

MY LITTLE HOMEMAKER

By Elizabeth Anne Nelson



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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MY LITTLE HOMEMAKER

By Elizabeth Anne Nelson

“Now,” Mrs. Lurd sighed setting aside her purse and allowing the waiter to hold her chair as she tucked her gray tweed suit skirt in place to sit down. “You must tell me all about your marriage, and everything.”

“There is so much to tell,” Mrs. Turner, exclaimed nodding her approval of the waiter's unspoken knowledge of her desired refreshment. “And yours, dear?”

“Oh,” was the observation as she brushed her dark hair aside from her high forehead. “I would love a Manhattan.”

“Yes ma'am.”

“Well. Where to begin?” Mrs. Turner paused with a little shrug. “Perhaps it would be best to explain from the beginning.”

“Explain?”

“Yes. Things have become frightfully complicated, really.” She accepted her drink and paused again long enough for a *cheers* and then she continued:

“I met Carol Jean at the Cultural Center Annual Board Meeting. It was one of those boring affairs where various company executives vie for corporate publicity *ala* helping improve local cultural offerings. Carol's paintings were among many of the other struggling artists' works on display to show that the Center is doing its bit to preserve modern art. His paintings were not too extreme, so I bought a couple for gifts. And, so I was introduced to him as a potential patron.”

Mrs. Turner shrugged before opening her purse to remove a pack of cigarettes and a color photo.

“I became quite intrigued by his gentle, almost dependent manner. And to be brief, I married him.”

Mrs. Lurd accepted the photo quite curious over the type of husband her former pupil might select. She had always felt that June's strong career drive would bar her from a serious marriage. Glancing at the photo she was amazed at what she saw.

“Why, he is very beautiful!” Yes, he could only be called beautiful. Like the classic image of a lovely child with golden curly hair, deep blue eyes filled with an almost haunting happiness, and the features of a demi-angel.

“How tall is he?”

“Well,” Mrs. Turner remarked almost hesitantly “About four and a half feet.”

“I see...”

“Yes,” was the observant counter. “I have also felt that I might have married him because he was more of a shy child than a husband. I have felt quite competent in my independence, but I have wanted to possess something...”

“It is quite understandable. After all, I have known you for over ten years darling. We all need somebody,” Mrs. Lurd said remembering the wedding invitation. “It was very disappointing that you held your wedding when I had to be at the Home Economists' Convention.”

“I am sorry,” Mrs. Turner replied with an almost masculine shrug of casual dismissal. Accepting the return of the photo, she replaced it and lighted a cigarette as if collecting her thoughts.

“There is more, isn't there?” Mrs. Lurd prodded.

“Of course,” was her casual reply. “We agreed to buy a home upstate just far enough out of town to be pleasant, yet close enough for me to commute. We further agreed that I should continue my career and that he could continue painting while caring for our home.”

“It was only right,” Mrs. Lurd commented firmly, agreeing with her friend's arrangement. “It sounds very modern. But, it must have been very difficult?”

“It still is,” was the simple reply.

“Please tell me, perhaps I can help?”

Mrs. Turner half shrugged and took a sip from her drink before saying, “Of course dear I do so need your advice.”

Setting the drink aside she continued, “I have never really considered giving up my career to be a homemaker. It only seemed natural that Carol Jean take care of such things while I earned our daily bread, so to speak. Our arrangement seemed so very simple. And, frankly, Mrs. Lurd, I did not think that matters could become so complicated.

“Carol selected our lovely home in Briar. He continued his painting and I am certain he found his surroundings very happy. At first he was all aglow over the strange adventure of running a home. He doesn't know much about housekeeping and, frankly, he is an awful cook.

“At first, I would have pushed a housekeeper on him, if it had not been for Carol heart rendering desires to please me in his new role. But due to the demands of the Elasco merger I am hardly at home. So, I felt that he would have time, despite his natural shyness, to pick up what he needed through social contacts with the other wives in Briar.”

“Other wives?” she was asked in a tone of concern.

“If I must deal with men, why can't he deal with women?” was the frank reply, causing Mrs. Lurd to smile. “I may even quote the statement you made concerning the possibility of society shifting towards ability rather than sexual role-placement.”

Mrs. Lurd nodded, “But, my dear, that was based upon the possibility of a future that accepts male homemakers in a society of pluralistic lifestyles. It was quite aca-

demic. Here you are trying the real thing. And that is quite another matter completely. But, please tell me how the wives, you mentioned, reacted to their new colleague?"

A trace of amusement touched her lips. "Perhaps it all began with the Briar Ladies Society."

"How interesting," Mrs. Lurd interrupted. "It is so important that women recognize the admission of men to their societies if they wish to be in turn accepted as equals. He joined their society?"

"Oh, no." was the prompt reply followed by a mysterious laugh as if June (Mrs. Turner) was enjoying a private joke. This outburst was followed by a half-sigh. "Although I wish he had."

"Oh, please tell me!" Mrs. Lurd asked in hushed tones feeling that she was about to hear a strangely amusing story.

"It seems that three of four of the local *ladies* dropped in on their new neighbor..." Mrs. Turner began...

"My dearest, is your mother in?" Mrs. Simpson asked in a tolerant tone, addressing the lovely little boy of about thirteen dressed in a blue color, spattered artist's smock, who had shyly opened the door to stand somewhat awkwardly before her and the other ladies.

She was quite pleased to note that her neighbor's boy was pretty and not at all rough in action like some of the other boys. With a nod she turned towards her three matronly friends and they all entered past the somewhat stunned *child*. "Your mother is in, my dear, isn't she?"

"No, ma'am," he replied almost instinctively.

"Oh," Mrs. Norton observed, with a trace of disappointment, as they proceeded into the living room.

"I just knew she wasn't in," suggested Mrs. Andrews placing her hand surreptitiously upon a nearby table to run her fingers along the dull surface.

"Humph," she snorted, brushing the dust from her fingers.

"I am sorry," he half apologized for his poor housekeeping. It was really difficult for him to know how to handle this situation. He was all alone and, there were so many of them. He didn't know what to say to the four large matrons, who seemed determined to take charge of things. At least, June would be home soon. In fact, he had already started coffee for her arrival.

"Perhaps, I might serve some coffee..." Carol suggested

"Well dear," Mrs. Simpson replied hopefully, not really listening to the *child* before her. "I guess your mother should be here soon?"

"Who?"

"Your mother, child," Mrs. Norton countered, with tolerant adult patience, in an effort to deal with the child. Perhaps he was not very bright. After all he did seem to be quite confused as to what to do. She did wonder why she had not heard anything about the child from the local school principal.

“She is coming home?” Mrs. Simpson pressed.

“Well,” he stammered nervously placing his hands into the folds of his smock skirt. “I...”

“Of course, child,” Mrs. Norton encouraged the boy seeing that her suspicions were confirmed by the boy's shy stumbling speech. “We would love coffee, dear.”

“Yes, it is sweet of you,” Mrs. Simpson noted helpfully with a nod towards Mrs. Sims. “Can we help, honey?”

Mrs. Sims, seeing her nod responded by taking his hand and leading the surprised man back into the kitchen.

“My what a lovely kitchen,” she exclaimed as she released his hand to survey the kitchen. “But it is a mess.”

“I'm sorry,” he murmured apologetically, causing her to lightly kiss his forehead. “Why, child, that was sweet. After all it wasn't your fault, I am certain,” she noted in a suddenly cold tone. “This is a woman's duty.”

“But...”

“Shh,” she cautioned dismissing his protests before turning to the brewing coffee maker on the counter by the stove. Noting that the coffee was fresh, she guessed that his mother had just stepped out and would soon be back; so, she opened a nearby cabinet and selected five cups and a glass.

“Please be a dear and fetch me some teaspoons child,” she ordered, shooing him away by patting his bumpylike one would a child underfoot, causing him to glow with embarrassment before he retreated!

Meekly he opened the silver chest as she arranged the silver coffee set after transferring the coffee and filling the silver sugar bowl. With smile she went to the refrigerator and selected from it a small bottle of cream and a bottle of milk.

“Do you have some cookies?”

“Yes, ma'am,” he replied going to a cupboard. Taking a box of mixed cookies, he brought it to her.

“Thank you, child,” she complimented politely. And soon the tray was complete for a small coffee party.

“I think I had better carry this, my dear. Perhaps you will hold open the door?”

Half running, he opened the door and she passed through into the living room. He knew that he was all wrong in his retreat from revealing the truth about himself. But, he was so afraid that his first impression before them was all wrong. What could they think of his poor housekeeping? Of him? Why didn't his wife, June, come to his rescue before things got worse?

“And she sends out her laundry,” Mrs. Andrews was explaining with serious concern when she noted their return. “Was he a nice little helper?”

“Oh, yes. The coffee was already on, so I suspect that she has just stepped out for something,” Mrs. Sims replied waving him to a nearby chair, a command he docilely followed while hoping June would soon be there.

“He is a simply delightfully well mannered child,” Mrs. Andrews observed as he sat down prompting her to reach out to automatically adjust the child's smock with matronly concerns for the child's tidiness while ignoring his obvious nervous embarrassment over her attentions. “Oh, yes, a perfect darling,” Mrs. Simpson commented, helping to set the tray down by clearing a spot on the living room coffee table, as she observed how quietly the child sat. “She at least knows how to train her child.”

“I think that is always important,” Mrs. Norton observed, helping to pour. “But the house is a bit untidy.”

“The kitchen is darling,” Mrs. Sims stated taking her cup. “But I don't think it has been cleaned in days. And what is this about sending her laundry out?”

“Of course, dear,” Mrs. Andrews countered warming up to her story. “I spoke to Mr. Jenkins and he said that she delivered all the laundry.”

Carol looked down at his smock skirt remembering how he and June had quarreled over his first feeble attempts to do the laundry. It was a real disaster, and she insisted that he send it out until he had more time to learn how to do a few personal things first. So she took the bundles with her en route to work.

He would learn how to iron if it killed him!

“And here is your milk and a cookie for being such a good boy,” Mrs. Sims announced handing him the large glass which he grasped in both hands because she would not release it until he had a firm hold. “Now, what do you say, dear?”

“Thank you, ma'am,” he replied automatically.

A cold shiver of sheer frustration touched him as he sipped from the glass. Their teasing of him was one thing, but this mere acceptance of him being little more than a backward child was another matter. Nothing he could do would reveal his adulthood to their condescending attitudes even if they would permit such action. It was apparent that he was trapped until his wife came home.

“How cute,” Mrs. Norton observed, looking at him with amused interest as he drank slowly from the glass. “Be a good child and drink it all.”

Mrs. Norton took another sip from her coffee. “We mustn't be too harsh on her, girls. After all, they have only been here a few weeks and a house this big requires a great deal of work.”

“Why yes,” Mrs. Andrews announced, pouring another cup. “It is unfortunate that we chose this moment to arrive.”

“A woman should always have a home ready for guests,” Mrs. Simpson stated, causing Mrs. Sims to nod agreement. “After all it is our duty to see to it that our community does not become careless as others have.”

“Perhaps” Mrs. Norton remarked with a shrug. “They may both be working. More and more women are holding down jobs now to make ends meet. And she is a

stranger. She may not know the name of a housekeeper who might help in tidying things up for her.”

“And the child?” Mrs. Andrews asked studying Carol Jean thoughtfully. “She should have him cared for. A boy his age should not be left alone at home.”

“I suppose he is registered for school?” Mrs. Andrews asked.

“No,” Mrs. Norton replied with a nod of her head towards the boy to add in confidential undertone. “They no doubt send him to a special school.”

“How sad, such a lovely child.”

To his utter amazement Carol felt himself quite alone in the room, as if they were speaking to each other and he wasn't there. He was now just a *child* to be spoken of and not to. A bit nervously, he moved forward in the chair to place the glass aside.

“Please, dearest,” Mrs. Sims cautioned before she quickly leaned forward, taking the hem of his smock skirt and wiping his lips. With a pleased smile she took the glass, placing it upon the tray.

“Now, up-see-daisy,” she murmured placing her hands beneath his slender arms and lifting him until he sat with his back straight up against the back of the chair so that his legs were childishly stranded, helplessly high above the floor!

“There, dearest. It is good to sit with your back up straight,” she murmured, straightening the smock skirt.

“What is your name, dearest?” Mrs. Andrews asked with tolerant amusement over the child's obvious embarrassment over their attentions.

“Carol Jean,” he murmured, sensing all too well his shame from Mrs. Sim's last humiliating gesture. Bowing his head almost shyly he swallowed trying to hide his mortification, while Mrs. Sims glanced at the other matrons before carefully adjusting the waist of his smock, allowing her hand to surreptitiously pat his lap causing him to quickly fold his hands into his lap. He realized suddenly that the purpose of her taunting little pat was to measure the true nature of his childlike control by feeling what he might be wearing beneath the pants and smock!

“Carol Jean,” Mrs. Sims repeated, apparently satisfied with her comforting of the child. “Now be a sweet child and sit still while we await your mother.” “He is really a delightful doll,” Mrs. Simpson observed as Mrs. Sims accepted another cup of coffee as a reward for her motherly functions. “How old do you think the child to be?”

“Oh, about twelve,” Mrs. Norton guessed, causing Carol to look up in mild surprise. As their eyes met, he could feel that her amusement was tempered with compassion. Uncomfortably he looked down at his smock, wishing that he had never worn it, as he knew that she was bemused as to why he wore it.

“I guess a smock is much more appropriate than a pinafore for toddler boys,” Mrs. Norton mused aloud.

“They are really quite efficient,” Mrs. Simpson rejoined. “And no doubt he wears one because he is much younger.” Her opinion was apparently confirmed by his sudden look of helpless distress.

“The spattered paint design is really quite cute,” Mrs. Andrews commented. “My little one has a dark green smock decorated with pink flowers. It is very pretty when worn over pale green stretch pants.”

“Those new stretch tights are so marvelously simple for changing trainer diapers. No snaps and buttons to confuse the poor child,” Mrs. Sims noted matter-of-factly before gazing at Carol with, amused interest, causing him to bow his head over the inference of her observation.

There was nothing he could do now. Her very words had removed any hope of his regaining any measure of adulthood with these women. It would be too humiliating to tell them the truth. As if to pretend he wasn't wearing the smock, he folded his hands again beneath the smock with the near panic of the child he now felt he may very well be.

“Judith Sims, I do believe you may be right,” Mrs. Andrews stated as Carol squirmed slightly in his chair feeling the warmth of his hands against his corduroy pants beneath his infantile skirts. “I do believe that corduroy is much more serviceable for his age. But it must be difficult.”

Mrs. Norton nodded. “I feel sorry for the poor woman. It must be hard to have such a helpless one around and such a big house. It is a wonder that she gets anything done. And now we know why she sends her laundry out.”

Carol wanted to run from their cruelty and cry. He could not believe what was happening. Again he squirmed in the chair, feeling every bit as if he were somehow that backward child, and still smarting from the truth of Mrs. Norton's remarks.

Unconsciously, from his frustrations, he wrung his hands beneath his skirts, giving to the women a signal that he could have hardly believed possible. His gesture appeared to be one that they all knew well from their own children.

“Ah, little Carol,” Mrs. Sims remarked, as if speaking to a small child, trying to help the child understand by her tone her disapproval and yet her desire to be a friend. She detected his apparent discomfort, with a trace of mild amusement mingled with sympathy.

“If you must, my dear, I would be happy to help you as your mother would. You do want to be good.” He looked at her in simple surprise as the other women nodded knowingly.

“You do need to go wee wee, dearest, don't you?” she stated bluntly, before arising to Mrs. Andrews' nervous nod.

“I...I...I..,” he stammered helplessly as her strong arms lifted him from the chair to his feet. To his renewed chagrin, she took his hand and led him towards the bathroom without regard to his embarrassment. “Let mmme...”

“Of course darling, you must know” she encouraged gently, with a sigh of impatience over his protests, before she opened the bathroom door.

“You can unbutton yourself?”

“Plee..” he protested, only to feel her lift the smock skirts to reach the buttons of his pants.

Without waiting further help from her, he backed away pulling the skirt from her hand only to lose his balance and fall to the toilet seat! With trembling fingers he unbuttoned the pants only to see her kneel by his side and draw them down to remove them.

“Oh, please!”

“Never mind child, I have toddlers of my own.”

Taking the pants she walked out of the bathroom and placed them on a nearby chair. Turning she stood patiently in the door.

“You can remove your trainers?”

“Yes,” he almost sobbed, fearful of her motherly interest, as he quickly lowered his briefs, fearing that she might remove them too, and discover the truth!

Silently she watched, adding to his total uneasiness, for he knew that she would not leave. “Please do not be too long, baby.”

Carol forced himself, feeling much like those embarrassing moments when he had been waited upon by his own mother so long ago. It was as if some strange magic had projected him into the past. Then he finished his business.

“Wipe yourself carefully, Carol Jean.”

Obediently he followed her instructions and moved aside at her signal as she leaned forward and flushed the bowl. Without further command, he washed his hands and waited as she helped him wipe them.

“That is a good baby,” she comforted with a little kiss for his brow, before leading him back to the living room *sans* pants!

Mrs. Norton came from the kitchen with another tall glass of milk and handed it to him.

“Please hold it with both hands, child.”

Passively he followed her command taking the warm glass in his hands. Warm milk. Oh, how embarrassing it all was! He sipped a swallow from the glass, not unlike a reluctant child.

“Now, sweetheart, all of it,” she encouraged.

“He looks adorable without pants,” Mrs. Andrews observed as he stood drinking the milk like a child... “He looks like an infant girl.”

“At least an infant,” Mrs. Simpson commented, taking the pants from the chair and touching the front cautiously.

“Perhaps you had better check?”

Before Carol could react, Mrs. Sims lifted the skirt front and patted her hand to his briefs gently, without bothering to look. “He is dry.”

She smiled and released the skirt, causing him to hide his shame by bowing his head to sip from the warm milk.

“Thank goodness we noticed his desire.”

With this Mrs. Andrews took the empty glass from his shaking hands and, using the edge of his skirt she wiped his lips and the tears of shame that appeared in his lovely eyes.

"I am afraid that we have upset the poor child somehow. He is so sweet."

"Maybe he would prefer to nap while we wait," Mrs. Norton suggested, only to be interrupted by the sound of the front door opening. "Ah, that must be his mother now?"

Carol almost fainted as he tried to regain self-control.

"Carol, baby," June called entering the alcove, only to see the four ladies and her husband *sans trouser* .

"What in the world?"

"It's all right, Mrs. Turner," Mrs. Simpson offered arising and placing her hand upon his curly head. "Carol has been a good baby and went chair chair all by himself like a big boy."

"And went...what!" June asked in utter disbelief. "I..."

"Oh, mommy," Carol cried to interrupt her as he ran to her childlike and clasped her about the waist. "I have been good."

She looked at him in astonishment, guessing that he was trying to hide something. "Of course, darling."

"You have a lovely child, Mrs. Turner," Mrs. Sims suggested with sympathetic concern. "It must be hard to work and care for a special child."

"A *special* child," June repeated in disbelief.

"I must say, Mrs. Turner, that he has excellent manners. As a child such as he should have. I am certain that our ladies could find a nursemaid to baby-sit while you worked, if you wished."

"Thank you," was her absolutely amused reply. "Carol would love that. Wouldn't you, darling?"

"Yes, mommy," he responded obediently, feeling the double barb of her sarcasm.

"I am Mrs. Simpson," Mrs. Simpson began again before indicating to the others. "This is Mrs. Sims, Mrs. Andrews, and Mrs. Norton. We are the Welcoming Committee of the Ladies Club."

"So nice of you to call," was the automatic response. She then turned to Carol. "Be a dear and go upstairs to prepare for your nap."

"Yes mommy," he sighed, moving to leave the room.

"Carol Jean!" June ordered sternly. "Your manners?"

"Oh," he sighed, looking back at her in disbelief that she would be so cruel.

"I have told you many times to not leave until you have *curtsied* and bid good-by to the *adults* in the room," she noted with mock sternness, enjoying the game while trying to guess how he had managed to get himself into such a mess. "Well dear?"

Touching the hem of his smock he half-curtsied towards the women. "Good-by, my mother wishes that I take my afternoon nap."

"Come child," June half-laughed, bending over and kissing him playfully and patting his rear under the smock as if he were the baby he pretended to be.

"You must say good-by to each of these nice ladies. And be sweet."

"Yes, mommy," he sighed. Turning towards the amused Mrs. Simpson he curtsied. "Good-by, Mrs. Simpson."

"Yes, darling," was the amused reply.

"It was so nice to meet you, Mrs. Norton," he stated with a curtsy.

"And you, child."

"Good-by, Mrs. Andrews," he repeated, with a delicate curtsy towards the woman, who merely nodded.

"And thank you, Mrs. Sims," he stated trying to curtsy again only to be drawn close by the matron and kissed.

"You are such a delight," she said releasing him and straightening his skirts under the highly amused observation of Mrs. Turner. "I must say that your mother should buy you tights. You look much cuter without pants."

"Perhaps you are right," June noted, with a nod of approval. "You may go, child."

"Thank you, mommy," he replied with a curtsy before retreating. As he mounted the steps he heard June say, "he is a very sweet boy. And you are right about his need for good manners. Being special, he is quite helpless and...."

Mrs. Lurd turned the glass in her hand signaling her desire for a refill. "And they never found out?"

"It was so very embarrassing," June replied uncomfortably. "I just couldn't tell them about my poor little Carol's humiliation at their hands. I was frankly at a loss of what to tell them, so I let them go home believing that he was in fact my child. It was all so unfortunate."

"I should say," she responded picking up her fresh cocktail. "What did you say to him?"

"Frankly, I scolded him quite severely for his foolish behavior and told him that he had received his just deserts. Humiliating as it might have been to have revealed to



them that he was a poor housekeeper, his actions had been much graver in consequence. It was all very awkward, I assure you," Mrs. Turner commented, with a nervous wave of her hand, as if dismissing the topic, but she continued, "I must say that he took it very badly and for a while I had a very hard time trying to deal with him. He acted just like a rejected child."

"Perhaps a new home?" suggested Mrs. Lurd.

"I would lose several thousand dollars in trying to sell the Briar place," June answered. "I think that no matter where we might live, he would find the house too much to care for, and he is so defensive about his size that it would only be a matter of time before he would reject social contacts beyond the needs of his art. They were right to a certain degree, he is like a child in his immaturity. He is so eager to learn that he often appears to be a child playing at a new game. He is easily hurt by failure."

