. Betty smiled, secure in the knowledge that her sissy little boy would be accepting the invitation and would gleefully attend the party, dressed just how she wanted him to be, as her pretty little daughter.

The great day came. Tommy had little else on his mind and yet, far from the embarrassment and apprehension he should have felt, he was strangely looking forward to the party, and dressing in a frock. The fact that he was not disturbed was, in itself, disturbing. As he lay, soaking in the sweetly-perfumed bubble bath his mom had drawn for him, he reflected on the path his life had seemed to take recently. He was most definitely turning into a sissy, yet he seemed more contented in his life than at any time since he could remember. Because of this, his gang seemed to be distancing itself from him, and that both pleased and relieved him. He had hardly had a fight in ages. Kids who would normally have attacked him almost on sight, now seemed to give him a wide berth. The girls in his class seemed more relaxed and talkative than ever before. His mother certainly seemed to dote on him more, and argued with him less. Tommy absent-mindedly scratched the itch on his nipples as he pondered, subconsciously noting the little bump which had recently appeared beneath them.

Finally, his time was up and his mother ordered him out of the tub. Laughing, she chided him. "Come on, Miss Vanity, you'll vanish down the plug if you soak any longer." He no longer seemed to mind the feminine name and stepped out of the tub to be enveloped in a large, fluffy towel as his mother lovingly patted him dry before dusting him off with liberal amounts of scented bath talc and led him into his bedroom to

be dressed. First, he slipped the frilly panties over his smooth, hairless legs, loving the way the elastic of the legs and waist held them snugly in place as his mother settled them about his hips. He hardly noticed the fact that his penis was now so small that his front was totally flat and female in appearance. He hardly noticed his penis at all, these days. Why, he had even started to sit down when he went to the toilet.

Next, the matching training bra was slipped over his arms and fastened around his back. The way the almost flat cups lifted his little bumps was strangely sensual. White frilly ankle socks with pink bows followed, as did the full petticoat, its frilly layers dancing against his legs as he swayed. Finally, the gorgeous dress was lifted over his head and he almost swooned with girlish delight. He stood before the full-length mirror and watched as his mother zipped up the back and fastened the pink sash into a large bow at the small of his back. Shiny, pink, patent leather Mary Jane shoes followed and his hair, freshly permed, was arranged into ringlets held in place with pink side bows. Finally, white, lacy gloves, a white lacy cardigan to ward off the cold and a white straw boater hat with the inevitable pink ribbon and Sarah was ready to party; every mother's vision of the perfect little girl. As she was led through the door to the waiting car, Betty, inwardly hugging herself with delight, passed her new daughter a prettily wrapped present for the birthday girl, and off they went.

Brad Cooper had had just about enough. He was going to have it out with Tommy Hughes once and for all. If he couldn't act like a proper member of the gang, then he was out. Of course he would have to impress on him how unwise it would be to discuss gang matters out of school—forcibly. Tommy had shown in the past what a doughty little fighter he could be, but for sheer sadism, he could never compete with Brad. After all, how else do you become leader of the gang? Brad walked warily up the road towards Tommy's house. He couldn't simply knock on the door because Tommy's nagging mother had long since banned him from the premises. He was hardly scared of her, but the cow could make trouble. Publicity, he could do without. If he was careful, he could sneak to the back of the house unseen, and somehow attract Tommy's attention.

Just as he reached the Hughes' fence, the front door started to open. Brad quickly ducked back behind the hedge, carefully watching the door to see who was coming out. With relief, he saw that it was Mrs. Hughes, Tommy's mother. If she was going out, then so much the better. As she stepped out from the door, she turned and a young girl, dressed in all her party finery, emerged. She looked like something off a cake; so sugar and spice was her dress. The sheer femininity of the little girl's attire was an affront to Brad's masculinity. Who was she anyway? Tommy was an only child. And yet, Brad thought, she looked vaguely familiar, as if he should know her but couldn't quite put a name to her. He was sure that he would remember if Tommy had introduced him to such a prissy little girl. And then his mind clicked.