"You certainly make him sound childlike," Mrs. Lurd thoughtfully observed, accepting a menu from the waiter. "Shall we order lunch?"

"They have an excellent salad luncheon," June suggested nodding to the waiter to signify her order. Once the waiter had withdrawn with their orders, June said, "I really don't know what to do. This whole marriage affair has been just too difficult. I should seek a separation, but I love him so very much and I am sure that he loves me too much. When I discussed with poor Carol the chance that we might be mismatched he just sobbed. It was all very complicated."

"What is it that you really expect of Carol? You certainly make it clear that he seems to be incapable of being your homemaker. And you are sure that hiring a housekeeper would destroy his pride?"

"It would hurt him deeply."

"You present me with a very interesting problem," Mrs. Lurd stated, as the waiter made way for the meal.

While the waiter set up the meal the two ladies remained quiet. And when he left Mrs. Lurd asked, "Do you have more photos of Carol?"

"Yes, of course," Mrs. Turner replied reopening her purse to produce the original photo and two full-length pictures of Carol; one of him standing on a beach, dressed in swimming trunks, and the other a marriage photo. "I have other photos at my office, if you wish to see them?"

"No, this beach photo is excellent," Mrs. Lurd murmured. "He could pass quite well as a teenager. Perhaps as a young girl? Couldn't he?"

"He was quite sensitive about that at the beach. It was a rather common occurrence, during our honeymoon, for him to be mistaken for my child. And, yes, I do believe that some people mistake him for a young girl in her teens."

"Did he object?"

"No, I think he used to such mistakes," June replied with a shrug, "After the visit of the club women, he complained to me that all his life he had been teased because of his stature and so forth. But, what embarrassed him the most was his inability to con-

fess the truth, due to the fact that he would also have to confess that he was a failure as a homemaker!”

“Of course,” Mrs. Lurd agreed, glancing at the photos to confirm her thoughts about Carol's physical size and appearance. “What kind of education does he have?”

“A bachelor's in Art from City College. Nothing practical, like a business degree,” June answered with a shrug. “Do you have any ideas?”

“Well, Carol has shown by his past conduct that he is insecure and that he is willing to accept a less than adult role to avoid embarrassment over his failure to be a homemaker,” Mrs. Lurd began. “Our basic problem is threefold. First, to make him content with his environment so that he may feel free to seek release through his painting. Second, to provide him with the training and mental attitudes that go with being a homemaker. And third, to allow him every chance to satisfy your real needs.”

“My real needs...”

“It would seem that, at present, he desires to be a homemaker because he feels that you would be pleased,” Mrs. Lurd continued past June's protests. “But, in fact, you want him to be something quite different.”

“What?”

“I am not at all certain. I suspect that you do have a parent-to-child relationship of some sort. You have certainly stressed his childlike qualities,” Mrs. Lurd observed. “But I suspect that it is more complicated. There are men who marry childlike women as a means of gaining masculine superiority. They can both be a father and a husband, so to speak. His little failures secretly amuse you and add to your belief that you are the dominant adult while he can be no more than a *childlike* bride. Why, he is your *Lucy*, as in *I Love Lucy*. And I seriously doubt if you want him to be anything more.”

“What utter nonsense!” June angrily protested, yet beginning to wonder about the truth of her situation. “What makes you think that?”

“Again, it is just a hunch. But, the simple truth is that you have done nothing to help him learn how to be a homemaker. Have you?” Mrs. Lurd noted with a shrug. “I suspect that you don't really place much value on his being a homemaker, no more than you value his arts degree; or, in all probability his life's work. To you it is a hobby through which your cute little husband provides a few clever gifts. I know that you are like some husbands, who think that homemaking is something that any dumb woman can do rather than really work for her living...”

“I really don't think...” June began, only to realize that her dear mentor was actually quite angry. Yet, she could see a certain truth in Mrs. Lurd's words.

“Frankly, to your way of thinking, it is more fun to see how helpless he is. It makes you feel superior” Mrs. Lurd shook her head in disapproval only to shrug.

“As the ladies of that club have suggested, in time you will find a competent housekeeper. She will also be a sort of *nanny*, to care for your *child bride*, to make certain that he doesn't make too great a mess about the house with his paints and such.

“And poor, shy little Carol will have no other choice but than to accept his failure to keep his end of the bargain, as he sees it. Then he will be just your *child*.”

“That isn't true,” June said doubtfully, but with a note of uncertainty. After a long pause she looked up at her friend.

“I do love him very much. What can I do?”

“There is only one real solution....”

Carol Jean stepped from the taxi and waited while his driver collected the suitcases. There was a crisp chill to the evening air which caused Carol to close the throat of his wool top coat before he followed the driver up the front walkway towards a rather large home styled as a Georgian Colonial to blend with the small campus with its ivy-clustered buildings of Rose Oak.

“That will be a buck seventy-five,” the driver announced, after setting the bags upon the front stoop. Turning from the bags he faced his fare and gazed down at Carol, who handed him a five dollar bill. Counting out the change, the driver was almost tempted to ask the passenger a question, but decided from a careful study of the passenger's four-and-a-half-foot form and peaches and cream complexion surmounted by golden curly hair that the lovely passenger was either a young boy or a teenaged girl. Being that this was Rose Oak he smiled into the passenger's deep pale blue eyes and returned the change to accept his tip saying: “Thank you, Miss.”

Before Carol could protest, the driver tipped his hat and drove away, leaving Carol to his thoughts and the evening chill.

With a shrug of dismissal Carol turned to push the front door bell to hear musical chimes. In a few moments the door was answered by a tall, middle-aged woman, dressed in a neat green wool tweed suit that blended well with her auburn hair and green eyes.

For a brief moment they stood facing each other as her eyes studied him with deep interest as if quite pleased with what she saw.

“Please come in,” she announced happily extending her hand in greeting. “You must be Carol. I am Mrs. Lurd.”

“I am very happy to meet you, Mrs. Lurd. My wife has told me such nice things about you,” he replied accepting her hand in a warm, friendly clasp. “Although I must confess I do not know completely why she insisted that I come here to visit you. I do hope that I am not intruding.”

“Of course not,” Mrs. Lurd exclaimed, before placing his bags inside of the door, but protesting when he reached for them. “I am certain that Mrs. Nelson, my housekeeper, will care for them while you and I have a nice cup of tea and a little chat about why your wife thought you might want to visit our lovely school.”

“I could do with a cup of tea,” he replied. “It was a long trip and, frankly, I do not sleep or eat well while traveling.”

“Of course, dear,” she noted sympathetically before leading the way to the living room. “Mrs. Nelson, this is Carol Jean Turner.”

If Mrs. Lurd had seemed tall to Carol, Mrs. Nelson, was a giantess by comparison. She was at least six foot-three and her black nylon maid's uniform with its old fash-

ioned pinafore styled apron caused Carol to feel almost childlike before her statuesque form. "How do you do, Mrs. Nelson."

"Very well, Carol Jean," was her amused reply which omitted the more formal *Mr. Turner* as a form of address. It was rather obvious that she, like other large women or so it seemed to Carol, was fascinated by his doll-like quality. He had seen that certain look many times before. "Your wife's description of you was quite inadequate," she murmured, instinctively helping him with his coat as if he were in fact a child. "You are beautiful."

"Thank you," he replied with a slight blush over being described as being *beautiful*. "Please take Carol Jean's things upstairs, Mrs. Nelson," Mrs. Lurd ordered, taking an easy chair by the open fireplace, which displayed a warm and somewhat energetic fire crackling about pine logs casting throughout the room a lovely fragrance of scented pine. At her side, a lovely silver tea set reflected the flames into beautiful flashes of light.

"Be a dear and sit over there," she suggested as Mrs. Nelson left the room, leaving them alone.

Thankfully he sat into the easy chair, but chose not to sit back since he preferred to keep his feet on the floor.

"Would you like me to pour?"

He smiled and nodded, watching her carefully pick up the pot to pour.

"One or two, with or without?"

"One," he replied, watching her use the tongs to drop the lump into the cup before handing the cup and saucer to him. Taking it in one hand he balanced it as she poured herself a cup.

Raising her cup as in a toast she said, "To an interesting visit."

He nodded and took a sip before setting the cup on his saucer.

"I am interested in knowing why my wife was so intent upon my coming to visit you. She would say nothing except that I should plan to spend a few weeks or so, here, until you were happy."

"She has a delightful way of putting things," Mrs. Lurd observed. "I am happy that she was able to send you here. As to why you are here, she asked me to teach you a bit about home economics and I have agreed to spend a few weeks now during summer vacation to do as she asked. Are you willing?"

Carol took another sip of tea before answering in a thoughtful voice, "I am very grateful for your generous offer of help, so to speak. And I am certain that I could use this training. But it seems so unlikely that I can learn so much in such a short period as the three months available. And, despite what my wife must think, it must be a terrible imposition upon your vacation to spend it teaching me."

"Not at all," Mrs. Lurd countered with a slight shrug as if to dismiss the matter. "Your observations concerning the time needed to train you is no doubt correct. But we can discuss such details later. As to my time, I feel that your wife has presented me

with an interesting problem that should provide me with a rather delightful change from my ordinary pupils.”

He noted that she seemed obviously interested in helping him, and he felt that perhaps this offer of hers was after all an excellent opportunity. “If you are sure that you will not mind?”

“Of course not,” she promised, arising from her chair and walking to a nearby desk from which she took a folder of papers.

“These forms are the usual administrative applications required for admission to Rose Oak College for Young Ladies. The Board of Trustees requires that no faculty member shall teach a private student unless that student shall be a member of the student body. Since you will be taught by one of the faculty we require that you be registered.”

Seeing his somewhat bemused expression, she continued, after handing him the folder, by saying in an encouraging tone, “I can see no reason why you should bother filling in the form. Mrs. Delbert, my secretary, can handle them. I do have your high school and college grade transcripts and a statement of health from your physician, which your wife kindly obtained for me. And that data may be filled in by Mrs. Delbert also. But, since you are an adult, we do need your signature in the proper places.”

“I see,” he replied, somewhat amused by the fact that he was enrolling in an exclusive women's college. Taking his pen from his suit coat packet, he opened the folder to see first, a form entitled Registration Application for Rose Oak College for Young Ladies. Opening the form he signed his name over the line labeled Signature of Young Lady Making Application. Next he noted a room contract. “Must I sign this?”

“Of course,” she replied, indicating where his name was to go. “You are living here on campus and your wife has arranged to pay for your living expenses, as well as tuition.”

“Fine,” he replied before signing his name. The next form was a physical history and examination report which he signed, somewhat intrigued by the fact that the form was designed for a woman patient. But it would be unlikely that Rose Oak had another form. Finishing this form he turned over to the other side of the application folder with the previously signed forms. The next form was entitled Class and Activities Program, which served as a place where the student with her advisor outlined her course of study and her desired activities and sports. Signing this he turned his attention to a credit agreement between the student and the Rose Oak City Retailers Association. “Why this?”

“The school feels that each girl should have an active credit account in order that she may learn responsible credit management,” Mrs. Lurd observed. “Since you are to be here for the next three months you may need to buy a few things and your wife felt that this account may leave the bill paying to her so that you may have more spending money.”

“Very well,” he noted, signing the card attached with the application as well. “My, what an impressive document,” he commented glancing at the legal documentation before him. “What is it?”

“You are over twenty-one,” she stated with a shrug. “Our Board feels that all those over twenty-one may sign an agreement of guardianship allowing the Board to serve in loco parentis over their conduct and so forth. Since you are a man, the Board felt that you should sign your power of attorney over to me so that I may have assume legal responsibility over your affairs. You will note that your wife has signed it as well as your family physician. It is really for your own protection since so many girls are still here on campus and one may try a paternity suit or some other embarrassing action against you.”

“It seems a bit complicated, but if my wife desires it...” he shrugged and signed his name. Turning it aside he directed his attention to an application for joint checking and savings between himself and Mrs. Lurd made out to the Rose Oak City Bank and Trust Company. It stated that the account of Carol Jean Turner had one thousand dollars in checking and five hundred in savings. As usual his wife had been too generous, yet had insisted on the joint control she maintained at home. Only now, it was to be Mrs. Lurd who would decide if he was spending the money wisely. But he signed it, feeling that if he was to stay all of these weeks, he might need expense money.

“Well, that is that,” he sighed, handing the folder to her and picking up his teacup for a swallow. “I hope that they are all in order?”

“I am certain that they will be,” she stated, as if amused, placing the folder in the desk drawer and locking it, before she returned to her easy chair to casually pour another cup of tea for both of them as she asked, “I do hope that you understand the fact that you are now registered as a student at Rose Oak College for Young Ladies? That you agree to abide by the rules of our college? And, that you are under my complete authority?”

“Frankly, I am aware of the fact that my wife feels that you can help save our marriage. I will do anything that you want me to.”

“Good. That should be foremost in your mind, dearest,” she noted with satisfaction, “I have made arrangements for you to live in the east bedroom, and I am quite sure that you have had a long and rather arduous trip. Would you like a bite to eat before resting?”

“Oh, no thank you,” he protested seeing Mrs. Nelson reenter the room. “But, I should like to shower and go to bed fairly soon.”

“Certainly,” Mrs. Lurd replied. “You do have a robe? It is a bit drafty in our halls.”

“Well, I am certain that my wife packed one for me,” he replied. “She virtually presented me with my bags and told me that I was to come right here.”

“I am sorry, sir,” Mrs. Nelson remarked, almost apologetically. “I unpacked your things and I saw that you had no robe or pajamas.”

“Well,” Mrs. Lurd announced as if the matter was settled. “I am sure that you would fit into one of my less-frilly affairs.”

“I have taken the liberty, ma'am,” Mrs. Nelson stated, “of placing a cotton robe from your wardrobe at his disposal.”

“Thank you,” he countered. “It has been very nice to meet you and I am looking forward to my schooling.”

“Thank you, Carol,” Mrs. Lurd observed with a smile. “I am sure that you shall have an interesting time at Rose Oak.”

Carol nodded and followed Mrs. Nelson up the spiral staircase and down the wide hallway to a bedroom door which she opened for him revealing a lovely room, decorated in frosty pink with white colonial furnishings and matching white satin drapes and woodwork. The robe was a simple blue dressing gown and it rested upon the white satin bedspread by his toilet kit.

“Is there anything that you wish?” Mrs. Nelson inquired before withdrawing.

He closed the bedroom door before undressing noting that they had also furnished a pair of bathroom slippers and three large towels. Putting on the robe he took his kit and the towels and tried the various doors in the bedroom to find a bathroom, only to note that they were locked. He returned to the hall to find a bathroom door nearby.

The warm bath was quite relaxing after such a long trip and he felt quite prepared for sleep as he replaced the robe and headed back to his room.

Opening his bedroom door he entered to see upon his bed a pair of women's pajamas. Closing the door, he went to the closet and tried the door again discovering that neither his clothes that he had taken off or his suitcases could be seen. The closet door was still locked, as were the drawers of his dresser. With a shrug of disinterest he turned to his night clothes, feeling that, no doubt, he could check on his belongings the next day.

The blue flannelette pajamas appeared to be simple and warm enough to prevent evening chill in the rather large and cool room, so he removed his robe and slipped into them, discovering that they were a bit large but quite comfortable. Pulling back the bed covers he crawled into bed and, in moments he was fast asleep.

His all but dreamless sleep was partly disturbed by a noise in his room in what appeared to be the early morning, but he merely turned over and returned to sleep feeling that perhaps he had been dreaming. The knock was sharp as it struck his door, causing him to awaken with a start. The morning sun was streaming through the lace curtains. With a yawn, he stretched out on the cool sheets and heard the knock repeated. Covering himself, wishing to hide the pajamas, he called, “Come in.”

The door opened to reveal Mrs. Nelson, dressed in a pale green nylon maid's uniform with its white pinafore. “Good morning, Miss Carol.”

“Good morning, Mrs. Nelson,” he laughed, feeling that she was teasing him about his pajamas. “I noticed that my clothes were missing when I returned from the bath.”

“Why your clothes are in your closet and I placed a complete set of underthings at the end of your bed on the blanket table,” she replied, walking into the room.

“Yes, dear, they are here as I placed them. All ready for you to put on after you take your first real beauty bath, Miss Carol.”

She turned to the bed and smiled, as if waiting for him to get out from beneath the covers.

“Breakfast has been ready for some time, Carol Jean,” she stated, as if slightly impatient. “You do have a busy day.”

“I shall be glad to arise and dress. But I do prefer to dress alone,” he commented, a bit directly, with a nod.

“Of, course dear, if you feel that you can dress yourself,” she replied humorously, bending over to pick up from the blanket table a pair of pink satin panties!

“Your new wardrobe is quite complicated, Miss Carol.”

He laughed uncertainly as he wondered about the panties.

“A delightful joke. Now please leave while I dress.”

“Please get out of bed, dear, I am not joking. Mrs. Lurd is waiting for you in the dining room, Miss. Carol, and if you refuse to cooperate I have orders to bathe and dress you as if you were a small, naughty child.”

With this statement, she reached over and with a single movement removed his bedclothes.

“You will get up, won't you?”

“Yes,” he replied, a bit shaken by her apparent intentions. He arose from the bed and went slowly where she indicated he should stand. “Why?”

She smiled saying, “I suppose because Rose Oak is a school for girls and you are a pupil. I am certain that Mrs. Lurd explained that to you last night. Didn't she, my dear?”

“Well, she didn't mention the part about dressing up like a girl,” he confessed, seeing her open one of the doors in his bedroom to reveal a lovely dressing room and bathroom. He could smell the rich fragrance of a bubble bath which she had, no doubt, prepared while he slept.

“You will start by covering your body from your neck down with that cream,” she noted, pointing to a pink bottle of depilatory cream and a feminine safety razor, and when it is dry you will shave it off in the tub, being certain that you don't get any in your eyes. When you are done with that you will take another bath. I expect to see you as dainty, fresh and hairless as a pretty little toddler.”

Having said this she handed him a simple flesh-toned panty-brief. “You may slip these on for modesty after you bathe. But, I want you to know that if you are not dainty everywhere, I shall see to it myself.”

Knowing that she was serious about her threat and no doubt quite capable of carrying it out he quickly retreated into the bathroom to follow her instructions before he slipped the tight spandex panties on noting grimly that they blended with his skin and concealed his apparent sex leaving him to see the doll-like child in the dressing room mirror!

When she entered the dressing room, carrying the rest of his girlish dainties in her arms, he turned around and blushed as his hands instinctively covered himself.

“How sweet,” she observed, stepping to his side and handing him the pair of pink satin panties with a lace trim.

“These go next, Miss. Carol.”

“I won't,” he protested angrily, realizing that she was not at all joking, that they fully intended to make him dress as a girl! “You're not going to dress me in those.”

She smiled, as if to soothe a child, placing the panties upon the vanity. Suddenly, without warning, her long arms reached out and seized him, and he found himself trapped in her hands, as she lifted him into the air, while she turned and sat upon the vanity stool, placing him across her knees.

“No, God, NO!” he shouted. “Not like this!”

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK! SMACK! SMACK! The flat of her hand struck against his soft, pantied bumpy and she could see the pink glow above the panty as he ceased to struggle and merely sobbed.

“When I let you go, you will thank me with a curtsy as a good girl,” she stated, waiting until he nodded.

Standing up he wiped his tears and meekly curtsied. “Thank you, Mrs. Nelson.”

“For what, child?” she asked, with amusement covering her serious tone, as he bit his lip trying to think his way past the pain he felt mingled with his humiliation.

“Thank you for helping me to be a good girl,” he said repeating the curtsy, only to be handed the pink satin and lace panties which he slipped on without protest, but with some tenderness.

“Please remember, darling, that we are doing this for your own good,” she announced, handing Carol a preteen training bra. “Please slip your arms into the straps and then turn your back to me and reach down to touch your knees.”

Slightly bemused, he turned his back to slip his arms into the straps of the pink satin and lace AAA cup teen training bra and, with some discomfort, he bent over and touched his knees.

Mrs. Nelson stepped behind the trembling Carol and tenderly reached over the childlike chest to draw the bra's back opening together and hooking it close so that it fit tightly in place. She then reached over each shoulder and placed her hands on each side below Carol's slightly bulging breasts and lifted them in the cups of her hands before tightening the bra straps.

“Please stand up, dear,” she asked, turning Carol to face her as he stood up to look down at this new feminine shame of two gently curved breasts. “They are lovely, child, and next time you will do that all by yourself, won't you.”

“Yes,” he murmured in blushing shame.

“All young girls learn to address people that they talk to by either their name or by ma'am,” Mrs. Nelson chided.

“I am sorry, ma'am,” Carol replied quickly.

“That is a good child,” Mrs. Nelson noted approvingly as she lifted from the vanity table a pink satin slip with a ruffled lace bodice satin waist and a bouffant cascade of marquisette and lace in five ruffled, tiered flounces. In a moment she had helped Carol into the lovely party slip and turned him towards the closet mirror revealing to Carol a young girl!

“I see we have a lot of work to get to the more feminine you,” she observed to his disbelief, because he felt quite too feminine already. She handed him a pair of pink nylon anklets which he slipped on as she took from the floor a pair of black patent leather baby-doll single-strap pumps. “Be careful not to mar them with your fingers, darling.” Carol gingerly held the dainty shoes as he put them on, strapping in place the black leather straps through silver heart shaped buckles.

“And now to your toilette,” she announced and much to his surprise she led him from the dressing room and back to the bath room.

“Do you have any personal matters to attend to?”

He swallowed hard to cover his discomfort. “No, ma'am.”

“Excellent,” she countered with a pleased smile. “Let us first arrange that lovely coiffure. It looks like a pile of loose hay.”

Carol laughed at her allusion for his hair was quite unruly...

“Ahh,” she smiled, taking the laughing Carol into her arms and kissing him, causing the laughter to fade into a faint smile. “You have lovely laughter. You should laugh more often, it suits you.”

“Thank you,” Mrs. Nelson he replied in near seriousness.

She nodded her understanding of his desire to be reserved. Opening the cabinet above the vanity sink, she motioned Carol into the seat before it and placed about his shoulders a cosmetic bib of pink plastic. Soon she was combing his unruly locks into pink hair curlers, which she soaked with a home permanent lotion before placing over the curlers and all a portable hair dryer.

Satisfied with this task, she manicured his dainty hands and placed a soft pink, natural polish on the nails. She then turned her attention to Carol's eyebrows and lashes. With tweezers, eyelash curler, mascara brush, and Vaseline, she transformed Carol's eyes into feminine beauties.

“I think that we shall arrange for an electrolysis appointment for you each week while you are here,” she noted with a nod of self satisfaction, as she bleached the fine hairs on his face to effectively hide his undeveloped beard. “In three months you should be as smooth as a baby's bottom.”

Feeling that the hair was ready, she removed the dryer cap and tested, a curl pleased to see that it was ready. Removing the curlers one by one, she styled the golden hair into a crown of curls.

“Why you are a lovely girl,” she exclaimed, seeing Carol's almost frightened looks at the delicate beauty that sat reflected in the vanity mirror.

Carol arose at her direction and followed her into the dressing room feeling that he had been unmanned and there was no longer any reason to resist her wishes. Meekly he accepted from her the pink satin blouse and slipped it on. The ruffled lace peter pan collar and bodice matched the lacy cuffs of the three-quarter length, bell-shaped sleeves. The faint outline of the lacy slip could be seen through the soft satin.

Mrs. Nelson had Carol stand with outstretched arms as she slipped over his lovely head a black velveteen jumper skirt. Adjusting the bodice of the jumper and arranging the ruffles of the blouse bodice she straightened the waist of the jumper before zipping close its side. Opening a jewelry box on the dressing room vanity she handed Carol a silver charm bracelet and a black, velvet strapped wrist watch, which he fastened upon the wrists she indicated.

"I am quite pretty," he observed, a bit hesitantly, as he gazed with a new interest into the multiple-sided dressing mirror, brushing the black velvet skirt to see a peep of the lovely pink-laced petticoats. A shiver of near delight mingled with embarrassment touched Carol, causing the lovely girl reflected in the mirrors to blush slightly with a delighted smile. "I guess three months can't be too long."

"Of course not, dear," Mrs. Nelson soothed in reply, taking Carol's hand. "I think that it is best that I hold your hand, Miss Caroline."

Meekly, Carol accepted her gesture and followed her from the dressing room feeling little shivers of near delight as the lacy petticoats tickled the top of lovely calves, causing Carol to realize that the shortness of the skirts had combined with the beautiful clothes and form to erase at least ten years.

As Carol walked down the stairs he began to grow taut with the fears that he was about to be displayed before Mrs. Lurd, and he knew not whom else, for he could hear women talking in the living room.

Mrs. Nelson paused before the living room doors to smile down at the trembling figure at her side.

"When you enter please curtsy and relax, dear. They will not eat you, even though you look pretty enough."

"Thank you, Mrs. Nelson," Carol replied, almost in a whisper, as she knocked and opened the door to reveal a half-dozen ladies sitting in a circle about the low coffee table. When Carol walked forward they set their cups aside, somewhat awed by Carol's lovely image, giving him what little courage needed to curtsy.

"Ladies, this is our little pupil, Miss Caroline Jean Turner," Mrs. Lurd announced. "Be a dear and show the ladies your new dress, dear."

Carol swallowed and carefully turned around so that all could view the pretty jumper and blouse.

"Lovely, I could never guess," a rather stout woman noted with interest, causing Carol almost to faint with the realization that they all knew. "She is beautiful little schoolgirl." "Thank you," Carol replied, with a blush. Seeing the warning nod Mrs. Nelson made, he quickly added, "Ma'am."

"I think that the ladies all feel the same," Mrs. Lurd observed, causing the assemblage to indicate their approval. "Perhaps they should introduce themselves to you Carol so that you may have an opportunity to practice that lovely curtsy."

The stout woman announced, "I am to teach you deportment and manners, Caroline. You may address me as Mrs. Vandy."

"How do you do, Mrs. Vandy," Carol greeted, lifting the jumper skirt in a curtsy, growing accustomed to the simple fact that there was nothing else but a course of obedience available to him.

"I am Mrs. Rogers, child we shall learn patience through sewing, knitting, weaving, and fashion design. I am certain that you, will like to learn how to make your own pretty party clothes"

"I am certain that I should love to learn how to be useful, Mrs. Rogers," Carol replied, with a curtsy, to note that Mrs. Rogers was quite pleased with the reply.

"You shall learn cooking and home budgeting from me," a slim woman, dressed, in a green wool dress, said a bit sternly. "You may call me Mrs. Terril."

"I would like to learn how to cook," Carol countered, with a winning smile and curtsy that went a long way in softening the stern lines on Mrs. Terril's face. "I do hope that I shall please you, Mrs. Terril."

"I am Mrs. Carlson, my dear angel," Mrs. Carlson stated, greatly intrigued by the obvious beauty of Carol as well as the amusing task Mrs. Lurd had set for her. "I teach dancing and music. And, with Mrs. Vandy, we shall school you in charm and modeling techniques. Do you play the piano or sing, child?"

"I can play the piano fairly well, Mrs. Carlson," he stated with the required curtsy. "And I have sung in a glee club."

"Excellent," Mrs. Carlson noted. "We should have little trouble with softening your voice to a more feminine quality."

"It shall be my duty to teach you child care and to have you trained in housekeeping by Mrs. Nelson," a gray-haired woman commented. "I am Mrs. Gorden and my daughter and Mrs. Lurd's daughter shall be your constant companions wherever you go about Rose Oak and they shall live with you here at Mrs. Lurd's until later."

Carol was quite doubtful about this last piece of information. The idea of his wandering about the campus and town had not dawned as a possibility. And the further idea of two young girls as serving as his watchful chaperons made him even more uneasy. "Do the girls know, Mrs. Gorden?" he asked, with a simple curtsy.

"Why of course, silly," a girl of about fourteen announced, entering the room with a respectful nod towards the women. After her came another girl, of about the same age, dressed in a simple blue wool skirt cardigan, and white blouse.

"Ah," Mrs. Lurd commented as if to hush her daughter. "These are your companions. Jo Ann Lurd and Patricia Gorden. Caroline Turner."

Carol curtsied instinctively, noting that the two girls seemed to regard him with mild toleration. "I am glad to meet you, Miss Lurd and Miss Gorden."

“Very sweet,” Patricia commented causing the women to laugh over the saccharine voice she used. She walked slowly around Carol, briefly lifting the hem of the black velveteen jumper to check the petticoats, with a trace of almost disdainful amusement.

She turned towards the ladies and said, “I do hope that she has some practical clothes as well as all this. I am sure that you feel that she should be pretty, and she is, too pretty. Look at myself and Jo Ann and you can see that Caroline is much too lacy for a teenager.”

“Well?” Mrs. Vandy drawled, delighting in the pretty child but seeing that Patricia was quite right.

“Pat and I agreed to help under the condition that we have final say on anything which we feel might separate Caroline too far from our age group. She looks like a ten-year old even with the bra.”

Carol blushed at the pointed observation, almost covering his bosom, but realizing that it was bad enough as things were now.

“Of course, girls,” Mrs. Lurd replied, seeing their wisdom. “Do you think that Caroline will pass for a ninth grader?”

Jo Ann walked about Carol, as Patricia had. “Well, mom, she needs a little more weight to round off some of the sharper lines.”

“Yes,” Patricia vouched. “She is a bit angular, but not really too much. I think that if you dressed her, the part, she could pass. I have seen skinner girls.”

“She will do,” Jo Ann remarked analytically. “But we will have our hands full for three months if she is to be relaxed.”

“Thank you, Jo Ann,” Carol replied almost with bitterness.

“Miss Caroline,” Mrs. Nelson warned.

“It is going to be fun,” Patricia exclaimed, convincing herself. “But, what is the timetable like?”

“Well,” Mrs. Lurd began, pulling a stack of papers from a brief case that rested by her side and passing to each person a copy, including Carol.

“This is our work sheet. As you see, each day is marked at the top of each page and beneath the date we have the times when each of us has to be with Caroline, teaching her in accordance with the schedule we agreed upon.

“At 7 o'clock in the morning she arises, primps, cleans her room and presents herself to Mrs. Nelson to help with the breakfast at 7:30. At 8:30 she has her class on voice on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Modeling Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. At 9:30 she studies sewing and home crafts all week.

“At 10:30 she works with housekeeping each day. At 11:30 she is again returned to Mrs. Nelson and she helps with the noon meal. At 12:30 she works with household economics each day. The time of 1:30 to 5:30 is a work period practicum. Monday: Homemaking, Washing and ironing; Tuesday: Household economics: marketing; Wednesday: Child and nursery care at the village center, Thursday, Dancing Class;

Friday: Beauty Care; Saturday Etiquette and manners. From 5:30 to 7:30 she helps Mrs. Nelson prepare supper. "From 7:30 to 9:30 she is placed in the care of the girls."

"Patricia?"

"Well, as we see it," Patricia began, handing the assemblage a new stack of papers. "Caroline should be integrated into our social life, although she is comparatively new to it all. Monday, she shall be with our girls, bowling group. You do know how to bowl?"

Carol smiled, brushing the skirt of the black velveteen jumper a bit nervously, and wondering if there would be any time to relax. "Yes, about 170 when I was in college, Miss Gordon."

Jo Ann looked at Patricia with almost surprised awe.

"The light ball may cut that down," Patricia noted seriously. "We generally have Tuesday nights for study through Thursday. During the vacation period the girls have planned to rotate homes for pajama parties and such to pass the time. We had a tough time getting it firmed up, but the chart shows that the pajama parties are for Thursdays here. Tuesday is skating night, and Wednesday is for movies or coke socials. Friday night with the church group hop. Saturday night is regular date night."

"Have you girls made arrangements for Caroline?"

"Yes, Mrs. Vandy," Patricia replied, handing Carol a black notebook. "Your dates are listed in there with their descriptions and interests. We have found some real high school hunks for our little visiting schoolgirl cousin as blind dates to start your summer. After the first few dates you are on your own, like the rest of us."

"Isn't it a bit much?" Carol asked, in embarrassed alarm, realizing that they fully intended to have him go out on dates with men! Well, at least with boys. "Dates can get pretty personal."

The women and the two girls laughed.

"Why, dear, that is how we girls learn to protect our virtue," Jo Ann murmured in a somewhat prissy tone. "Don't worry the first few are all a setup, but the rest you have to arrange yourself. All we can do is brief you. Tell her, Mrs. Nelson, what you plan if she fails to get a date?"

Mrs. Nelson nodded. "She will do some heavy housework."

Carol had a feeling that the date might be quite a bit easier.

"As to Sundays, Mrs. Vandy?" Mrs. Lurd asked.

"Well, our little one shall arise at 6:00. Does her personal chores. Helps with breakfast and then dresses for church. She will return from church, help with lunch and serve with Mrs. Nelson, with us all as guests, in accordance with the schedule added to the first list. During this period I ask that you all be careful to note any of her little mistakes, so that I may see to her training. She should be observed at all times for any little habit or gesture which may appear to be awkward for a girl of fourteen," Mrs. Vandy observed, to the general agreement of the group.

Mrs. Vandy continued. "After lunch she shall discuss with me all the literature that she has read about girls and women during the evening hours of 9:30 to 10:30 after she comes home during the week. We shall also discuss any observations she may have about her week's training. At six she shall help Mrs. Nelson with supper. And from 8:00 to 10:30 she may tend to whatever she may feel is important for her life during the next week."

"Do you have any questions, Caroline," Mrs. Lurd asked.

Carol looked at the women and girls in the room wondering at how suddenly his whole life had changed in these few minutes. "Why, Mrs. Lurd?"

"Why, what, child?"

"Why are you all treating me this way? I mean, why should I live like a teenage girl for three months?" he asked, somewhat disturbed by her tolerant smile. "I do wish that you would tell me, ma'am."

Mrs. Lurd arose and led Carol to a full length mirror. "Tell me what you see, Miss Caroline"

"Myself," he replied, almost closing his eyes, knowing the meaning of her question as to why they are treating the image as a fourteen year old girl. "I see what appears to be a young girl, Mrs. Lurd."

"Yes, a young girl on the verge of womanhood, yet not quite a woman," she murmured placing her hand upon the bodice of the dress.

You are the new spring of womanhood, so to speak. Only yet you are a child. It is during that period of that girl's life that," she pointed to the mirror, "I, no, we want you to experience. We know that this is the time when girls began to plan for marriage, began to shape their destiny, began to think of their sex as a life force directed towards a man, a special man, who will be a combination of many men. They learn to please, they learn to be feminine. They need to feel that they are destined to become women. We felt that the Caroline in you should be unchained, set free to be loved and to learn how to love in return as a woman should. These girls and their friends shall test you, give you doubts, make you want to excel to prove that you are to be a woman. And in three months, you will be ready to feel free as Caroline."

"That is why we have made these weeks so full. For when the college reopens you shall enter its classes as a young lady. We have reviewed your college records and you will be enrolled as a sophomore, completing her Associate in Arts Degree in Home Economics. Since your required arts degree courses are finished, you will only need to attend to your major course requirements. What you are taught here during the summer will provide you with the basics that most of your peers will already know."

"What?" he gasped in disbelief.

"Miss Caroline!" Mrs. Nelson warned.

"Yes, my dear, you shall be moved to the women's dorm next to Mrs. Vandy, our dormitory mother. And from the end of summer vacation until school's finish you shall be just another girl among others," Mrs. Lurd continued seeing Carol bow his head.

“A girl who has completed major surgery and must wear a special supporter. Mrs. Nelson, as a practical nurse, has her instructions as to how the supporter fits and I assure you that it is very well-constructed so that only the closest medical examination could detect that you are not, in fact, a girl. The little panty blends in perfectly with your skin color and its pudendum even has pretty hair to match your natural color. And, I must add, it is quite functional in design. You will also be given weekly hormone injections. They will serve to curb your masculine interests while heightening your feminine emotions and providing you with more female secondary characteristics to go with your pretty panty.”

Carol blushed. “My June permitted this, Mrs. Lurd?”

“Of course, child,” she answered, as if amused over the silliness of his question. “She even selected the dress you now wear.”

“Why must I be treated so, Mrs. Lurd?”

“We feel that when you finish here you shall think much more as a woman would, and therefore you shall be more prepared for your life as a homemaker,” she explained. “By the end of the school year you should be quite adapted to thinking the feminine way.”

“Perhaps, Mrs. Lurd”

“We shall see, Caroline,” Mrs. Lurd remarked, knowing his doubts, but feeling sure that as the days passed he would understand what was expected. “And now it is time for breakfast. Come girls, we have much to talk over with our lovely new pupil. And I must say that she is quite eager to learn.”

With this they all retired to the dining room, with Carol in tow.

Carol's first day as a girl really began in earnest after breakfast when Mrs. Vandy informed him that this Saturday and Sunday he should receive modeling and poise training all day long, and that, during these two days, Mrs. Carlson would be Carol's constant companion to see that a gentle voice was quickly developed.

After breakfast Carol was returned to his dressing room and the pretty clothes were removed to be replaced with a simple cotton slip, white shirt blouse, and a wool, pleated, plaid skirt. Carol then returned to the living room to greet the two ladies.

“Caroline,” Mrs. Carlson began. “I would like to have you learn several fine poems which would require you to pronounce each syllable in a certain pattern. I am sure that you have heard the little saying which goes, ‘*How now brown cow?*’, and so on. Unfortunately, we shall not have time for such refinement. Therefore we shall rely upon nursery rhymes. Are you able to remember some of them?”

“I think so, Mrs. Carlson,” he replied uncertainly.

“Dear? Would you whisper aloud the words to *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star?*”

Carol obeyed her as Mrs. Vandy knelt at his side and placed each foot side by side. She then pushed his hips back so that his back was straighten and adjusted his shoulders. She had him stand with his wrists bent upward and hand poised.

“Now repeat it in a high, shrill voice as if you were screaming at me”

He again did as she asked, half giggling at the startling sound of his voice at such volume. "Walk forward by placing one foot in front of the other as if you were walking upon a plank," Mrs. Vandy ordered.

"That is it, balance upon the ball of one foot pushing off with the toe and then placing the heel down in front of your other toe so that the heel and toe of the moving foot arrive at about the same moment. Then transfer your weight." She smiled as if amused.

"Don't hide the natural sway of your hips, dear. A girl has hips."

Carol blushed slightly, but relaxed.

"Pull in your tummy you are much too young and nice a girl to have babies."

He laughed at this.

"That is a delightfully natural laugh," Mrs. Carlson noted. "I am certain that you shall find it a valuable asset. Now, as you walk for Mrs. Vandy, I want you to say our little poem in a soft voice, as if making love. And please talk as you were taught to sing, not from the belly."

"Turn, like this," Mrs. Vandy instructed, listening to his soft voice with delight, as she walked towards him and turned. "And remember, wrist bent, shoulders back, chin up, back straight, hips tucked in, and walk the plank."

The time passed while Carol walked back and forth. He turned, he sat, he stood up, he crouched to pick things up, and then they went to his room where they watched him dress and undress, making certain that each gesture was feminine.

As he went through the motions, Mrs. Carlson had him talk, talk, talk, about what he was doing, reciting poems, telling stories, greeting his imaginary friends, and pretending every emotion in a play-like situation where they played the other roles.

They would try to catch him unawares by asking questions of his masculine personality, or suddenly drop a cup of coffee into his skirt lap to check if he would instinctively spread his legs, or clap their hands behind him-or suddenly shout from behind. Each gesture was noted and corrected again and again until he was constantly aware of each motion, each word, each gesture, each expression, and he consciously allowed for a pause before he acted.

When they saw this delay in his reactions they relaxed, and told him that it was time for him to help Mrs. Nelson with the lunch preparation.

As soon as he arrived in the kitchen Mrs. Nelson put him at once to peeling potatoes and cutting them for frying. He took the soaking pan to place it by one of the work counters and drew up a high stool to sit upon. "Who said you could sit down?" Mrs. Nelson demanded angrily.

"I thought that I..." he began to protest.

"You thought, and who told you that you can think, little girl," she asked sarcastically, placing her hands upon her hips.

"I am sorry, ma'am," he muttered, not wishing to argue.

“You sound sorry,” she countered, pointing at the stool. “When you are in my kitchen you stand up and work. Do you understand?”

“Yes, ma'am,” Carol replied, quite tired from all of the constant harassing he had received already today. He clenched his fists before going to remove the stool.

“Come here!” she demanded sharply. “I did not tell you to move the stool. And don't you dare make fists at me, girl!”

“I am sorry,” he repeated.

“And how many times have I told you that you are to say ma'am to me?” she asked, taking her hands and placing them upon Carol's shoulders and suddenly shaking Carol violently until his teeth chattered.

“Please, Mrs. Nelson, I will try to do as you ask,” he promised when she released him.

“Try?” she questioned angrily.

“I mean, ma'am...”

“You talk too much, girl,” she ordered. “I should think that you would have learned by now that a child should be seen and not heard.”

“I am not a child, Mrs. Nelson,” he snapped angrily losing his temper.

“You aren't?” she asked, as if amused. “And who told you that? Who told you to lose your temper with adults?”

“You shouted at me first, Mrs. Nelson,” he countered.

“And if I should shout at you, it is for your own good, young lady,” Mrs. Nelson chided. “I asked you, who told you you could yell at adults?”

“I can do what I please.”

She laughed. “Who told you that?”

“I know it, it...”

“Well, you forget it, child,” she countered briskly. “You do what you are told from now on. Do you understand?”

“I think...”, he was about to protest.

“You think. You can't think, you are a little girl still in panties. I can think for us both. And when you are a big girl your husband will think for you. But, now do as I say, understand.”

“But...”

Her hand struck out, slapping Carol.

“I...”

Again she slapped Carol, causing delicate hands to touch the tender cheek.

“Who told you you could place your hands upon your face. Stop picking at your face. Do you want to break out in pimples? Don't you think I have enough troubles with you, child?”

“No, I mean...”

“So you plan to give me more trouble, eh?” she asked suspiciously.

“No, ma'am.”

“Well take your hands down,” she repeated, and as he obeyed she slapped him again, causing tears to well into his eyes.

“Oh, please, Mrs. Nelson,” he began to plead, trying to wipe his eyes.

“Haven't I just told you to stop picking at your face,” she demanded, shaking him violently. When she released him Carol was crying helplessly, but he kept his hands to his sides.

“Stop crying, child. You are supposed to smile.”

He swallowed and sniffled, trying to control himself.

“Stop that horrible sniffing, you're not a baby!” she scolded, handing him a hanky. “Blow your nose like a good little girl.”

He followed her instructions, trying to recover his composure.

“Don't you thank people?”

“Yes, ma'am,” he stammered, wiping his nose on the hanky.

“Well?”

“Thank you for the hanky, ma'am” he replied meekly.

“Smile now!” Carol forced a smile, wondering if he should return the hanky, he felt so suddenly helpless. He dared not to ask, in fact, he didn't know what to do.

“Are you happy?”

“If you wish, ma'am,” he murmured dutifully with a happy-looking smile of submission.

“And you will obey your elders?”

“Yes, ma'am”

“Then be a good child and peel the potatoes and place that hanky into the belt of your skirt. And remember, no sitting in my kitchen”

“Yes, ma'am,” Carol replied beginning to understand what had just happened. She was methodically destroying his masculine pride.

As he picked up the peeling knife and began to peel the bowl of potatoes he thought over the argument, trying to see how this violent argument could have served their purposes. Certainly he was cowed and bullied, and he was no match for her, but there was something else...

She would not let up until he was a sniveling child, until she demonstrated her complete dominance.

Thinking back he could remember how he had watched other mothers subdue their daughters by this means. Looking up from his thoughts he saw her pick up a clipboard and check off several items before writing some comments.

Seeing her about to set the board aside, he returned to his work, smiling now that he thought that he understood. He wondered how he had done on this little test.

The next day he found out.

Carefully placed one foot behind the other, slowly shifting the weight to the rear-most leg as he lowered himself into the chair, allowing the full skirts of the white organza church dress to flow between the chair and his slender legs. With a simple brushing move with his right hand he half-turned as he sat down, smoothing the skirt over his knees and then folding his hands into his lap.

“Well, my dearest,” Mrs. Vandy began, pleasantly enough, as she opened a folder of papers which were obviously reports from those who had worked with Carol during the last day. “How did you like reading the two first books we placed at your bedside?”

Carol thought for a moment.

“Mrs. Rice's book on teenage conduct was very interesting,” Carol began. “And I felt that the Jane Barns novel was very sweet, Mrs. Vandy.”