"Oh, my god," thought Brad in sheer disbelief. "Wait until I tell the guys about this! And the girls will love it. The little fairy is not just a sissy, but a total queen. There is no place in our little organization for this, but we can have some fun, at least. I just wish I had my camera. The crowd will never believe me!"

It was just an ordinary child's birthday party. Well, almost. The girls were dressed in their finest frocks, the boys were scrubbed and uncomfortable in their collars and

ties. Of course, Becky was now thirteen, almost a woman, and feeling very grown up in her tight, black, little minidress, which clung to her body, still with the ungainliness and coltishness of youth, but already showing signs of the woman she was to become. Her pert little immature breasts showed clearly through the fabric of the dress and her hips had already started to widen and become curvy, contrasting with her narrow waist. Her friends were of a similar age, and while some were as well-developed, others were not, and jealous of her, to them, very grown-up appearance. Boys and fashion were becoming increasingly important in their lives.

The sight of Sarah was a source of amusement, sympathy and relief to the girls. They were amused that a girl so obviously the same age as them was wearing an outfit designed for a much, much younger child. They were also sympathetic to Sarah's plight, as they knew that given just half of a chance, their own mothers would have them dressed in a similar outfit, looking for all the world like the ornament off a very fancy cake, with all the sugar and spice. They were relieved that they had been able to escape such a fate and dress in a more grown-up fashion, in a way designed to attract the attention of the boys huddled in the corner, frustratingly talking about football, of all things.

Caroline was delighted at the appearance of Sarah, for, as a much younger child, she too was dressed in a pretty and youngish, party dress, and glad to have someone "her own age" for company. Becky had only invited her as she was her sister, and had therefore been ordered to by their mother, despite complaints that she was too young. So, while Becky and chums played more grown-up games, and danced to the mobile disco, Caroline and Sarah, after the eats, were more than happy to retire to Caroline's room and amuse themselves playing with Caroline's dolls and dolls house.

Tommy walked quickly down the street. He was late so he was in a hurry. He had enough trouble staying out of arguments with Brad Cooper these days so he was loath to give him another excuse. He hurried into the clearing in the woods that was the gang's regular meeting place. Then, as he entered, he slowed down and adopted an air of feigned disinterest as if he hadn't, in fact, been hurrying. The rest of the gang were already there and he sensed that something was up as soon as he noticed the odd way that they were looking at him. His fear was almost overwhelming but he managed to suppress it.

"Well, well," grinned Brad, wolfishly, "If it isn't our little sissy boy." Tommy flushed red and stammered a denial. "What are you talking about?" "Shut up," snapped Brad. "Take him," he snarled, signaling to four of the other boys. Tommy tried to bolt, but they were too quick. As he struggled futilely, they held him firmly and, to Brad's order, ripped off his jeans and shirt, to expose the pink dainties he was wearing underneath to the laughing gang members. "See, I told you," taunted Brad. "Our Tommy is a little girl who likes wearing little girl's panties. Perhaps we should help him to dress properly."

With a further signal, two of the girls moved in. What they held in their arms made Tommy's blood run cold. Quickly, they pulled the dress over his head, and pulled off his sneakers and socks to replace them with pantyhose and heels. Tommy had ceased his struggles and sat quietly, accepting the humiliation as they fixed his hair into a pony tail. He flinched as they pierced first one, then the other, of his ears with a sharp

needle which he hoped that they had at least sterilized. He endured their giggles as they fitted long, dangling earrings into the newly-formed holes and quickly applied makeup—lipstick, mascara and blusher—to his face before standing back, laughing, to reveal their creation, to the amused stare of the boys.