“Would you repeat the story in the Barns' novel, telling me of the characters and relating their conduct to that described by Mrs. Rice in her book?”

“Yes, ma'am,” he began with a knowing smile, glad that he had thought that this would be her question. For the next few minutes he gave a very orderly report occasionally gesturing to illustrate a point. When he was talking about the hero she stopped him.

“Tell, me, my dear, would you love such a man?” she asked. “And tell me why you might?”

Carol sighed, trying to think about the hero more carefully. “Frankly the thought had never occurred to me, Mrs. Vandy,” he stated truthfully. “It was a very feminine novel and I could only see him through her eyes.”

“Tell me what you thought of her description?” she probed, glancing at one of the reports and checking off an item. “Tell me as she would”

Carol smiled over this contradiction.

“When I first met John, he was skiing,” Carol began softly, almost breathlessly, thinking of how the teenage girl in the book would describe her first true love. After a few minutes Carol sighed, saying, “I love him.”

“Very well done, my dear,” Mrs. Vandy observed with a sympathetic nod. “Now I should like to speak to you about an argument you had with Mrs. Nelson yesterday. You do remember?”

“Yes, ma'am,” Carol replied in a near whisper. “I was a very bad girl.”

Mrs. Vandy moved her eyes across Carol's face as if to catch him lying as she asked, “What if you were to become involved in such a discussion again. What would you do?”

Carol looked down at his dainty hands, as if uncertain.

“I should first try to be a good girl, so that I would not do wrong, ma'am.”

“Of course, dear. But, we are all human. What if you should be caught doing wrong?”

“I should apologize,” he replied. “I must be a good girl, Mrs. Vandy.”

“What if you are not caught?” she probed, with a frown.

“I would tell her that I have been bad.”

“Have you done anything that you shouldn't have these last two days?” Mrs. Vandy asked, returning her gaze to the forms before her. “Anything which you were told not to do and promised a spanking if you did do it?”

Carol swallowed hard; there were so many things he might have done wrong. “Mrs. Vandy, I have tried to be good. There are many which I might have done wrong. But nothing that I was told I might be spanked for.”

“I see. Did Mrs. Nelson ever tell you not to stand while using the toilet?”

The question was so sudden that he covered his mouth with one hand to cover his surprise. But, how could she know, the door was closed. And then it dawned on him the sound! Blushing, he lowered his eyes.

“Yes, Mrs. Vandy, I did stand once after she told me not to.”

“Why did you wait until now to tell me?” Mrs. Vandy asked, almost angrily. “Didn't you know that you were doing wrong when you did it?”

Carol replied frankly, “I am so sorry, Mrs. Vandy, but it is a habit.”

“I see,” she taunted. “All your life you have stood to a bowl, lifted your skirts, lifted your petticoats, and lowered your panties. It must be quite hard with your hands full and nothing to aim with, a bit messy.”

The picture she painted caused Carol to erupt into laughter.

“It is not polite to laugh at your elders.”

“Oh, I am so sorry,” he replied, trying to compose himself. “It was so funny, Mrs. Vandy.”

“I fail to see the humor in it, Miss Turner,” she noted sternly. “Such stupid actions are unmaidenly and inexcusable, and I want to know if, when you lowered your panties, you realized your mistake, or was it now?”

Carol lowered his head. “I did it intentionally, feeling that I might get away with it.”

Mrs. Vandy asked, “Do you think you should be punished as promised?”

“Yes, ma'am,” he replied, as Mrs. Nelson entered, carrying a coffee tray which she placed between Carol and Mrs. Vandy.

“Of course, child,” Mrs. Vandy replied, looking up at Mrs. Nelson. “Is there anything you have to tell Mrs. Nelson?”

Carol arose and bowed his head almost shyly, “Mrs. Nelson.”

“Yes dear,” Mrs. Nelson asked with concern.

“I have been a very bad girl in that I stood while going to the bathroom. I did it intentionally.” Never again would he try to lie to them. It was too humiliating!

"I see," Mrs. Nelson stated seriously. "Do you think that I should accept your explanation as to why you did what you did?"

He began to understand that they were testing him again. "No, ma'am."

"Well?"

Carol swallowed trying to remember what had caused him to do what he had done. It was so cruel of them to select this particular incident. He thought, he saw Mrs. Vandy smile placing a foot stool in front of a mirror!

"I want you to approach this stool and act out why you did what you did. We must understand your silliness as well as your good conduct."

"Please, Mrs. Vandy, I would rather be punished," he said looking at the stool and the mirror, and realizing the humiliation of the charade they promised.

"Of course child, that would be simpler. But, you must learn not to do certain things, either by habit or in defiance of our wishes. Now do as you are told."

"Yes, ma'am," Carol replied, with an almost instinctive curtsy. "Mrs. Nelson is standing outside of the bathroom in my dressing room. She has just scolded me because I have forgotten to hang up my nightgown. Like a little child I was quite angry at what she had said and, since I needed to go to the bathroom, I asked her permission to withdraw."

"Yes, child dear, you may go, but remember to hang your clothes up," Mrs. Nelson ordered, as she had in the past, pointing at the stool.

"Oh, please," Carol begged. "I will be good, Mrs. Nelson."

"I am sure that you will, Caroline. But you did ask to go to the bathroom, didn't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Carol replied knowing that there was no escape. "I closed the door and walked to the bowl saying to myself, *'She is just a sadist. And she wanted to humiliate me, treating me like a little girl.'* Seeing the stool I bent over, like this, and was about to sit down when I thought, *'I will show them that I am not a girl!'* With this thought I lifted the seat." Carol made the motion as if lifting a toilet seat and then stood up before the stool. "I lifted my skirts, and my slip. Then I slipped my panties down."

Carol placed both hands beneath the panties and lowered them to the floor before hiking the skirt of the white organdy dress with its stiff taffeta petticoats with the left hand. Carol swallowed seeing the smooth surface of the all-too-female silicon plastic panty that Mrs. Nelson had put in place that morning.

"Well, dear?" Mrs. Vandy asked with interest. "What did you think then?"

"I..," Carol stammered almost unconsciously, allowing dainty fingers to touch the skin-like textured surface knowing that he would have to sit from now on and that those thoughts of that morning were no longer meaningful. "I placed my hand here and held unto it and said, *'See, I am not a girl. And you can't see me now to scold me...'* I was very foolish."

“Yes,” Mrs. Nelson soothed. “You may pull up your panties, girl. And, I assure you that we shall tend to that spanking I promised you, later.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Nelson,” Carol sighed in relief that the humiliation was completed. Replacing the panties, Carol returned to stand politely by the coffee table.

“Do you wish cream or sugar, Mrs. Vandy?” Mrs. Nelson asked.

“Just a dash of cream, my dear,” Mrs. Vandy replied, seeing the quick recovery in Carol's composure with some pleasure, but noting that the child's hand still trembled.

“Will that be all, Mrs. Vandy?” Mrs. Nelson asked, about to withdraw.

“Yes, thank you,” Mrs. Vandy stated as she handed her the cup and saucer. “Will you please sit down child. We were discussing your telling of the truth. Do you really believe that Mrs. Nelson is sadistic?”

Carol carefully sat down and arranged the lovely skirts, pausing to think of the proper answer; a habit that had been wisely learned in the last two days. There were so many ways to delay an answer by such feminine gestures as adjusting a skirt, touching up a curl, and many others. Folding delicate fingers into the organza-covered lap Carol said, “No, I was very foolish. She has her instructions to teach me by pain, when other means may fail to do in the short period of time we have. Because a mother spans her child, she is not being needlessly cruel or sadistic as long as the child understands, and is willfully bad despite her words of warning. I was bad, Mrs. Vandy.”

“A delightful explanation,” Mrs. Vandy replied, taking a sip from her coffee. “You have come to understand a great deal in the last two days. Perhaps it is because you are learning so much that you seem so reserved now. Have you laughed or cried for no reason at all yet?”

Carol looked at her strangely. “I cried at church for no reason at all. It was so sudden, as if I needed to cry. It felt so wonderful after it was all over. I cannot understand.”

Mrs. Vandy arose, after setting her coffee cup aside half-finished, causing Carol to also arise politely. “When you laugh alone for the first time, be certain to tell me. For then, we shall both know that you are more womanly than male.” With these vague words she left the room, pausing long enough to pick up the reports and to bend over and kiss Carol upon the forehead.

“I shall, Mrs. Vandy,” Carol promised, as the woman left the room. Carol stood for some time looking as the young girl in the mirror did a deep curtsy.

“Well,” Carol murmured to the smiling reflection. “You may have cried once today for no reason, but now is the time for naughty girls to be spanked.”

Shrugging, the girl turned from the mirror and retreated to her room.

Carol found that each day was filled with surprises during the first week of training.

Thousands of facts were poured into his head as he was taught things which he was assured that any child his age was certain to know. The work practicums were in-

teresting, if not challenging. But, most interesting to Carol was the fact that when they went to church, marketing, and tended the nursery children, that Carol no longer was frightened by people. There was a game to be played, and Carol loved it.

Monday night with the girls' bowling was tense at first, but Carol shook away fears which the others mistook for shyness and soon Caroline was one of the girls.

Suddenly a new world opened unto Caroline's wonder filled eyes. This world was a strange mixture of frills, sudden loves, rich hates, deep longings, surprising giggles, and talks about boys, clothes, school, love, the other girls, and sincere longings to become women, yet unsure that the miracle will ever take place. Soon Caroline found that this world was a place to ride emotions rather than reserved logic.

Tuesday's skating was fun since Caroline knew how to skate. The only problem was the short skating skirt and boys. Within a few minutes upon the ice, Caroline discovered that the boys at the rink had decided that *she* was a real doll!

From then on Caroline was in a whirl of boys ranging from a shrill fourteen to a deep, mature eighteen that made Caroline's whole body to all but vibrate at each word he said. There was little doubt that next Saturday night's date could have been cinched right there, but Jo Ann burst that bubble promptly in the powder room.

Caroline was warned to curb *her* sudden popularity or *she* would be without a girlfriend to her name. Needless to say, Caroline was both amused and amazed by this sudden green-eyed Jo Ann, but *she* was much less outgoing for the rest of the night and confined most of her time skating with the gang.

At the Wednesday night coke social after the movie, Caroline was introduced to Bill Richards, a young high- school junior noted for being next year's football captain. Carol, a bit chagrined by his own slowness in developing, saw that Bill, at sixteen, was quite on his way to manhood and, as Caroline, *she*, was rather pleased at how interested he seemed to be with her as a blind date.

Saturday night was a madhouse at the Lurd's household as the girls all prepared for their dates and helped Caroline with *her* new clothes, which, that afternoon, Mrs. Vandy had supervised as Caroline went from store to store and purchased.

Caroline stepped from the shower and accepted from Jo Ann a heavy towel, having become by now accustomed to the idea of being seen naked by other women.

When Caroline had been presented with the hormonal treatment which had produced two small teenage breasts Caroline was quite upset, but now the fact of their presence and the special female-looking panty somehow made nakedness itself not at all uncomfortable before other girls.

It was disturbing to think that the little breasts would not vanish once Caroline left this interesting life, but, Caroline knew that only June would see them and they really were but little pillows.

Wiping off, Caroline walked to the dressing room after cleaning up the bathroom. Removing the shower cap, Caroline dropped the towel to pick up a pink lace net, A cup teen bra which, once on, transformed the little pillows into a young maiden's pride.

“When is Bill coming?,” Jo Ann asked, watching Caroline's dressing with almost detached interest.

“I think he said 7:30, Jo,” Caroline sighed after slipping on a pink net panty girdle. Caroline stood in front of the mirror and turned around with fascinated interest, seeing how the bra and panty really served to hide nothing but yet heightened a visible femininity. “They are just way out.” “Look, Little Miss Conceit,” Jo Ann remarked, with laughter over her companion's obvious delight, “Bill is going to come pretty quick, and unless you plan to show him your pretties, you had better get going.”

Caroline blushed at the idea of Bill seeing what the mirror reflected. Opening a package on the vanity, Caroline carefully rolled up one of the sheer nylons in it and slowly drew it up a long slender leg to fasten it tautly to the garters on the panty brief.

“Aren't they just marvelous?”

“You will get used to them,” Jo Ann answered matter-of-factly looking down at her own pretty legs making a mental comparison with those of Caroline and knowing that her friend had her, hands down. “But they sure are a change from the little-girl look.”

“I'll say,” Caroline laughed, unfolding a pink satin-and-lace slip to drop over her lovely shoulders and form before adjusting the lacy straps.

“My,” Caroline almost sighed, brushing the smooth satin skirt to cause the slip to cling in place over Caroline's feminine form as its lacy hem tickled across the taut nylons sending little shivers up Caroline's spine. “Do yours send little shivers?”

“Silly goose,” Jo Ann giggled, brushing her wool skirt back and forth.

“Ohh, I couldn't stand that,” Caroline laughed, slipping into a pink angora sweater and stepping into a black taffeta swirl skirt, zipping its back up after adjusting its waistband over the sweater blouse. The matching bolero jacket of black taffeta was next.

“You should wear petticoats with that,” Jo Ann observed opening a closet and pulling from a hanger a pink bouffant satin-and-lace petticoat which she placed in Caroline's lap as Caroline finished with a soft dab of make-up.

“Okay, but I'll be shivers all night,” Caroline swore stepping into the petticoat and adjusting the flounce of the swirl skirt. “I dreamed that I danced on a cloud in my...”

The sound of the front door chimes broke off Caroline's chatter.

A knock and Mrs. Nelson entered, dressed in a black nylon maid's uniform. “Your dates are here, ladies.”

“Oh, thank you,” Jo Ann answered, running to fetch Patricia.

“You are lovely, Miss. Caroline,” Mrs. Nelson stated with a delighted smile. “I would suggest that you wear your white wool coat with these gloves and this black satin purse. It gets cold in the evening,” Mrs. Nelson opened a closet and handed Caroline the indicated items. “Now remember, in by eleven tonight.”

“Yes, ma'am,” Caroline replied seriously. “I do hope you are right. I want to knock Bill's eyes out.”

“Darling,” Mrs. Nelson protested with a soft laugh that revealed more amusement than scolding. “You had better watch yourself with that boy. He is pretty big for his age.”

Caroline nodded with a half curtsy before following the other two girls down the stairs. Walking with a demure light step in Queen Anne heels, Caroline and the others composed themselves at the top of the stairs and made the grand entrance down the spiral stairs towards an appreciative audience.

“Good evening, Miss. Turner,” Bill announced with a mock bow before taking Caroline's coat and helping her with it. “My don't we smell nice tonight.”

“Thank you, Mr. Richards,” Caroline replied, maintaining the social distance in the presence of Mrs. Lurd, who was obviously pleased.

“Now, you men have these ladies back by eleven,” Mrs. Lurd stated with motherly concern, causing the girls some discomfort. Yet, Mrs. Lurd caught Caroline's nervous glance at Bill's obvious masculinity and she was amused to see the child's uncertain fears. “Safe and sound.”

“Mom,” Jo Ann complained, as her date, Larry Eller, opened the front door to usher the girls out after promising to meet the deadline.

“Have a good time children,” Mrs. Lurd observed as they all flocked from the house.

“Boy,” Patricia muttered over Mrs. Lurd's last observation.

“They have to go through that,” Larry noted going around to the driver's side of his dad's car after having helped Jo Ann into a front seat alongside of a large box. “The box is for the dance. Ed is the recreation chairman today and we thought that the back seat would hold the rest of you real cozy-like.”

“Sure,” Patricia mused, looking at Ed Gaines, her date, with a bit of suspicion. “I bet it's an empty box.”

“Ah, come on,” Bill laughed, taking Caroline by the hand and leading the way to the driver's side. “I'll get in and you can sit on my lap?”

Seeing that Patricia had already taken to Ed's lap Caroline bent over and folding the heavy satin skirt into a single fold in the front *she* bent over and sat into his lap, releasing the skirt as he closed the door and placed one arm about Caroline's waist and a hand in *her* lap.

“Now isn't that comfortable, baby,” Bill laughed as the car suddenly lurched forward pushing Caroline into his arms.

“Please,” Caroline laughed, turning to face Bill, whose hand gently brushed the black taffeta skirt.

Patricia giggled, throwing her arms about Ed as if they were alone.

“See, they don't care,” Bill urged, pulling Caroline closer so that *she* was enfolded in his arm like a child and she had to place her arms about his neck for support while his free hand patted the skirt almost suggestively.

“You mind your hands,” she whispered in his ear. “I would hate to slap you in front of your friends.”

“Sure,” Bill whispered back. “Later.”

Patricia's renewed giggling blocked whatever Caroline could have answered and so they rode to the dance. It was not until they got to the dance that Patricia was able to free herself from her date so that the three girls could meet with the others in the powder room. “Isn't that Ed all man?”

“You should know,” Sarah Little observed, straightening her nylons.

A titter of laughter filled the room.

“You had better watch that figure of yours, fatso,” Patricia said, knowing how worried Sarah was about her weight.

“Isn't that a lovely dress,” Nora exclaimed happily as she paraded Caroline by, leading her across the room. “Where did you get it?”

“Angela's,” Nancy announced. “I saw it in the window. I almost bought it but I just couldn't afford twenty five dollars.”

“You should see the keen panty girdle,” Jo Ann announced, lifting Caroline's skirts and slip as the girls flocked about the somewhat embarrassed Caroline. “Isn't that sexy?”

Caroline laughed, brushing the skirts out of Jo Ann's hands. “Mrs. Vandy found them. There is a bra to match.”

“Gee, I wish I had a rich guardian. Is it true that your guardian built Turner Hall for the school?”

“Yes,” Caroline said, growing serious for a moment. “She is very nice to me.”

“Come on, the wolves must be howling by now,” Sarah laughed, opening the door and yelling back, “I bet Bill would like to see those panties!”

Caroline blushed angrily at the laughing girls as they trooped from the room towards their dates. Shrugging, Caroline followed them, vowing to get even with Sarah. Bill would be amused at Sarah jibes.

“What was the yelling?” Bill asked with mock innocence as he took Caroline's hand and led the way to the dance floor as the Rose Oak Rock Band struck up a golden oldie twist.

“You mind your own business,” Caroline scolded with a slight giggle, swinging graceful hips to the dance. In strange fascination, Caroline's lovely eyes dropped their gaze to Bill's twisting form, noting with some approval that he danced well. The swishing sound of Caroline's skirt sounded as she spun closer to Bill, feeling the soft satin brush back and forth across the net panty and bra causing Caroline to shiver in disbelief at the delicate sensations this caused. In utter amazement, she found her eyes looking again and again at Bill's form, tracing the outline of his dark blue trousers. Carol had heard of how female hormones had turned male rats into accepting sex from males like females; was Caroline becoming like that too? Tearing her eyes from his masculine build she tried to look into his deep eyes, seeing that he was studying her with the near detachment of a connoisseur tracing with his deep blue eyes the shape

of her pink sweater blouse revealed by the open bolero jacket as she danced back and forth before him.

Suddenly the music stopped.

“Coke?” he asked, taking her hand in his and squeezing feeling the near trembling. “Wouldn't you be more comfortable without that jacket?”

“No, thanks,” Caroline breathed, accepting eagerly the coke he handed her. “Perhaps later, but it is warm in here.”

“The porch is open,” he suggested hopefully, taking her hand in his as the band started to play a slower touch dance.

“I think we had better dance,” she countered, seeing Patricia and Ed heading for the porch. She could wait on that one. “If you don't mind?”

“Of course not,” he laughed, but added, to be certain that she understood, “Later.”

With this, he took her hands, setting the coke aside, and led her to the dance floor. In a moment he had moved her closer into his arms until they pressed together. Using his free hand he placed it upon her cheek and lowered her head to his chest before placing his hand high on her waist beneath the bolero jacket. As they moved to the soft music he carefully moved until, at each turn, his hip pressed into the soft satin skirt just below the opening of her jacket. With this movement, knowing that she had to turn with him or be virtually lifted by his leg between hers' into the turn, he continued into a series of graceful touch dancing turns feeling her pulse quicken with each turn. Now he knew that Patricia had been right; Caroline was going to be fun!

Caroline tried to fight the frustration of his movements, feeling her skirts slide back and forth across the gentle pressure of his leg, as he carried her again and again over the turns. Wave upon wave, of shivering delight added to her discomfort as she tried to turn away from his arms but feeling the strength of his arms holding her closer and closer with each turn as if she were a helpless child.

She certainly felt like no child.

When the music stopped he held her backwards, and bent over and kissed her lips as she vainly tried to push his face away between her palms. When he released her she was so tense that she could barely walk.

“I must,” her voice trembled slightly. Helplessly, she muttered something about the powder room and retreated from his amused form with a flurry of skirts. Once inside the powder room, she collected her composure long enough to see Jo Ann enter.

“Wow,” Jo Ann exclaimed looking at her still-trembling friend. “He had you going in circles out there. I should have warned you, he is a bit of an expert. But we didn't know that you would be so easy. You must not forget that your emotions are those of a woman, subject to the desires of a man.”

“Thanks,” Caroline sighed, straightening a curl angrily and realizing how weak she was to those desires! “I think I will wait here until I cool off. I'm so mad I could slap him!”

Jo Ann opened the bathroom door for a quick check; seeing it empty she turned towards Caroline.

“I wouldn't do anything like that yet.”

“He was trying to give me hot pants!”

Jo Ann laughed in sheer joy seeing that Caroline's anger was directed at the fact that Bill was succeeding. “He is exciting, isn't he?”

“You're a great help,” Caroline pouted, opening her purse and taking a comb to the unruly curl. She smiled and laughed, “I think I'll go out there and get pregnant; I bet that would shake up Rose Oak?”

Jo Ann looked at Caroline in shock, seeing how really shook-up her friend was over what had been done. “Please, Caroline, that is no joking matter!”

Caroline set the purse aside wondering if Jo Ann remembered. It was if reality had suddenly closed in on them both. “I am sorry.”

Jo Ann looked very worried. “He will be too experienced for you. We should have known. Oh, this is horrible. And I arranged for Patty to go back with you two. She is so eager for Ed that she won't have time to keep an eye on you.”

Caroline blushed saying, “I think I can take care of myself.”

“Oh, no you can't,” Jo Ann warned. “This being on the passive side of the fence is no snap. He has all the advantages and if you can't even be cool for five minutes of dancing...”

“Maybe I had better get sick,” Caroline suggested looking at a sanitary napkin vending machine.

“And if you don't have a fever, Mrs. Nelson will have you scrubbing the basement floor with a hand brush. You have to go through with this,” she announced, following Caroline's eyes towards the machine only to giggle. “Why you little devil, it's a wonderful idea.”

With this she left the powder room to fetch Patricia taking her aside with a rather loud whisper making certain that Ed caught it with his keen ears.

“She is all tears,” Jo Ann murmured taking Patricia's hand. “Her time has come, and I need your help. It's her monthly.”

Patricia was stunned, to say the least, looking nervously at Ed before following Jo Ann's insistent lead towards the party room. She couldn't believe that Jo Ann could be so indiscreet. And who was she talking about? Following her into the powder room she saw Caroline finishing up before the sanitary vendor readjusting her skirts in place.

“What?”

“Insurance,” Caroline announced, turning to face the laughing Patty.

“It's not funny,” Jo Ann announced sternly placing her hand to Patricia's shoulder, causing her friend to look up with her eyes filled with amusement. “And you had better keep you hands off Ed and your eyes on Caroline. She has problems with Bill.”

Patricia giggled, covering her face with her hand she tittered, "I thought so, he is a real stud."

"Shame on you," Jo Ann stated, looking nervously at Caroline and knowing that Patricia would not be any help, because she was all ga-ga over Ed. "Two minutes in that car and both of you will be goners."

"I will not," they chimed together, only to giggle at themselves.

"Let's hope so," Jo Ann muttered, leaving the powder room as they all returned to their dates, who were talking together and laughing about something which Caroline could well remember, thinking of a certain joke. Bill almost gently took her hand and led Caroline to the dance floor and Caroline braced for another treatment only to discover that the ruse had worked. He was almost frightened of her as they danced about three inches apart.

There was no denying that Caroline enjoyed the dance. Every moment on the floor was like a lovely dream. And Bill was an excellent dancer.

To her surprise, most of the boys that she danced with were rather good at dancing, even if a few required a gentle lead through the more intricate steps. It was as if all else vanished and she was dancing across a palace ballroom alone at night with her swirling skirts singing again and again.

"Dream, sweet dream, what are you dreaming of?" It was then that she realized that he was again dancing close and holding her into his strong arms to whisper, "What are you dreaming of?"

She smiled happily and placed a finger along the bridge of his manly nose. "You're cute, but nosy."

He laughed, almost huskily, sending shivers down her spine as they turned. "Do you mind if I dance close to you? It feels so natural."

"It is nice," she agreed, forgetting all that Jo Ann had warned against. She was safe after all. Impulsively she kissed him as they paused in a turn so that she could balance on one toe and lift her leg to reach his lips. For that brief moment they stood still to the music.

"I think that I should be sorry," he murmured, continuing the turn after her playful kiss. "When I first saw you I thought that you were a child. But you are a woman."

Caroline felt almost proud, forgetting all that was real for this moment of love. As the music ended they stood together and then he led her to the porch. Her eyes were fixed upon his strong face, wondering what it would be like to hold him dearly. There was something in the way he walked that made her want to skip by his side. And she saw in his eyes brighter lights than those of the stars reflecting through the cold night into the tall panes of the windows that lined the hotel's closed verandah. The night was right out of a teen-age romance novel that they had her read.

Tenderly he enfolded her into his arms, lifting her until she had but the tip of one toe to the floor as her breasts ached in delight from the pressure of his strong chest. And then their lips met to cause time to stand without motion as they did in each other's arms. As he kissed her, he felt her delicate fingers hold lightly to his cheeks as

they tenderly touched his curly black hair and played with his locks. Slowly he bent forward, moving his arms down her lithe back as he pressed closer into the soft folds of her skirts.

“Oh,” she gasped at last, turning her head, aside and standing in his arms with her lovely head on his chest as they danced to an unsounding music that only played to them. Caroline suddenly wanted to cry, she was so very happy in his strong arms as they moved slowly, causing her to walk ballet style.

Tenderly his right hand released its hold as they stood facing out towards the evening stars. From where they stood they could have seen the lake or the evening stars if they cared, but they were too enraptured to care. Delicately his free hand parted her bolero jacket and gently explored the soft angora blouse to form a little cup below what he sought to caress.

“Why you are frightened little one? I will not hurt you or your friend.”

Caroline sighed, glancing down at his hand and feeling a pride in that he was so happy with her.

“You really shouldn't,” she whispered, meaning that he should. Deep within her wave upon wave of desire swept away all desire to resist his tender urging as her breast grew taut to his touch, causing her to feel sudden panic over this new urging. Suddenly turning she was free of his arms causing him to gasp in surprise.

“Have I hurt you?” he all but pleaded.

“No,” she whispered, still trembling as her body fought her mind. *Carol* suddenly realized that *Caroline* was actually thinking about having sex with a man!

“Perhaps we had better go back,” he suggested softly, watching her close the bolero jacket. He would never understand girls; she seemed to be enjoying his petting, and wham she pulls out cold. “It is getting cool out here.”

“I think you are right,” she replied, taking his hand almost distantly and wondering about this new element in her body response. Suddenly she was free from her urging, as if refreshed. The dream world had suddenly vanished and Caroline so wanted to laugh, or sing, or cry, just to show what emotion this could be. It was like when she cried in church. Perhaps Mrs. Vandy would be able to understand.



Entering the dance floor she saw that the clock was at 10:15.

He looked at the clock himself. "How about a couple of burgers and some coke? It's getting near that time."

"For sure," she answered, catching Patricia's eye, noting the amusement it reflected, almost with pride, for Bill was a big man at City High. "We will go to the powder room, first, okay?"

"Okay, I'll get the car and Ed can bring you two out," Bill stated with a wave towards Ed as Patricia joined Caroline near the powder room. As the boys got together, the girls went into the powder room to primp.

"Why, if I hadn't seen it myself," Sarah announced coming from the bathroom. "Caroline, I do believe that you have that big boy around your little finger, or does he have you all wrapped up." She winked suggestively to Patty, who knew that Bill was one of Sarah's heartthrobs.

"Eat your heart out, kid," Patricia answered, seeing Carolines' wince at Sarah's sly finger motion. "And you had better keep your hands still or Caroline will be told about your bit with Bill."

"You do, Patricia Gorden, and I will never speak to you," Sarah stated angrily.

"Promises," Patricia laughed, watching Sarah storm from the powder room.

"What about her and Bill?" Caroline asked growing interested.

"Girl secrets are done on an exchange basis," Patricia stated with a sly wink. "Now if you told me what Bill and you did on the porch, maybe..."

Caroline blushed a deep crimson. "You are worse than she is."

"Well, you had better get used to the idea that women take care of themselves, with each other, or you will be an old maid," Patricia warned before retreating into the bathroom with Caroline close behind. Finished they both went out to rescue poor Ed, who was waiting with their coats.

After a few burgers at Tino's, Bill swung the car back towards the college via the lake road.

Caroline could hear Patricia's heavy sighs as she and Ed cuddled together in the back seat and she wondered at the sudden cool chill she felt as she sat alone looking out of the car window at the frozen lake which reflected a snow-colored moon.

At Newton's road, Bill swung the car off the road into a darkened lakeside park and turned off the lights, leaving the radio softly playing.

"Eleven," Caroline warned softly as he turned to face her, taking her soft hands into his and pulling her closer until her lovely head rested upon his chest and her eyes looked, up through the darkness into his, with an appealing plea of helplessness.

"We will be home soon," he replied huskily, sending delight through her body, awakening her earlier emotions as he bent down, holding her chin and kissed her breathless.

Again, reality vanished as her arms swept about his neck and clung longingly as her long fingers caressed him. She felt as if she was hanging in space as her lips again met his to be crushed into the wine of a kiss.

Placing one hand in the small of her graceful back, his other hand carefully undid her coat as they met for another kiss. Leaning her gently back towards the seat, he slid the coat from her arms, as his arm rested beneath her arms still holding her half-struggling body close to his.

“Don't be frightened,” he whispered, sending her heart into a wild, frightened beat. Smiling, he slid to the car floor on his knees stretching her out on the car seat.

Half pinned by his strong arm about her waist, she lifted her head as he placed his coat beneath it and bent forward to kiss her, forcing her head into the heavy wool folds of the coat. She couldn't breathe under the force of his kiss. Replacing her arms about his neck, she felt his arm removed from behind her back.

“No, please,” she whispered in protest, only to be kissed again while his left hand carefully opened the bolero jacket to caress her breasts as his right hand tenderly stimulated her desires by gently slipping the taffeta skirt up. Her whole body was aflame from his experienced gestures of petting and her struggling only added to the fires. “Please, don't!”

“Sure,” he whispered gently as his hands carefully turned her waist, and she felt her sweater slipped up over the satin waisted slip only to feel his fingers quickly slip the straps free to reveal her bra.

“Oh,” she cried in disbelief, over the renewed waves of delight that shook her body while his fingers made taut her breasts to their urgings. When he bent forward to kiss her full nipples, one hand slid up her skirts to form a soft cushion upon her waist as the hand rested firmly on her panty, causing her to react by opening her legs.

Suddenly he was upon her, crushing her lips beneath his as his body all but crushed her into the seat. As one hand forced itself beneath her neck and he held her close for another kiss, she could feel the hand by her panty-girdle busily doing something as his breath matched hers'. Then his hand withdrew from her panty and encircled her waist as he clung to her in a gentle motion of friction that slowly increased speed as her legs entrapped him feeling his maleness pressed against her body. And then he kissed her as his body emptied its passions into the soft folds of her girdle!

With this kiss, he rolled from her and sat up, adjusting his trousers before shifting the car. “We have ten minutes,” he complained as she tried to seek his love.

“Oh,” she sighed in disbelief. So sudden and he was done. How could a woman ever become used to such sudden withdrawal? As the car moved she sat up and arranged her clothes, trying to suppress her desires also. But, he was right, they couldn't afford to be late in getting home and then she suddenly wanted to laugh, so she cried instead.

Bill wondered what made them cry after heavy petting. Would she cry after the real thing? He shrugged, wondering if he could gamble the real thing with her. She was a bundle of fire, but she was the type that would take something like that as the step to

marriage. His dad warned him about taking chances with her kind of girl. They make wonderful wives but..."

"You had better take my handkerchief," he offered as they stopped in front of the house. "It was wonderful I hope that I didn't hurt you any."

"No," she cried, wiping the tears away. "You are sweet."

He got out of the car and held the door as she arose from the seat to check all her clothes. Her back was to the house and seeing the porch light was on and, no doubt, Mrs. Nelson was watching. Patricia looked at Caroline and winked as they inspected each other for a final check. The boys were standing helplessly by, trying to make small talk about the cold. Soon they rejoined the girls and walked to the front door and embraced for a simple kiss before the girls retreated into the house as Mrs. Nelson opened the door.

"Did you girls have a good time?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Nelson," they replied together, seeing that Jo Ann had just arrived before them, because she was still standing at the foot of the stairs, removing her coat.

As Caroline withdrew up the stairs, Mrs. Nelson followed close behind...

In her bedroom Caroline danced a lovely turn and asked, "I wonder if June ever felt this way. I feel so tired and yet like I was floating in an endless dream."

"June had a tendency to send boys home," Mrs. Nelson answered briskly as she pulled back the bed covers. "Did you have a lovely time?"

"Yes," Caroline answered softly as her fingers removed her clothes until she stood dressed in the panty and bra. "I had a wonderful time, Mrs. Nelson."

Mrs. Nelson glanced at the child as if amused, only to change her smile to a frown. "What is this dampness?"

Caroline suddenly turned to retreat to the bathroom and remove the panties as her eyes filled with humiliation.

"It's can't be," Mrs. Nelson exclaimed, only to break into laughter.

Caroline placed the panty on a towel and shrugged knowingly. "We were just petting. He is a very passionate boy, ma'am."

"And you have been a very bad girl," Mrs. Nelson remarked.

"I am willing to be spanked," Caroline remarked. "I have learned more tonight than I did all week. It was worth just this once, Mrs. Nelson."

Mrs. Nelson looked at her for a long moment and then retreated from the bathroom. "Prepare for bed child, I shall be back."

Caroline took a light shower and slipped into a pair of blue baby dolls over which she wore a simple blue dressing gown. She entered the bedroom to discover Mrs. Lurd sitting on the edge of the bed, dressed in a blue silken and lace nightgown and peignoir. Just then Mrs. Vandy, dressed in a satin dressing gown, entered the bedroom with Mrs. Nelson. "I have been told that you have become quite a willful child."

"I am sorry. I merely spoke the truth, Mrs. Vandy."

"I see," Mrs. Vandy remarked, gazing at the panties that Mrs. Nelson showed her and Mrs. Lurd. "Caroline, this aspect of your personality is new to us. Tell me just exactly what happened?"

Caroline stood before Mrs. Vandy and Mrs. Lurd as Mrs. Nelson sat also on the bed to arrange her dressing gown. "Mrs. Vandy, maybe I should tell you. I do not understand why I did what I did tonight. It was as if I were caught in a storm and I couldn't escape."

"Tell us what happened," Mrs. Vandy urged.

Caroline told them of her evening with Bill, avoiding only those parts of her description which might put Patricia Gorden in trouble. She was certain however that the women were aware of Patricia's problem for they did not probe at all into any glaring loopholes that Caroline had left in her own description.

"Well, dearest, you had a very interesting evening," Mrs. Lurd stated after Caroline had finished her story. "I wonder if you should ever be with Patricia again, or Bill."

"It might be dangerous for her not to," Jo Ann stated, entering the room. "After all, Bill looks at her as being his steady. If what Patricia has just told me is true, Caroline had better either stay dating Bill or lose her reputation."

"Reputation," Mrs. Nelson remarked caustically causing poor Caroline to cover her lovely face.

"Nevertheless," Jo Ann continued. "Bill is a good boy, despite what you might think. He has almost as much to learn as she does. If he is so attracted to her perhaps she had better learn how to overcome that attraction."

"No," Mrs. Vandy disagreed. "We do want Caroline to get to know more boys. No girl her age should be going steady too long."

"Once she can control him," Jo Ann suggested. "Then they can break up."

"Does that sound right, Mrs. Nelson?" Mrs. Lurd asked with concern.

"No," Mrs. Nelson answered. "Mrs. Vandy is right. She should never go out again with that boy. In fact, someone should talk to his parents about this matter. And I am worried about the simple fact that we must have a way of limiting her. Although the cute little belt is designed for an accurate appearance and no doubt it would serve her well..."

"Mrs. Nelson!" Caroline protested. "I don't..."

"I believe that," Mrs. Vandy interrupted, "Mrs. Nelson was speaking, child. You may not like our bluntness concerning this evening's tryst, but you will be polite."

"Yes, ma'am," Caroline apologized. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Nelson."

"It would seem that she was quite ready to be spanked for tonight's activities," Mrs. Nelson continued, ignoring Caroline's apology. "I feel that she must be taught a lesson; something that both she and Bill will understand. Something that her girl friends can appreciate much more than she might."

“Very well,” Mrs. Lurd decided, with a sigh, “I shall talk to his parents. It is clear that, at the very least, he should be taught to use a condom when he has sex with a wanton girl.”

“Yes, Caroline will be grounded for one month and forbidden to have any dates with boys,” Mrs. Vandy added, “And, a spanking once each week during that month to remind her why she has been grounded.”

Poor Caroline spent the rest of the month *grounded*, which in her case meant that she had to confine her life to her training to become a young lady and a social life limited to *girls only*. She quickly realized that this cooling off also applied to her circle of girlfriends. Some of them were well aware of the fact that she had gotten Bill into trouble, and they feared that their association with her might hurt their own reputations.

When the month was over however, Caroline found herself restricted to chaperoned affairs with dates that were not at all as experienced as Bill. Furthermore, after each date she was subjected to the humiliation of telling the ladies about everything that went on between her and her *boyfriend*, as well as a most shaming and intimate physical examination by Mrs. Nelson followed by a douche! And then, suddenly, summer was over and Caroline was delighted to be allowed to buy her own fall college wardrobe with the realization that she actually was going to move into a college dorm far from the high school world of City High and her friends, who were led to believe that she had returned to her own home town high school....

Lovelace Hall housed three hundred young ladies in twelve wings with about twenty five girls living in each wing. In charge of each wing was a college senior, earning her way by serving as a house counselor.

The girl in charge of Caroline's wing was a Miss Niles and her superior was Mrs. Vandy, who was the dormitory head counselor.

Caroline was assigned to a room with Victoria Shaffer. Vikky, was a freshman girl of seventeen who was still just entering her maidenhood with all of the problems involved. Her dresser vanity was covered with lotions which Caroline was sure only added to the girl's problems. Vikky's mother helped her daughter unpack and was quite pleased to see that her roommate was older than her daughter.

“What is your name, dear?” Mrs. Shaffer asked.

“This is my mother, Caroline,” Vikky introduced her roommate, placing another bottle upon the small vanity dresser. “We are both in the same pre-nursing classes, although she is taking the homemaker series.”

“I see,” Mrs. Shaffer stated, offering her gloved hand. “Caroline.”

“How do you do, ma'am,” Caroline said, with an automatic half curtsy, only to blush over her childish manners as she took Mrs. Shaffer's hand.

“Delightful,” Mrs. Shaffer approved. “But, Victoria, I must rush; my chauffeur has been waiting quite long enough.”

“Thank you mother,” Vikky responded, accepting her kiss with a rather matter-of-fact attitude.

“Be a good little girl,” Mrs. Shaffer chided with amusement before turning to leave. “And you too, Caroline.”

When the door closed Vikky sighed, almost happily, and turned her attention to unpacking.

“May I help?” Caroline offered, having completed her side of the room which consisted of a dresser vanity that enclosed a sink, a dresser, bed and mirrored closet.

“Sure,” Vikky said pushing a suitcase towards her.

“How did you know what I was taking?” Caroline asked.

“It's out on the bulletin board. They post our dorm duties on the board here, just like they do for the high school girls over at Henderson Hall, where I lived last year. You had better get used to reading the board. You're on sweep duty tonight.”

“Sweep duty?”

“Sure. You and Ann have the job of cleaning the halls tonight,” Vikky stated. “Each one of us is posted on a roster and assigned to certain cleaning duties. You are new, aren't you?”

“Yes,” Caroline answered, unpacking Vikky's underthings in a bureau.

“Well,” Vikky began. “We had better keep our eyes open.”

Caroline paused in her helping of Vikky to return her eyes to the vanity filled with lotions. “If you help me, I will help you with your face.”

Vikky's smile faded as she almost dropped a dress.

“You can?”

“I think so,” Caroline noted, looking over the bottles noting that none of them bore a prescription label.

“Mother promised me a bigger allowance if I cleared up.”

“Well, is it a bargain?” Caroline asked, seeing that she had Vikky well in hand.

“Yes, what do you want, mistress,” Vikky laughed relieved. “I will even clean house for us both.”

“Nothing rash,” Caroline stated. “Just tell me what I need to know to stay out of trouble. Can you do that?”

“Well,” Vikky countered with a slight smile as if pleased at Caroline's request.

“First, learn the routine facts. Frosh are nothing. And, even though you are a Sophomore, you are considered to be a first year girl. If an upper class girl approaches you, cast your eyes down and play the role of a child. Don't ever get caught in slacks or pajamas in the halls, Mrs. Vandy wants skirts all the time, except for gym.”

From then on Vikky spoke for thirty minutes about the routine that Caroline was to live for the rest of the year. “And if you follow my advice you shouldn't have too much trouble.”

“It sounds awfully complicated,” Caroline noted packing away the last item from Vikky's suitcase.

“Not really,” was the answer. “I’ll help you.”

And help she did. Caroline was soon viewed by her friends and the teachers as a wonder since she did not break a single rule during the first few weeks, a thing unheard of among first year students. Miss Niles was very proud of her star resident, since Mrs. Vandy constantly complimented her on how well Caroline behaved.

Caroline found her classes surprisingly tough, causing her to realize that she had not been in school for some time. Her core class in Home Management and Care required math and some knowledge of chemistry, and it was amazing how much she did not know, or had forgotten.

In addition to her three credit core class, she was carrying: three credits in Family Psychology; three credits in Interior Decoration; three credits in Child Care; three credits in Clothing Care and Design; and, a three credit course on Cooking and Baking.

Each of these courses checkerboarded a schedule for six days a week, with three hours a week for each.

At the end of each day she found herself taking the mandatory gym class. For it seemed that Rose Oak believed in: A Mind in a Sound Body.

After dinner the girls were free to study and attend to housekeeping chores for their wing.

Caroline took private tutoring from Miss Niles and, in time, her grades were much better.

Since Mrs. Lurd was Caroline's guardian, it was up to her to make the decision and Caroline was required, after each date, to present herself and tell what she learned from this experience after Mrs. Nelson had completed her humiliating examination followed by a douche.

And after ten weeks of such interviews, when Mrs. Lurd was assured that the novelty of petting had worn off, she allowed Caroline greater freedom.

Even her studies improved, much to the surprise of her teachers who had become naturally disturbed by her extracurricular interests which ranged from social work in the evening, baby sitting club to the weekend dance parties. There she met Robert Denton, a pre-law junior from nearby Denton College, who was a star athlete and all male.

Her high school experience with Bill, and the other boys, was a success in all ways for she now had the ability to dangle Robert temptingly throughout the date. He left with a kiss wondering about this girl and resolving to return again. And then it was the night of the Rose Ball Prom...

Caroline wore a white ballet-styled lace over taffeta off the shoulder gown with ballet-styled, white satin dancing slippers. As she finished dabbing perfume she turned to the door, picking up her wrap, gloves, and purse.

“Please come in,” she exclaimed happily, as the door swung open to reveal Vikky dressed in a blue ball gown.

“They are here?” Vikky cried for near joy. “I am dancing tonight with Allen Gibbs; he is a quarterback. I am so happy that I have you for a room mate?”

“Well, do us both proud,” Caroline laughed taking her arm as they half skipped into the hall. In moments they were both to the front door to be met by Robert and Allen. “Isn't spring grand?”

“Not half as beautiful as our dates,” Allen replied gallantly, helping Vikky into the car.

“You're beautiful,” Robert whispered, sitting by the wheel and starting the car. “Will you kiss me for good luck?”

“Silly,” Caroline replied, giving him a little kiss upon his chin. “No more now, but perhaps a little more, later.”

“Later,” he whispered as the car moved forward towards the Music Building which housed the ballroom that Rose Oak used for all of its dances. In a few minutes he eased the car into the parking lot behind the building.