Brad turned his predatory grin on Tommy as he reached down toward his flies. “And now, little lady, I’m going to introduce you to the true joys of girlhood.” Tommy stared as Brad stroked his penis into a massive erection, all the time bringing it closer and closer to his mouth. Brad’s intent was obvious. Tommy felt like a rabbit confronted by a deadly snake; mesmerized, powerless to resist. Opening his lips, he felt the thing enter his mouth, heard the laughing, as if from a distance, felt Brad’s strong hand grasp the back of his head and force him onto his massive organ. As the huge thing filled his mouth, Tommy felt himself choking as it penetrated down to his throat.

He was filled with a final surge of his long-gone masculine pride, of revulsion at what he was being forced to do, and he reacted. Tommy bit, hard, very hard. And the distant laughter turned to screams. And his mouth was filled again. Not with the expected secretion, but with blood. And then, with a massive pain, it all went dark.

“I came as soon as I got your message,” said a concerned Mrs. Wilson to her friend, Mrs. Hughes. Mrs. Hughes was in obvious distress. “What happened?” asked Mrs. Wilson. “As far as I can tell,” replied Mrs. Hughes, “those thugs found out about Sarah’s femininity and forced him to dress like a tart and perform a foul sex act on their leader. When he struggled, they kicked him unconscious and then mutilated him. Oh, what have I done?” she sobbed, “If I hadn’t tried to change him, this would never have happened.” Mrs. Wilson tried to calm her. “Come now Betty, you know that’s not true. You acted from the highest of motives. If you hadn’t, you know what was going to happen to Tommy. There, let me use my contacts to try and find out how badly he is hurt.” “Thank you, Maureen,” sniffled Mrs. Hughes, gratefully. “You have been a true friend.”

Maureen returned, some minutes later, with a rather bemused surgeon. “The good news, Mrs. Hughes, is that Tommy is not as badly hurt as we thought. He has a concussion and is badly bruised, but that is all. There is something that is confusing us, though. Perhaps you can help?”

“Certainly Doctor, anything I can,” replied a relieved Mrs. Hughes.

“Well, at first, we thought that gang had mutilated Tommy. It seems however, that the blood between his legs is not from an injury.”

“What do you mean?” asked a perplexed mother.

“Mrs. Hughes,” continued the doctor, “I can think of no easy way to put this.” He took a deep breath. “Your son has just started his first menstrual period. Is there something you would like to tell me?”

### **Epilogue**

“And so,” continued Maureen, “I’ve used my contacts to cover up our part of the story. Tommy is now registered as a twelve-year-old girl, Sarah. The doctors that have assisted me in my studies are powerful and have no wish to be in the public eye as yet. They will give us their wholehearted support. Already, moves are afoot to change

Sarah's birth and school records. Soon, there will be no trace of Tommy having ever existed." Once again, Mrs Hughes found herself thanking her new and firm friend.

"Tell me," she said, "what happened to those horrible bastards who did all this?"

"That's the funny thing," replied Mrs Wilson. The Cooper boy didn't take part in the actual physical assault, he had troubles of his own. It was the other boys who beat Sarah up, and they are all in custody. The girls who helped were horrified at the actual violence and it was them who called for the police and ambulance. They are cooperating fully with the police and seem to be willing to give evidence on a number of crimes that the gang have been involved in. As for Tommy, as far as they are concerned, the ambulance brought in a young girl, dressed beyond her age, who had been physically assaulted."

"As for Cooper, he has a record as long as your arm. Now the police are thinking of charging him with committing a sexual act on a minor and that is very serious. If found guilty, he could go to jail for a long time. He is only seventeen. What a waste of life. In fact, the Judge has asked me to consider taking him on as a client. He feels that my success in rehabilitating drug offenders may be put to good use. Perhaps I can recondition him into a more caring member of society."

"And you would take such a person?"

"Oh yes," replied Mrs Wilson. "The worst cases offer the best challenge. It seems also, that your offspring bit him so hard that his penis is irreparable. His manhood is destroyed. He would not enjoy prison."

Mrs Wilson thought for a moment. "I wonder what he would look like in a pretty dress." Both women laughed as, arm in arm, they went to visit their new little girl.

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