The dance began with a grand march so that each couple would be paraded past the reception line of the teaching staff and their male companions. As they walked towards the beginning of the line Caroline almost passed out and needed Robert's surprised but willing support, for she saw Mrs. June Turner standing by Mrs. Lurd!

“Mr. William Richards and Miss Caroline Jean Turner,” announced the little herald page, who was, in reality one, of the high school girls at Rose Oak.

When they reached the beginning of the line Caroline curtsied and they turned to face the first couple. They then sidestepped to the next couple where she repeated the curtsy, as Robert repeated their names to acknowledge in turn the names of those in the reception line.

“Mrs. Turner,” he pronounced, looking at Caroline's, who was in a very deep curtsy as her lovely eyes almost mocked the amusement upon Mrs. Turner's face.

“Charmed, ma'am,” Caroline murmured, recovering from her curtsy. “Delightfully unbelievable,” Mrs. Turner countered. “You are quite beautiful, my dear.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Turner,” Caroline replied, turning to move to the next couple and repeating her curtsy hearing Mrs. Turner say to Mrs. Lurd: “She is impossibly beautiful.”

“Yes, I think that Mrs. Vandy should be quite pleased.”

Soon Caroline and Robert were free from the line and were dancing out unto the floor following the other couples.

“She is your aunt?” Robert asked as if awed. “She is a handsome woman.”

“Yes, she is my guardian,” Caroline replied looking back at the line to see June watching *her* every move so she snuggled closer to a pleased Robert. *Her* thoughts were interrupted by the fact that Robert had begun to dance into a series of turns, again using his leg as the balance of each turn. Feeling the slippery satin of her slip move to each turn she knew that she must change her position not wanting to become his plaything tonight. Not with June watching!

She had other plans for him.

Using the toe of her ballet slipper she turned to the music just a fraction before he did and their combined weight brought him about so that her hip was resting where his had been upon her. Much to her delight and his discomfort she held her place in his arms on each turn thanking the powers that taught her modern dance.

At the end of the dance he suddenly left her and rushed to the men's room as she covered her face and giggled her amusement!

"What happened to him?" Jo Ann asked leading the way to the powder room. "He looked as if he wet his pants."

Caroline burst into soft laughter.

"In a way I guess you can say he did."

With this she opened the powder room door and entered with the bemused Jo Ann. Pausing at the mirror she primped her face and hair while Jo Ann went to the bathroom.

"Hello, darling," Mrs. Turner exclaimed as she entered with Mrs. Lurd. "I have a present for you and I thought that you would like to wear it tonight."

Caroline smiled saying, "You look very lovely, Mrs. Turner. My Robert was quite impressed with you. I believe that he called you *handsome*."

"Ah, she even purrs," June countered as if greatly amused. "You have done wonders, Mrs. Lurd."

She opened her handbag and removed a jeweler's case from it. "Be a dear and turn around towards the mirror."

"Yes, ma'am."

Caroline gazed in the mirror wondering what she had as she removed the simple cross necklace that Caroline had chosen for the dance. In its place she placed a pearl necklace!

"Why they are beautiful!"

"One for each week," June whispered, kissing her forehead as Jo Ann came from the inner room to see the beautiful pearls.

"Why they are wonderful," she exclaimed as Caroline replied by placing her arms about Mrs. Turner and kissing her upon the lips.

"Now ladies," Mrs. Lurd interrupted by placing her hand upon Caroline and gently separating the two of them. "Perhaps tomorrow you two should have a little chat, but tonight Caroline has a young man to dance with."

"Of course," June replied, dropping the cross necklace into her purse almost tenderly. "She should return to her date, he looks like a real lover. A college football star, no less. Much better than I did when I was your age."

"Thank you," Caroline replied with a half curtsy. "You have been so kind to me, Mrs. Turner. It is the least I can do to be the most popular girl with the boys that I can be."

“Not too popular,” she countered. “Girls your age are too old to play house, but not too young to avoid being a mother.”

Caroline blushed at Jo Ann's giggle. Angrily she withdrew only to be stopped by Mrs. Turner's hand.

“I am sorry, darling.”

“Perhaps you may be,” Caroline murmured. “But, we shall see who has the baby, Mrs. Turner.” And then she left in a flurry of skirts.

“What in the world did she mean by that?” Mrs. Lurd asked with mild amusement, covering her interest.

Needless to say Robert was quite tamed by his new experience and when Caroline returned she enjoyed her dancing, feeling much more relaxed in her knowledge that she could handle the big youth's techniques.

“AND NOW,” a voice broke into the dancing as the well-known M.C. began as the dance music faded. All of the couples faced the bandstand.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the faculty, and honored guests,” he continued. “It is our pleasure to introduce the Queen of The Rose Ball.”

A murmur of interested voices filled the room as the girls explained that one girl was voted by her high school class to be a princess and the faculty selected from these girls the queen. Up until the dance none of the girls knew who were the princesses and who would be the queen.

“But, first the princesses,” the announcer continued, with a roll of drums. “Princess Carol Ann James,” he announced as a lovely brunette from the Senior Class walked forward, curtsying first before the faculty and then turning towards the couples on the floor to curtsy again as she stood by the throne which had been unveiled by two mock pages, who now stood on either side of the throne.

“Princess Joan Lee Nelson,” he again announced, looking at the list as a tall girl dressed in a satin strapless gown walked forward. Holding the front of her green satin dress the black haired junior curtsied.

“Princess Caroline Jean Turner,” he again announced, causing a gasp to titter from lip to lip among the girls for Caroline was a sophomore. Caroline's heart stopped and Robert held her for that brief moment or she was sure that she would have fainted. She walked slowly by his side until near the bandstand, and then she went forward alone to turn and curtsy to the faculty and then towards the happy audience. She looked a bit surprised by the conversations that flooded the room but she lifted the skirts of her formal and moved to the stand, wishing that she could hear what was being said. Obviously it wasn't about her.

The band rolled out a martial best of flourishes and the announcer stated, “Her Royal Majesty, the Queen of The Rose Ball, Mary Ann Baldwin.”

“Queen Mary, your crown and robe,” the announcer stated as last year's queen came forward following two mock pages who carried the robe and crown. “You may kneel, Queen Mary.”

As she knelt the two pages adjusted the royal robes and the former queen held the crown above her head.

“I crown thee Queen of the Rose Ball.”

She arose to the curtsy of all the women present and retired to the throne as the pages held the robe train. When she sat down the couples all clapped their approval. The band played a lovely waltz as the couples danced after each escort came forward and accepted the hand in turn of the queen and each member of her court with a formal bow and led them to the dance floor. It was all a dream.

When the band stopped the girls suddenly flocked about Robert and Caroline to congratulate her and express their joy at her selection. Suddenly Robert took her from the mob of friends and led her towards the gardens causing the girls to pull away knowingly.

“You don't mind!” he asked, looking quite happy over his narrow escape.

“Of course not,” she sighed, allowing her royal princess robe to be removed by Robert, who threw it to the surprised and slightly amused page who followed close behind with its train.

“Thank you,” Caroline whispered to the girl who withdrew a bit reluctantly.

“Let's go for a walk,” he suggested taking her hand and leading her out into the garden.

Hand in hand they walked out under the beauty of heaven's veil of glittering stars. There was a sudden stillness to the night as they walked almost to a gentle air. Robert stopped and turned her by placing a hand to her waist. “My princess.”

“My love,” she whispered, not wanting to break the spell. Soon she was in his arms, crushed to his lips and for moments her heart sounded like crashing thunder in her ears. Spring perfume filled the night and the sudden songs of the night broke forth in her heart as she clung to his arms. It was a long moment before she felt strong enough to half back away. “Others may be watching.”

“Oh,” he murmured half in protest as he looked around seeing other couples similarly engaged. “They won't mind.”

“Perhaps we should go back to the dance,” she urged as the music began, taking his hand and leading him back to the ballroom. As they reentered she noticed Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Lurd step discreetly back into the shadows. She was almost tempted to return to the garden and give them a real show, but she could not rely upon Robert to control himself, or perhaps even herself.

With some amusement she wondered what Mrs. Lurd told June about the first date. No doubt that was a well-kept secret. Smiling, she went into his arms and danced.

Caroline enjoyed herself as she danced around the ball room. There was a birdlike freedom in her dancing, for she knew that these moments were to be cherished. She didn't even mind when one of the faculty dates cut in on her leaving Robert to dance with his companion, Mrs. Turner!

Her next dance was scheduled with a boy from her own class who had been her first date. He was all filled with pride and talked on and on about how lucky he was to know her.

Meanwhile, she noted that Robert and June were quite involved in a conversation which seemed to amuse Robert. As Caroline moved to her next dance on her card she saw that the two of them had retired to a corner and were busy whispering something. At last Mrs. Turner seemed quite pleased and she handed Robert a small object from her purse. Since her next dance was scheduled with Robert she retired briefly to the powder room only to return towards the dance floor as Robert moved in to take her arm.

“What did my guardian have to say?” Caroline asked as they moved to the floor causing Robert to be a bit surprised before he said;

“She loaned me her car keys so that we might have an evening alone.”

“What about your car?”

“Oh, Vikky's guy can take it. After all Mrs. Turner's car is a convertible,” he replied with great enthusiasm. “You have to see it. Your guardian sure is a swell gal.”

“For sure,” Caroline observed thoughtfully with a shrug. “I would like to be home early. Church is bright and early.”

“Just a drive out to the pavilion park and back,” he promised, holding her close in his arms.

Soon the dance ended and Robert led Caroline to the refreshment stand where they were greeted by June, who offered each of them a coke which she had already purchased. She handed one to Caroline, but allowed Robert to take the other. With a mischievous smile she watched Caroline finish the drink and then quickly lead Robert back to the dance floor when the next dance began.

June put the pills back in her purse, observing Caroline, who at first followed Robert, relaxing to the soft music not feeling a care in the world.

Perhaps, Caroline was tired, but all about her seemed vaguely unreal and she could hear the music only as it echoed from the distance. Above she saw the circles of light from the glittering chandeliers, around and around they spun casting their glow throughout the room, warming all who saw. As she was turned by Robert over his leg she could feel as if she could touch them in the near giddy joy that filled her heart. The sound of his voice whispered in her ear that they should be leaving and in a near trance she followed him, remembering to say good-by to the faculty members who all seemed to see in her eyes the delight and love she felt, and they were pleased with the touch of young love.

Helping her by carrying her wrap and purse he joked about doing this and opened the door to the convertible to help her in. Soon they were on their way home and Caroline leaned back against the soft seat to gaze up at the stars that whirled by as they moved through the warm evening air towards the pavilion park.

All was so peaceful and happy that she didn't protest when he lifted her from the seat and kissed her when they arrived at the park. With her in his arms and a blanket

he found in the back of the car he walked to a place near the old pavilion on the lake-side slope in the glow of the giant spring moon and spread the blanket before placing her gently upon it.

“Comfy?”

“Yes,” she sighed happily, looking up in wonder at the giant moon, “It is all so beautiful, and I feel so happy.”

“I'm glad,” he whispered sincerely as he crawled by her side and placed one arm about her slender waist as his other hand reached up and caressed her face ever so tenderly. Satisfied that she needed his love, he bent over her and kissed her lips until her eager arms enfolded his neck in loving embrace. Pleased with her reaction he placed his hand upon her heaving bosom to delicately awaken its desires, causing Caroline's heart to race in disorder as she lost all reserve and eagerly sought his lips.

Moments passed as she rested silently; only the sound of their impassioned breathing touching the stillness of the night. Slowly the waves of her passion increased and she giggled when he rolled her over and unzipped the side of her gown to reveal her throbbing bosoms to the moonlight glow as he gingerly dropped her strapless bra aside. Almost in relief she sighed from this unrestrained freedom while his strong hands lovingly played with their newfound toys, causing her flushed nipples to eagerly become erect to his tongue.

She couldn't understand why she had to fight his shaping of her desires. She couldn't resist him, but she knew that her surrender was all wrong. But, all she could do was unbutton his now tieless shirt and caress his strong masculine chest wondering at the curly hair that was hidden by his shirt. Almost as if playing a game she lifted the shirt and toyed with the curls.

“My, you are virile,” she sighed, wondering why he was undoing his belt.

“What are you doing?” she laughed placing her hand out and feeling her fingers wrap around a life force that caused her whole being to panic!

Half rolling over, she held on to him, trying to control her desires as her eyes saw what she held and amused eyes of her lover, who held a small disk which he slipped in place after removing her trembling hand.

In a gentle soothing voice he whispered, “She said that you needed my love and when we stopped dancing I found the safety in my coat. I think she understands.”

“No!” she cried, trying to turn away from his powerful arms as he lifted the layers of skirts and held both of her struggling hands in one of his while his other swiftly undid her nylons and panty girdle.

“Oh, save me!” she half screamed only to find her mouth pressed to his as his sudden weight bore her down against the hard ground.

It was over in what seemed like hours to her and slowly he arose and tended to himself leaving her to roll over and sob her heart out in the shame of her emotions.

“Please,” he whispered tenderly, helping her to her feet.

“You will be alright,” he promised nervously, helping her to straighten her nylons and dress. “We now are engaged, and I know that your guardian approves.”

She wiped a tear from her cheek and suddenly slapped him with all of her strength, delighting in the solid sound only to have her delight vanish as he took her into his arms and kissed her until she was breathless and ceased struggling.

Taking her hand, he led her from the blanket which he placed under one arm as they walked down to the lake and silently moved along the bridle path, He said nothing. All he did was walk by her side holding tight to her hand as they moved along the cedars. After about an hour of walking he turned around and they walked back, seeing the first rays of morning dawn.

“Oh, I will get a real spanking,” Caroline suddenly gasped, realizing that it was way passed her permission time.

“I am sorry,” he countered with a sigh, leading her up to the car.

Silently they drove to the dorm, kissing but briefly before parting.

“Good morning Miss. Turner,” the night proctor stated with a friendly smile. “You had us all quite worried.”

“I am sorry, ma'am,” Caroline replied, signing her name in the late book. “What time is it?”

“Four-thirty.”

“Thank you, ma'am,” Caroline murmured, entering the time by her name as the total fears of what she had done came forth. “At what time shall I be expected to see Mrs. Vandy?”

“Right after church. She was quite upset, dear.”

“Yes, I am sure of that, ma'am,” she noted, closing her purse and bidding the proctor good night as her heart beat anxiously in the realization that she had actually submitted like a woman to Robert's sexual needs!

Caroline reported, as the rules required, the moment she had returned from church. Knocking on Mrs. Vandy's office door she waited until called to enter, which she did.

“I'm here for punishment,” Caroline stated with a curtsy, seeing with some embarrassment that June was sitting by the desk! “The night proctor told me to report at this hour, ma'am.”

“Of course, child,” Mrs. Vandy observed looking up from the night proctor sheet. “You must be quite tired child.”

“Yes, ma'am.” Caroline folded her hands in front of her white organza church dress and avoided the intent gaze of June, who watched the proceedings with intense interest.

“What did you children do after the dance?” Mrs. Vandy probed, setting the report aside and adjusting her glasses in her fingers as she removed them, wondering how many girls she had interviewed in a like situation.

“We went to pavilion park and walked by the lake,” Caroline answered, noting through the corner of her eyes the amused glimmer in June's eyes. “Ma'am.”

“Is that all, child?” Mrs. Vandy asked. “Your guardian and I are entitled to know the facts.”

Caroline looked down at the skirt of her dress and whispered, “Robert made love to me, Mrs. Vandy.”

“Look me in the eyes child and speak up.”

“Robert made love to me, ma'am,” Caroline replied slightly louder as her hands were tempted to fidget with her skirts like a child, but she swallowed and controlled the impulse as her eyes met Mrs. Vandy's a bit nervously.

“How sweet,” June murmured causing a shiver of anger to touch Caroline. “You must have her tell us what he did to her?”

“I think that it may be wise,” Mrs. Vandy agreed. “We should know if you expect...to be in trouble?”

Caroline looked her in the eyes saying, “I am sure that Robert was very considerate of the fact that I am a young girl quite capable of love. He was very nice to me and I have no regrets, Mrs. Vandy.”

“Did he ravish you?” Mrs. Vandy stated bluntly with angry concern.

“I...” Caroline was about to protest and then she shrugged. “I think that the technical term for my position is that of PMI with precautions, ma'am.”

The two women looked at her as if stunned by the crispness of her moment of truth before them.

“Do I understand you to say that you took him as a lover?” Mrs. Turner murmured at last, secretly delighting in the fact that it went as planned.

“I believe that it is his power to take, ma'am,” Caroline answered frankly blushing from the humiliation of what she had to admit. “My role was quite passive, if not frightened towards the last, I....” She was about to blurt out her knowledge of June's plot but then she knew that it would be denied. Suddenly Caroline burst into tears of mortification as her reserve vanished before the onslaught of this reality.

The women waited patiently for her to recover showing some concern over her display of emotions.

“I am sorry, ma'am” she apologized at last. “Will I be expelled?”

“Why do you ask child?”

Caroline wiped away her tears with a lace hanky a bit thoughtfully. “I so wanted to graduate.”

Suddenly she sank to her knees placing her hands upon the desk edge. “Please don't. I would die of shame. They are all my friends. I would hate you if you did.”

“Hate, child,” Mrs. Vandy asked incredulously. “A late arrival requires some sort of punishment, it is the rule. And if any girl deserve to be punished I think that you are her. I will turn the matter over to the Dorm Honor Committee, to decide.”

"I don't think," Mrs. Turner began only to be silenced by Mrs. Vandy's curt nod of dismissal, yet she had not expected this turn of events.

That night Caroline was required to present herself before the judiciary of the Dorm Honor Committee, consisting of a girl elected by each of the twelve houses in Lovelace Hall. To her utter shame she had to submit to the judgment of her peers by telling in almost shocking detail everything she had done to be late in signing back in after the ball!

As her *guardian*, Mrs. Turner, a Rose Oak alumna, who was obviously concerned over her ward's conduct observed the shameful confession with a polite tightlipped smile, the young ladies decided that suspension was too great a punishment. But, Caroline should be required to sign in and out of each class during school hours while otherwise being restricted to the dorm until graduation.

Nothing more was said about the incident but Caroline knew that it was around the college like wildfire why she had been late. Such stories were always cruel, and she knew that her friends were many but that there was little she could deny to them. It was a fact that she had accepted punishment.

Luckily enough the approach of graduation and its attendant activity buried her scandal quickly and most of the girls began to plan their summers with several issuing invitations to Caroline.

But, Caroline gracefully turned them down.

On the day before graduation Mrs. Vandy helped Caroline pack all her clothes except for what she might need for the graduation and the trip home. Caroline was informed after she had completed her packing that she would be leaving some time on the night of graduation and that Mrs. Turner would be present at the ceremonies.

Strangely enough Caroline cried when she went to bed that night, knowing that she was soon to leave Rose Oak, which had become a new way of life for her. Here she had her friends and her dreams.

"Miss Caroline Jean Turner," Mrs. Cobb, the school president announced as Caroline moved forward to bow her head as she spread the skirts of her white lace floor-length graduation dress and curtsied deeply.

"Thank you," Caroline whispered, accepting the Associate of Arts Degree in Home Economics. Polite applause filled the audience as she continued, daintily on holding the front of her skirts. And then it was all over as she laughingly ran into Mrs. Turner's outstretched arms and accepted her kiss and delighted congratulations as the other girls sought out their parents and friends.

During the next few hours Caroline bid good-by to most of her friends, who were already packed and ready to go home with their parents. From sad farewells Caroline was led to Mrs. Lurd's house, where all of those who had helped Caroline during the first few months were assembled for a farewell party.

"You are the guest of honor, not our hostess," Mrs. Lurd announced happily as she prevented Caroline from serving the coffee. "I think that you should have a cup of coffee, if you would like dear?"

"I would love one, Mrs. Lurd," Caroline answered, amazed by the simple fact that a full school year had passed. Almost gratefully she accepted the cup. "Thank you."

The others all sat about the living room coffee table waiting for Mrs. Lurd to pour her own cup at last. "To lovely Caroline," Mrs. Lurd acknowledged with a toast of her cup to be followed by the others.

Once all had taken a sip of coffee she turned to Caroline, saying, "I wish to offer you our heartfelt congratulations dear, and tell you how very happy we are that you have been able to do so well at Rose Oak. Perhaps you would like to say a few things?"

The ladies all clapped to show their approval of her suggestion and Caroline set aside her cup with an embarrassed but pleased smile.

"Ladies, my dearest friends," Caroline began, a bit choked up with the sudden sadness that touched her.

"There have been many times when I was at first a willful and disobedient child. You have never hurt me without reason and I have come to understand that in reality we all love one another.

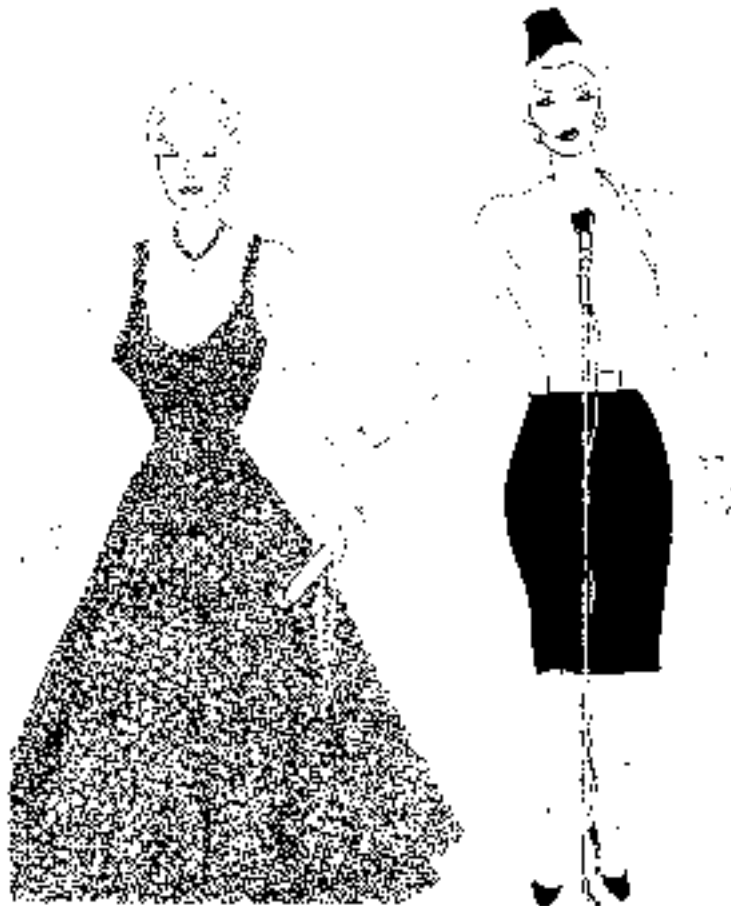
"There have been moments when I felt so like a woman that I could have touched the lips of any woman and said to her, *"I am like you, a woman"*. There were also moments when I stumbled like a child and wondered if I would ever become mature to my responsibilities and your expectations. In both of these moments you were close by to praise, to help, to understand.

"All I can say is thank you."

The ladies nodded and Jo Ann arose to retreat from the room only to return pushing a cart which bore several packages. "We have all bought you going away presents, as a token of our pleasure in your lovely presence."

"Please open them," Mrs. Vandy urged as Caroline arose to open the small pink package that topped the stack to reveal a scroll and pin from the Rose Oak Gamma Sorority, the home economics honorary society on campus. "Please read the scroll, dear"

Carol unrolled the scroll and read aloud, "Let it be known that the bearer of this scroll is Carol Jean Turner, and that this personage has been accepted by the sisters of this society as a full



honorary member and shall be entitled to the rights and privileges accorded any sister.”

Tenderly Carol looked at the pin, knowing that only a few girls were accepted members.

Mrs. Vandy arose and pinned the pin in place over Carol's heart.

The next package contained a dozen sets of lacy satin chemises, and another dozen sets of matching camisoles and pettipants styled from rich lace and satin.

“Oh, thank you, Mrs. Carlson.”

“You must wear them always,” Mrs. Carlson replied, causing Carol to blush slightly.

“If June wishes,” Carol replied, noticing her nod of approval before opening the next large box. From this box Carol picked up a pair of women's slacks with their man-styled fly front; beneath this pair were at least a dozen more all in single colors. Carol looked over to Mrs. Rogers a bit amused by her gift.

“We all thought that you should be properly dressed in slacks and since they are all buttoned or zipped the same as men's are we saw no reason why you should mind them. And they will fit you much better,” Mrs. Rogers explained, looking at Mrs. Turner for support.

“Thank you very much, Mrs. Rogers,” Carol stated, replacing the pants into the box.

“They are quite serviceable,” Mrs. Turner commented. “And I think you will enjoy wearing them.”

Carol nodded understandingly.

“Yes, dear.”

Opening the next box Carol discovered that under its tissue were at least a dozen panty girdles, a dozen panty hose, and a large assortment of women's socks.

“Thank you, Mrs. Terril,” Carol murmured, looking at the card and beginning to understand the purpose of these gifts.

The next box was quite large and it took some time to open it, only to reveal that it was carefully wrapped with an inner layer of tissue paper. Removing the tissue paper, Carol gazed at what it contained for some time. With delicate hands Carol explored the layers of artist's smocks made of nylon and cotton, each one beautifully styled and each one quite *serviceable* as June might say, even if they were a bit feminine.

On the other side of the box was another pile of shirts made in various fabrics, ranging from cotton to satin, and each shirt man buttoned but no doubt styled from the more feminine styles for men.

“They are all quite lovely,” Carol observed, wondering if the lacy camisoles would show through some of them and knowing that they would.

“Thank you, Mrs. Gorden.”

“I was certain that you would like them,” Mrs. Gorden replied, refilling her cup. “My girls in Mrs. Roger's sewing class made the smocks. And I went to New York and pur-

chased the shirts because they are so very blouse-like.” Carol nodded, moving the box aside to remove the twine from the next box. Lifting the cover from this box, Carol found that it contained several shoe boxes.

Opening the top one of these Carol saw that they were indeed shoes. Each pair was probably like the first pair in that they, too, were women's shoes styled in near masculine lines, or men's shoes styled along more feminine lines.

“Thank you, Mrs. Vandy.”

“They should go quite well with your other clothes,” Mrs. Vandy commented, walking over to the cart and helping to place the larger boxes that had already been opened aside. Beneath them rested several suit boxes.

“I think that these are from Mrs. Lurd,” she noted picking one of the boxes up and opening it for Carol. “How nice.”

The suit had the unmistakable lines of feminine tailoring in a men's suit. Carol could see that such a suit was simply a man's wool suit cut on a misses' pattern. It made no attempt to deny the sex of the wearer but it certainly hinted that the wearer was feminine in form.

“Thank you.”

Under the cart Carol selected from the bottom shelf a large suitcase which was opened to reveal that it was a vanity box containing various toiletry items ranging from eyelash curlers an electric hair curler to an electric shaver which mystified Carol who didn't need to shave until Carol realized that there were other places to shave.

Looking at the card, Carol thanked Mrs. Nelson.

The next box was from Jo Ann and Patricia and it contained a collection of rather feminine pajamas and night gowns which caused Carol to look up at June, who merely smiled as if quite pleased at the girls' choice.

Carol thanked them both and sat the box aside, seeing that it was the last box.

“They are all very lovely gifts, and I do not really know how to thank you,” Carol murmured, spreading the skirt of her graduation gown in a deep curtsy as the ladies clapped their approval.

“Thank you.”

“My gift was too small to place upon that large pile,” Mrs. Turner announced softly. “Mrs. Lurd, do you have those papers we signed this morning?”

“Yes,” Mrs. Lurd suddenly exclaimed as if she had forgotten. Arising from her chair, she quickly moved to the living room desk and opened it to produce a folder of papers.

“Here they are. Perhaps Caroline would like to read this one first. I think that the other ladies will be very pleased by hearing about this because I assure you we hadn't expected such a fine gift.”

Carol accepted the document, seeing that it was an agreement between Rose Oak College and Mrs. Turner, providing for a building to be named after Caroline Jean Turner, providing that the building serve as a Home Economics Classroom building.

A photo was attached to the document which was made from a painting that Carol had never seen. It was of herself dressed in a lovely pink party dress in the little girl-styled frills that Carol remembered as being the dress she wore to the first school dance.

The girl was standing as if on tiptoe revealing the hems of her petticoats as her right hand was reaching up for a golden distaff held by Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, who was spinning from it as she gazed with compassion at the child.

“Who did the painting?” Carol asked in wonder. “It is lovely, June.”

“Max Lobardy; he felt that you would like it,” June answered handing Carol the next document.

“He knew?” Carol murmured. Max had always tried to interest Carol; in portrait work.

“He recognized you,” June answered. “He was quite interested, in fact he is going to be the first Turner Scholarship student in Homemaking.”

Carol nodded, since she was already reading about the scholarship, which provided all expenses for any male interested in studying home economics at Rose Oak under provision that he conform to all the rules of the school. Carol further noted that the scholarship was underwritten by a very powerful organization of career women.

“Will they be treated like I was, Mrs. Lurd?”

“Perhaps, my child, they may be. But, I believe that we have had to be more extreme in your case since we wanted to be more exact. You are, after all, the first one. Much depends upon how you behave once you are at home,” she replied with serious concern. “Our project is quite secret, and will continue to be until we learn much more about our new type of pupil.”

“I see, Mrs. Lurd,” Carol replied, glancing at the next legal document which served to transfer legal guardianship over Carol Jean Turner, a legal infant, as determined before Probate Court from medical records, and the ward's consent. Rose Oak School for Girls, as represented by a Mrs. Lurd released the ward to the care of the ward's wife and guardian, after having aided in training the legal infant in various household functions and duties which would adjust the ward to a better and more useful life.

“Why this, June?” Carol asked, a bit confused, trying to remember when the *consent* was agreed upon and then remembering the document that Mrs. Lurd had asked Carol to sign when Carol arrived at Rose Oak.

“I thought that you would like to know your present position in our household,” Mrs. Turner replied a bit briskly, almost as if to dismiss the matter. She noted Carol's expression seriously for quite some time, seeing no sign of objection. “You do understand what it says?”

“Yes,” Carol murmured softly. “I think I do. It states that I am an infant and that you are my guardian, fully responsible for my health and well-being. That I have no legal right to property, citizenship, income, and personal decision.”

The women looked at each other a bit surprised, except for Mrs. Lurd who nodded that what had been said was true.

“It seems so needless,” Mrs. Carlson stated, seeing that Carol was not going to object. “Why, Caroline has some rights?”

“It's almost as if Caroline were,” Mrs. Vandy began only to smile seeing suddenly the reason for this formality. “It is appropriate. Do you know why, Caroline?”

“Yes,” Carol replied seriously, as the others were even more intrigued by the obvious submission in Carol's soft sweet voice. “I am hers to do with as she would. It is well that I have to trust in her judgment and have her to care for me. I belong to her. It is that simple and just.”

“A woman in the Middle Ages could say no more,” Mrs. Vandy noted bluntly. “Perhaps it is best. Only one should make the decisions in a family such as yours.”

Carol looked at the last document in the folder which was a diploma which was granted by Rose Oak High School for Girls.

“This is for your studies last summer. Please read it aloud,” Mrs. Lurd suggested with a trace of amusement, seeing that Carol was quite interested and a bit embarrassed by what it stated.

“It is a diploma,” Carol began slowly, a bit surprised. “It is from Rose Oak High School..”

“Let it be know by all who read this diploma that Mr. Carol J. Turner has successfully completed his course work as a High School Home Economist and is proficient in Pre-Nursery Care, Child Care, Housekeeping, Home Crafts, Household Budgeting, and Sewing. Let it be further known that he has completed all his work with honors.”

“We shall hang that in our living room along with your college degree so that all may see them,” June announced. “You should be proud of it.”

“I am,” Carol replied noting the ‘Mr.’ with amusement, wondering what the women in the neighborhood would say. But it did not matter. If June wanted to display the diploma, Carol would share her pride.

“When we were married, my dear, I insisted on a plain gold band,” June stated, showing her wedding ring. “And I did not give you your ring. And so I thought that perhaps this would be the best time since you are all in lovely white. It is quite like a bridal gown.”

The women suppressed their delight in her comparison, as Mrs. Turner moved forward and produced, from her tailored suit jacket, a ring box.

“Will you please kneel before me, dear,” she suggested, causing Carol to come to where she indicated to spread the skirts of the graduation dress and gracefully assume a kneeling position before her.

“Please hand me your left hand.”

Carol did as she asked, mystified by this little ceremony.

“In the formal wedding there is a promise made by the wife-to-be. Do you remember these words? Since our own marriage lacked them, perhaps?”

"I, Carol Jean Turner," Carol began thoughtfully repeating the time-honored love, honor, and obey' statement. When Carol had finished June slipped two rings upon Carol's heart finger.

The women sighed and all crowded about the couple to look at the lovely rings which were, beyond a doubt, engagement and bridal.

"They are quite lovely," Mrs. Carlson said, taking Carol's hand in hers and admiring the size of the brilliant engagement solitaire diamond which was mounted in the classically feminine, high-crown setting.

Carol looked towards the rings, realizing that June had no intention of having them changed. They were more evidence of a desired feminine role desired by her for Carol, and Carol would just have to become accustomed to the stares and comments that the rings and clothes would no doubt cause.

"I think that they are just wonderful," Carol sighed, placing the slender arms about June's neck and, standing on one foot, kissing her. "Thank you, dearest."

"June and Mrs. Nelson shall pack your new clothes while selecting something for you to wear home, unless you want to wear your graduation dress home?" Mrs. Lurd suggested.

"If you wish," Carol replied seriously.

"No, I think that the neighbors might talk a bit more than we both might wish. Perhaps some other time," June teased.

With this problem ringing in his ears, Carol left with their well wishes to undress for the last time in the room that had been Caroline's first home at Rose Oak.

Mrs. Nelson soon arrived, bearing in her arms a few boxes, and a hanger that held a beige, pleated skirt.

"You should wear a skirt until you are well away," Mrs. Nelson suggested, noting that Carol was fussing with his curls sitting before the vanity wearing but a dressing gown. "Your hair is not that long that you should need to worry."

"It is beautifully feminine," Carol said without remorse. "It might be too feminine?"

"That is for Mrs. Turner to judge. I asked her and she smiled and said, *"I think that Carol should enjoy femininity. And lovely hair is a crown to beauty"*. She is quite right, but I am sure that you will be quite hard put to answer the questions of those less understanding."

Carol nodded his recognition of her truth. Seeing her motion him to the bed he followed her desire. "Are you going to remove the belt? I have tried, and it is quite difficult even to know where it is."

"Please remove your robe," she stated simply, taking a razor blade from her apron pocket.

When he had followed her instructions, she bent over and carefully ran the sharp blade down each side of his hips and suddenly the silicon snapped from the strain and began to peel, causing Carol to cry out from the pain that was very much like the removing of a bandage.

She placed both hands on the sides of the panty and pulled down, causing Carol to scream as the garment ripped away from the soft, reddened skin, pulling what hairs there were with it.

“Turn over on the bed,” she directed and when he did she pulled the rest of the garment until she reached the groin.

Disengaging the hoses that handled his functions she placed one hand firmly over his virility and tore the garment free, to his outcry of pain.

“There, all gone,” she commented soothingly applying baby oil over his tenderness once he had taken a nice warm bubble bath. Satisfied she handed Carol one of the skin-toned panty girdles that he had received as a gift. “This might be more comfortable for now.”

Meekly he slipped it on feeling that she was right it was much more comfortable. Next came the panty hose. Then the matching set of beige satin and lace camisole and pettipants.

“These should look quite well until you change into a pair of socks over your nylons,” Mrs. Nelson commented handing him a pair of Italian-toed, tan, slipper-styled shoes with gold buckles.

“Very nice,” she stated, opening the suit box to produce from it a white nylon-French-cuffed shirt with a wide deep collar, which, once on, did little to conceal the camisole beneath. The skirt was next as she set aside a pair of beige slacks. The suit coat was beige with an Eton jacket-cut and deep brown trim about the collar, pockets, and hems. It went quite well with the skirt and Carol's blond coloring. With a smile, she adjusted the collar of the shirt over the suit jacket. “And a pair of tan gloves and matching purse makes the young lady quite well-dressed.”

Carol accepted the gloves and purse, gazing into the full-length mirror on the back of the bedroom door before she bent to open it. Even without make-up, Carol was still a young lady as she had said.

With a sigh he followed her down the stairs to where they waited to say good-by and pass on the farewell kisses. And then Carol saw that Robert was also there, waiting a bit awkwardly with a box under his arms.

“Miss Turner...I rushed over from class as soon as I could,” he exclaimed as Carol dutifully walked to him, taking his offered hand into a carefully-gloved hand not caring for him to see the rings. “These ladies told me that you are going home and I thought that you would like a little present.”

Nervously he looked about, and the amused ladies withdrew to leave the two of them alone.

“I hope you like it, Mrs. Angela said that you would love it. it...it...” he stammered and blushed telling Carol that he must have been quite embarrassed by his shopping tour in Angela's.

“I am sure that I will love it,” Carol assured him, accepting the package and kissing him gently upon the lips as he held Carol suddenly very close, causing Carol to raise one leg for balance in the embrace. “Please,” Carol laughed, backing away and using

his handkerchief to clean the saucy bow that appeared by his lips. "We should be more reserved dear. It is our last farewell."

He looked at Carol in disbelief.

"Yes, darling, it is best," Carol said a bit sadly. "I am too very young for marriage and they thought that perhaps another school in Europe."

He nodded understandingly.

"I see. But I love you so much."

Carol nodded and released his hand. "I think that you should go now, or I shall cry, and I want you to remember me as being happy always."

He suddenly took Carol into his arms and clung in a lingering kiss before releasing Carol, saying, "I love you, Caroline. Remember me."

With this he walked slowly to the door and left. And Carol cried, feeling the sadness of the moment, for Caroline had loved her Robert and now she knew the truth of the love lost.

Mrs. Vandy entered alone saying gently, "I felt that I should be the one to let you know that they are waiting by the car."

"Thank you," Carol sniffled. "It was so kind of you, Mrs. Vandy. He was so very sweet."

"Caroline, my dear, you loved Robert because he was a man who held you and cared for you," Mrs. Vandy murmured softly, placing her arm about Carol's shoulders as she would any child she, too, loved.

"All of us have gone through at least one spring love. But soon you must serve the love of one who understands you much more than that young man ever could. So wipe away your tears child and smile."

Carol thanked her and wiped her eyes daintily before walking out into the glare of sunlight. Soon Carol was kissing good-by each of those he had grown to love and then she was in the car as June shifted gears to drive away.

"Sad, darling?" she asked after some time, turning the car onto the main highway.

"It was wonderful," Carol sighed, resting back in the seat. "Will we ever return, June?"

"No, my dear. I may visit Rose Oak, but I don't think that you shall ever go back," she replied. "Unless it is many years from now and if there is a reason to fear exposure. The distance and the smallness of Rose Oak protects us and our secret."

"If we are keeping a secret why have me dress so femininely at home and the diploma?"

"Hush, that is my wish. No one will take the diploma seriously," she laughed, looking at Carol and then, adding in mock seriousness, "Or will they?"

Carol was quite nervous.

They were about due and he had spent the first week at home, cleaning it from top to bottom in order to prepare for their first meeting.

Pausing before the mirror he smiled, seeing the lovely reflection of black French-toed shoes, dark blue, tailored pants, and a light blue, nylon artist's smock with its dark blue, satin bow. Beneath the smock's lines could be seen the faint lines of a pale blue camisole. Brushing a curl in place, Carol walked to the door to answer its chimes.

Sighing, he opened it.

"Please do come in," he said softly.

As if to make up their minds the four women stood looking at him for a long moment and then Mrs. Simpson took his outstretched hand into hers with a broad smile saying. "We are so glad that you invited us Carol. We did know that you were quite hurt by our first visit. And we are quite sorry."

"It was really quite amusing," Carol replied, liking the directness of this matron. "Would you please come in?"

"Certainly," Mrs. Simpson announced, walking past Carol as the others followed a bit bemused and yet very eager to see more.

Pausing at the entrance to the living room, he turned and smiled towards the women saying gently, "My name is Carol Jean Turner. You may call me Carol, if it pleases you?"

"Oh, I am dreadfully sorry," Mrs. Norton suddenly apologized, offering her hand. "I am Sarah Norton. Sarah."

"Sarah," he repeated politely, shaking her hand.

"Betty Ann Andrews," Mrs. Andrews murmured, still a bit uncertain, as he acknowledged her with a smile and turned to accept the hand of Mrs. Sims.

"Judith, Judith Sims dear," she stated suddenly, allowing herself to giggle almost in relief. "I wonder what you must have thought when I helped you in the bathroom!"

"Judith," Mrs. Simpson exclaimed, seeing Carol's blush and thinking that he looked quite naturally beautiful.

Carol suddenly burst into gentle laughter, covering his delicate mouth. "My wife's expression was the most precious when she saw me without my pants."

The ladies all laughed with Carol as the tension vanished.

Mrs. Simpson remembered and stopped laughing saying with a happy smile, "I am Nora Simpson, my dearest."

"I am so happy to meet you all," Carol announced recovering his composure. "Perhaps you would like to see our home?"

"We would love to," Mrs. Sims noted, seeing his pleased smile and the pride he portrayed when he said *our home*. "You have changed it quite a bit since I was last here."

"Yes," he murmured in that soft voice that caused the women to feel a near thrill. "My wife felt that it was right that I change it to suit our tastes. I hope you will like it."

With this, Carol graciously showed them the house, causing them to be quite impressed, especially with his studio.

“Carol,” Mrs. Sims asked suddenly as they were about to leave the studio. “Do you do portraits? I would so like to have one of my daughter. And I am certain that my George would pay you quite well.”

Carol paused thoughtfully. “My wife has told me that she wishes me to be an active member of this community,” he began looking down at his smock a bit uncertainly. “I asked her permission to not only paint a few portraits if I was asked, but also to offer art lessons to those who might be interested.”

“Ohhh, would you?” Mrs. Simpson exclaimed, “The Society Culture Committee would love to have a real artist offering courses.”

“Why it's wonderful,” the other agreed. “We would love to have you teach us, and perhaps the children?”

“If you wish,” he murmured and then he turned to Mrs. Sims, “My wife feels that I should charge for my portraits, but not for the teaching. She says that the teaching is a service to my community; but that the portraits would be an example of my talent and that I could not give freely of that.”

“But, she did suggest that I might donate the money to the Society, if I become a full member, since she feels that my allowance is quite enough.”

Mrs. Simpson looked as if greatly amused. “You want to join the Briar Ladies' Society?”

He nodded with an almost eager, little, wistful smile. “Yes, if you will have me?”

They all giggled at his suggestion, causing him to blush slightly, he knew that it would not be easy.

Mrs. Norton recovered her composure first.

“I can't see why not,” was her startling announcement. “There is nothing in our constitution against it.”

“I think she is right,” Mrs. Sims stated, reconsidering what she had read of the constitution. “If Carol Jean is willing to abide by the rules,” and then she giggled again. “Oh what will the others say?”

“Perhaps you would all like some coffee,” Carol asked gently.

“I think that would be very nice,” Mrs. Norton announced as she led the way to the living room. “Could I help you with the things?”

“Thank you, but they are on a tray and all I need do is push them in. You might hold the door.”

“Of course.”

In a minute Carol pushed the serving cart into the living room as the ladies looked at the treats with amazement, for it held a very lovely arrangement of crackers and dips as well as a silver coffee server. Carol served the coffee and carefully placed the treats upon the low coffee table before the women. Satisfied that they were comfortable, he spread the skirt of his smock with the traditional feminine gesture they all recognized and sat down, crossing his legs and arranging the skirt.

“Why,” Mrs. Norton exclaimed in shocked surprise, extending her hand to take his left hand into hers. “It's an engagement ring. Isn't it lovely?”

Carol bowed his head saying almost demurely, “Thank you, she felt that it was appropriate.”

The ladies all gazed at the rings in wonder over his words.

Mrs. Simpson was the first to break the silence by asking: “Do you mind if I ask a few very blunt questions?”

“I think not,” he replied, as Mrs. Norton released his hand and he placed it in his lap with his other, knowing that now was the moment. “I feel that you may need to be quite frank and my wife wants me to be helpful.”

“I see,” Mrs. Simpson commented almost impatiently, only to shrug and, looking at the others, seeing that they were waiting for her leadership. “Are you wearing a slip beneath the dress?”

Carol looked at the others, seeing that they were not smiling but that they were a bit concerned about her bluntness. Trembling slightly, his voice whispered, “Yes, I am wearing a pale blue satin camisole with a lace bodice. It is really quite pretty.”

Mrs. Norton sighed, seeing that her suspicions were confirmed.

“In fact, I would guess that nothing you have on is designed for a man,” Mrs. Simpson continued.

“My clothes are especially designed to be feminine,” Carol replied, looking up into their intense eyes and smiling... “It might be said that they button to the right side.”

The ladies all smiled at this confession.

“Why, my dear, are you dressed so?”

Carol grew serious. “I am happy with my clothes. My wife is amused by them and feels that I should dress to please her. She married me because I was feminine and I love her too much to be otherwise even if I were. It is our agreement that I dress as to please her.” He paused as if uncertain as to what to say. “She is to me what your husbands must be to you. I can understand your concern and curiosity, but really it is just that simple. I shall always wear these clothes and all I can promise you is that I shall not wear skirts; they are drafty.”

His innocence in this last remark caused them to break into laughter. He smiled at their delight adding, “I might also say that my suits are not as feminine as this *dress* I am wearing now, but when I was out marketing this Monday dressed in slacks and suit coat with a shirt I was called ‘Miss.’”

He looked to the bodice of the smock.

“Ah, that is what Mike was talking about. He told me all about a lovely child dressed in slacks and sports jacket who bought from his store,” Mrs. Andrews stated. “He said that she was quite shy, but very nice.”

The ladies laughed at this observation, except for Mrs. Simpson.

Mrs. Simpson picked up her cup thoughtfully. "I think ladies that we are faced with a serious question. Carol Jean has been honest in his answers to our questions and I think that we owe him the courtesy of taking his request for membership back to the other ladies."

"Oh, yes," the others exclaimed eagerly. "We must let them know."

Carol blushed at this frank desire to expose him, yet he understood their passions for something new and interesting to talk about.

"Carol Jean," Mrs. Simpson asked setting her cup aside and arising to cause Carol and the others to do likewise. "Will you come to our next meeting?"

"If you wish," he replied, accepting her hand gratefully. "How do you wish me to dress? I can ask my wife for a new suit if I must, but she will not be pleased."

"In a dress if you wish," Mrs. Simpson laughed, causing the others to giggle. "The Society shall either accept you as you are or not. If you are uncomfortable in trousers I doubt if we would be offended by anything you would prefer to wear."

"Yes, you are quite lovely, child," Mrs. Andrews observed truthfully to the approving nods of the others, "And I can see that you are quite suited to what you wear now. In fact I can understand all too well why you wife insists on you wearing beautiful clothes. They become you, dearest."

"Thank you," he murmured as she impulsively kissed his cheek.

Friday evening Carol had received an invitation to attend the weekly business meeting of the Briar Ladies' Society scheduled for next Tuesday at noon. Carol showed the card to June, who called Mrs. Lurd long distance to talk to her for quite some time about the invitation and what Carol should wear. But the problem was solved in a strange way, for Monday morning the delivery van from the Norton Department Store left, in Carol's hands, a large box bearing a note from Mrs. Norton, whose husband, no doubt, owned the store. The box was marked Starlight Room, the women's shop!

Dearest Carol Jean,

After we thought over this matter of your membership request, we realized that perhaps you might have misunderstood our final comments as to how you should dress when you come to your first meeting. The more we thought over the matter, the more concerned we became over your personal feelings.

I was assigned the duty of finding something appropriate for your debut. I must say that my selection was greeted with much approval, not only by the members of our committee, but by members of the membership committee.

We all hope that you will come.

Love, Sarah

Carol paused at the glass doors of the entrance way to the Briar Village Community Center after leaving his car in the front lot. As he stood there, waiting to build up enough composure, a young man walked to the door and held it for Carol.

"Are you going in, Miss?" he asked with a pleased smile, seeing Carol's eyes gaze up into his with amusement.

“Thank you very much, sir,” Carol murmured entering the main reception area as the man hurried away a bit reluctantly after noticing the rings on Carol's lovely left hand. Suddenly Carol saw Mrs. Norton, who came to Carol, placed her arms about Carol and offered a kiss of greeting.

“You are early, darling,” Mrs. Norton exclaimed, stepping back to look at Carol more carefully, with obvious pleasure. “Why, darling you look simply lovely. I was right, it does suit you. Come we must show the others.” With this she took Carol's hand and led him into a conference room where a dozen ladies were all talking to each other about the larger meeting to come and the planned refreshments. As Sarah entered with Carol, the room grew silent as all eyes turned to Carol with deep and slightly amused interest.

“Ladies, this is the lovely Carol Jean Turner, ” Mrs. Norton stated what they already had guessed. Feeling moved to break the ice further, she introduced Carol to each woman present, finishing with Mrs. Janet Newer, who was the Society's president.

“Janet has been quite interested in your nice offer to teach,” Mrs. Norton stated with enthusiasm.

“Oh, yes, dear, it was a lovely offer,” Mrs. Newer replied, gazing at Carol with renewed interest. “Our cultural committee was very captivated by the idea and the children's activity committee felt that it would be a delightful opportunity. I saw your exhibit last year, When do you plan to exhibit again?”

“My wife has promised me that my last group of paintings will be shown in New York this fall. Unfortunately there are only a few canvases, since I was away to school during the last year.”

“School dear? Where?” Mrs. Newer pressed, liking the soft way he spoke and quite suddenly impressed by the fact that Carol was very sweet. She could see that Carol was obviously quite feminine, but it was not the fairy show that she had seen some men present. Instead it seemed quite natural as a part of his poise and manner, a mere matter of acceptance, that caused her to want him to be protected like she would a lovely child. “Was it an art school?”

“Oh, no, Mrs. Newer. My wife sent me to a college to study homemaking.”

“Really, I think all young wives should have some formal training,” Mrs. Norton offered, remembering how the Turner house first appeared to her and of how lovely and homelike it was now. “Were there any other like you there? I mean...”

Carol smiled reassuring her, “I believe I was the only man there. You see it was a private women's college.”

“And you are a Gamma,” Mrs. Newer exclaimed, as if it was just too precious, noticing the sorority pin.

Carol nodded, saying, “Yes.”

“Wonderful,” Mrs. Norton exclaimed. “Why I think that was very nice of them. You must be proud.”

“I am quite grateful,” Carol replied gently. “They all were very kind to me and I do want to justify their hopes that I will be a good homemaker. That is why I am here.”

“Yes, of course, dear,” Mrs. Newer stated sympathetically.

“The lades are here, Mrs. Newer,” Mrs. Sims announced, looking at Carol, “Why Carol, you are positively adorable in those clothes. I am certain that we shall all fall in love with you when you are introduced.”

“Thank you, Judith, I hope so,” Carol murmured to the approval of the others as he wondered how many women would be in the next room to make the decision whether he should be admitted into the society.

“Well, come girls,” Mrs. Newer suggested, leading them to the auditorium.

A polite applause greeted them as they entered across the stage, as many turned from their conversations to add to the applause and in turn to gasp in amazement and delight at the sight of a very frightened Carol, who meekly followed Mrs. Newer and stood at her side looking over the vast audience of at least six hundred women.

Mrs. Newer opened the meeting and asked for corrections of the previous minutes, as she politely motioned Carol to take a seat by the other officers who sitting behind a long table to the back of the stage. She then asked for the various committee reports and Carol learned that the Society was virtually the central organizer of all women's and children's activities in the village and that it also served as the central committee for all large community projects.

Each chairwoman was responsible for a committee which usually consisted of thirty active members and that each woman was required to serve on at least two committees each fiscal quarter for no longer than two quarters when she moved to a new committee. After having served on at least twenty committees she was entitled to serve as the chief officer of any committee needing her services.

Each one of the thirty matrons on the stage with Carol arose and in one crisp minute each stated any information they felt was of prime importance and referred the



general membership to the section of the General Reports that applied to the activities of their own committee.

At the end of the officer's reports the floor, was opened to questions on their reports or observations. With this brief question-and-answer session over, Mrs. Newer moved the agenda to discussion of old business, which consisted primarily of vote tallies on previous decisions and an informal group vote call on an item requesting that the Village of Briar consider the motion of the League Committee to build a new skating rink. The vote was passed without protest and the matter was assigned to the Civics Liaison Committee to bring up at the next village council meeting.

Mrs. Newer then opened the floor for new business. The treasurer requested several appropriations based upon the published recommendations of the finance committee. Her request was noted for a general ballot and the secretary was instructed to publish the ballots before the next meeting so that the results would be in by the next meeting.

Carol was quite surprised to learn that each member paid ten dollars a month for membership and that absences from meetings brought fines from five to twenty-five dollars each. In short, when Carol computed the dues, plus fines, plus earnings from various service projects, and the grants given to the Society by various businesses listed in the financial report, he realized that the Society was worth, in assets, annually over a quarter of a million dollars and that its re-serves were over the million dollar mark!

"I recognize the Chairwoman of the Membership Committee," Mrs. Newer announced bringing Carol from his calculations to the reality of the meeting. His heart began to pound nervously as all eyes seemed to fix upon him.

"Madam President, Members of the Ladies Aid Society," Mrs. Bowers began, gazing at Carol and smiling to encourage him. "Our committee has received a rather interesting application for membership."

A mild wave of laughter swept the audience to be pounded down by the gavel.

"It would appear that, for the first time in Briar, a man has assumed the role, quite capably I am told, of housewife. Or homemaker as he prefers, quite appropriately, to call his duties." Another wave of giggles which vanished. "It is usually the action of our committee to approve all membership, but due to the unusualness of this application we felt that it should be referred to the General Membership Business Meeting. Our committee has sent the applicant copies of the various forms and he has complied with all of the requirements by offering to serve on the Cultural Committee, The Child Craft and Arts Committee, and the Nursery Service Committee."

At the last item the women could restrain themselves no longer and a wave of laughter filled the hall, causing the gavel to bang for silence.

"Madam speaker!" a tall matron, dressed in a white nurse's uniform, asked for recognition.

"Yes, Mrs. Leeds?"

“As the service center nursery supervisor I should like to ask a question of the candidate.”

“Procedure,” objected the Parliamentarian. “Questions of the speaker require a motion to be on the floor for discussion.”

“I am sorry, Mrs. Leeds, but I am sure that Carol Jean will answer any question you wish after the motion,” the president observed, nodding to the speaker to continue.

“The committee has prepared a brief report on the candidate's social, educational, and other special background which you will find in the back of the General Report section on our committee, page 23. Before making my motion, I should like to read aloud the recommendations of the Membership and Welcoming Committees on this delicate matter.

“First. Both committees recommend that Carol Jean Turner be accepted as a full member of the Society with the general stipulation that as a member he shall be responsible to the officers and constitution as any other member and conduct himself as a member of our organization should.

“Second,” she continued, allowing the amusement to fade before going on. “It is the wish of both committees that it be known that they can see no objection admission of a male into our Society, since our constitution was, no doubt, drawn up as a part of the feminist movement, and no mention of the sex of the membership is made, although there are some interesting items under Article IV, Sections 2,3,4, and 5. If I may please ask Carol Jean to stand up and come forward so that all may view as I quote these passage?”

“Carol Jean,” the president requested, and Carol arose to do as he was requested, wondering what these women must be thinking. Trembling slightly, he stood before their probing eyes.

“Before reading the passages I wish to make a perfunctory remark. It would appear that when women first entered into the career society of men there were many rules which were established by some men to block their entry by humiliating them. Many of these rules, however, were simply in existence before the admission of women and they may have seemed to have been insults to our sex. Also, there were some women who felt that if they must exist in a *man's world* they must look like men, and there were others who were and, no doubt, still are too masculine to hide the fact.

“Whatever the barriers or reasons may be, my training in the concept of society has taught me that all societies must erect barriers to test the desire and ability of those wishing to become members. It is further understood that candidates must conform rather than change the rules of the society to meet each individual's need instead of meeting the needs of the total membership.”

She paused on this serious note to open a copy of the constitution which she rested on the speaker's rostrum.

“Article IV, entitled 'Dress and Conduct of Members'.”

At this the women all nodded, seeing now what they thought to be the reason for Carol Jean's costume.

“Section 2: All members shall be attired in accordance with the proper fashion for women engaged in whatever activity they may be a part of in service of the Society.

“Section 3: In accordance with the above section it shall be the responsibility of the Rules Committee on Dress and Conduct to establish whatever standards are agreeable to the general membership,” she paused. Opening a book of rules she read, “The Rules Committee on Dress and Conduct has required that each member, while in attendance of a general business meeting, shall be dressed in after-five dress or suit, high heels, and other items of dress suitable to social activities of a polite nature.”

“As a barrier to test Carol Jean, we asked that he present himself to us as he is now. Would you describe your clothes Carol?”

Carol nodded, swallowing. And then Carol stated in a soft voice that startled those that had never heard it before, “My shoes are black patent leather with Queen Anne heels and in slipper style. I am wearing beige nylons. My pants are in the Capri style, made from black velvet. The tunic is fingertip-length Chinese pink, brocaded satin, belted at the waist with a black velvet belt decorated with silver lace work. The skirt is flounced and neatly pleated accordion-style.”

Carol paused to brush up the pleated tunic skirt to reveal the beauty of what rested beneath it.

“Beneath my tunic and over the Capri pants, I am wearing a short nylon lace slip with bouffant layers of ruffled net petticoat of a rose pastel. About my neck, revealed by the Y neck of my tunic, I am wearing a necklace of shell pink pearls, a gift from my wife who feels that they are appropriate, as is my dress, to my nature.”

This last touch in his description caused the women to clap their hands in appreciation, and almost on impulse Carol executed a little curtsy causing a ripple of mirth to fill the room as the women recognized his sense of humor and at the same time felt strangely akin to his present position.

“Section 4: That at no time shall a member appear in the environs of the Society or the Village dressed in clothes which detract from her sex or natural feminine beauty.

“Section 5: No member shall be permitted to wear the clothes of a man unless taking part in a skit or other form of entertainment.”

A gasp passed through the audience.

“In view of these provisions in our constitution the committee wishes to publicly ask the candidate if he is willing to abide by these provisions?”

“Yes,” Carol answered to the applause of the women who recognized the emotions and courage of Carol's answer.

“Third. The committees have expressed concern for the attitude of others towards the candidate. It is generally understood that the vote of membership includes with it the responsibility of the voters to treat the new member as an equal in all respects honoring his individuality and making no effort to belittle him in front of other mem-

bers, the family, or the whole of our community. His membership is our acceptance of his sorority relation to us all.

“Fourth. The committee asks that Carol Jean Turner be permitted to express his reasons for desiring membership to the general meeting and that he pledge to honor our rules and trust.”

She paused long enough to pull out a slip of paper from her notes.

“Madam Chairwoman, I move that Carol Jean Turner be instated as a full member of our society with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities.”

“Second!” “Second!” Shouted several of the members only to feel embarrassed by their eagerness.

“Discussion. Carol Jean Turner.”

Carol moved to the rostrum left by Mrs. Bowers who paused long enough to, much to his embarrassment, give him a feminine kiss of friendship. Standing there before the rostrum Carol waited for the mild applause to die down.

“There are many of you who I would have loved to have met before this meeting,” Carol began in a near whisper that carried throughout the hall, causing the women to smile, recognizing the fact of his nervousness and feeling pleased with his greeting.

“But, now it is in a more formal setting and so I shall try to convey my sincere desires for your friendship under what may be a very difficult handicap. For I can think of no man who could propose to six hundred women at once and not make a few jealous.”

Laughter filled the room as they delighted in this witticism.

“Madam President, Ladies of the Society, I am a house-husband. In the morning I make breakfast for my career wife, who gives me a peck on the cheek and dashes to her world, a world I shall never see. Then I turn to my housework much as I am sure you all do. When the day passes I know that I am alone, so very alone. There are no back-fence friends, no bridge friends to drop in for coffee. When I know that she is coming home I drop all and make myself appealing to her pleasures. I know that I amuse her and it pleases her to love me. But she is tired when she comes home and I am merely a means of convenience to look pretty, say little, and make her home comfortable. I know that she loves me because she gives me pretty things to wear and a lovely home to manage. I owe her everything.” Carol paused, “I remember the first time I met your ladies from the welcoming committee; they mistook me for a child dressed in a smock. I was so embarrassed by the condition of my house that I even allowed them to continue in their belief, even to the point where they believed that I was somehow retarded and needed to be helped in chair-chair.”

The women burst into laughter all knowing how closely they had been studied by the hawk eyes of the Welcoming Committee, and understanding his discomfort and reluctance.

“I was shamed and knew that I was not being useful to my wife. I was then merely a child for her amusement. I suppose those wives who marry and discover that a house and family is not a game could have felt no more lost than I. I begged my wife to find a

school where I could learn how to keep house. At first she thought that it was silly, but after a few tears she made arrangements and for six months I was taught how to be a housewife, I was treated like a girl, not yet a woman, along with other high school girls and I was required to act, think, and be as they.

“We all must have a purpose, and need to be wanted; not because we are merely ornamental, but because we can fulfill a part of our life by serving others. When your committee returned I asked to become a member, to serve.

“Yes, I was lonely. Which of you are not lonely when your love is away and your friends do not come to you. You go to them as I have come to you. I cannot confine myself to the walls of my home, I must feel that I am a part of a community, a useful part, as is the obligation and joy of any homemaker.

“My wife is proud of me because I do what any homemaker should do. I cherish her pride in me, but I know that it is just as she works to keep me, I must serve to comfort her and give her reason to know that I am accepted by others who are also homemakers.

“Much has been made of my femininity, and my dainty clothes,” Carol noted, causing the women to listen even more intently.

“I think that perhaps many of you are under the impression that these skirts are my first taste and that the Membership Committee has decided to play a little joke or erect a barrier. This is not true. In fact I think, that they are being ever so kind and quoting rules so that it would appear that I was being forced into femininity in exchange for membership, much as a mother might dress her daughter in pretty clothes so that she knows that she is a girl and she shouldn't swing on the back gate or crawl into trees. I must be a pretty figure so that all will know that I am one of you.

“Really they had seen me in skirts, so to speak, before they looked up the rules,” he announced, spreading the skirt of the tunic as the audience released a gasp of surprise at his confession.

“When they came to my house I was dressed in clothes made on the pattern for women, but delicately called by women's magazines as manlike or styled. Such clothes please my wife and it is my desire to please her. I also feel more comfortable in them, since I am, by nature, feminine, I wouldn't be here if I weren't. I doubt if I own a single item of men's apparel.”

A murmur of disbelief spread through the room.

“And if I am to leave my home, I shall wear what pleases my wife and comforts myself,” he stated with a choke in his voice.

“But, I shall not wear a skirt alone for I am merely feminine, not female. I have worn skirts because others would tease me and I had no way to fight back. And I shall dress as you wish, if I must wear a skirt. But I shall not be happy unless it is for a good reason, one which my wife approves of, for it is for her that I dress as I do.

“I think that perhaps I have talked much too long for one who wishes the friendship of many. So I shall say that if I am granted the honor I seek, I shall abide by the rules

of your Society as long as my wife approves. And since it is her wish that I be happy I am sure that she approves.

“I thank you, Madam President, and ladies.”

“Questions?”

“Mrs. Leeds?”

“I wish to ask Mrs. Turner if she has tended infants before.” Mrs. Leeds asked pointedly revealing her hostility. “Has she had a child?”

Carol blushed over the laughter that sounded to her remark.

“Madam President!” Mrs. Norton protested.

“Let the child speak for herself,” Mrs. Leeds commented briskly.

“If you wish, Carol Jean.” Mrs. Newer asked.

Carol walked out from the rostrum and curtsied deeply towards Mrs. Leeds, causing a strange uneasiness through the ladies. “I have tended to babies and I wish to have a baby of my own. But biology has cheated me of that which you are so proud of. I can only give my love.”

“Mrs.. Turner, to what temperature do you heat a baby's bottle,” Mrs.. Leeds pressed her attack. “And how do you test it?”

“Recently, Mrs.. Leeds, a series of tests were made which determined that heated milk might burn the baby through careless handling and that it made very little importance if the bottle were heated or not, since most milk is quite pure. But, I do think that the baby would like some warmth. Usually to avoid harming the baby a few drops on the wrist will gauge the temperature. My source is Niles, On Babies and their Care.”

Applause filled the room as Mrs.. Leeds smiled and shrugged her shoulders. “You will do, Mr. Turner, with or without a skirt.”

“Thank you,” Carol replied seriously.

“I am Mrs.. Lode,” a small woman announced. “Tell me, Carol Jean, do you find men attractive?”

A gasp went through the audience.

“Of course,” Carol Jean replied with a shrug. “But, I don't think that my wife would approve.”

Laughter filled room.

“In seriousness,” Carol stated as the room grew calm. “I can say that I love only one person-my wife. The physical attractions of either sex are nice to the eye and certainly worthy of being considered attractive, but my wife is what no man or woman could be to me. If I am affectionate, it is because I am feminine, no more. If it pleases you I am childlike.”

“Mrs.. Turner,” a tall woman stated. “What do men think of you?”

“Much as some women think of my wife, who competes in the world of men. I feel that what I am is much more important than what others can try to say I am. It is my

duty to show you all that I am your equal. A man might say, 'good riddance, weakling.' But in most cases they look at me and say, even when they know my sex, '*Excuse me miss.*' And once they see that I am not offended they withdraw, shaking their heads."

"Mrs.. Sawyer. What do you suggest I tell my children about you, and what will prevent our sons from following you pattern?"

"The truth. Children are very wise. As to your sons following my pattern," Carol looked thoughtful for some time and then continued. "I believe that my mere presence will be much more of a reason for them to be masculine. There is nothing appealing about what I am doing. Yet, I may also ask, why shouldn't a boy think of homemaking as a way of life? Are you ashamed of what you are? If some girls are better in their working career, why can't some men be happier in the kitchen?"

A silence filled the room.

"If we accept you, who will be next?" a woman shouted.

Carol smiled and laughed gently at her fears, "I doubt if many will come after me. Frankly, it was a long hard climb for women to be accepted and not doubt my road will be just as rocky. Whoever follows may slip on my tears or walk timidly along that narrow path I have made widening it for others. Perhaps your great-grandson, who knows. But, there will be more."

"Question," a voice called for the vote.

"The question has been called," The president repeated, moving the meeting on and opening the vote.

"A ballot booth is in the back of the room. "Please vote when you leave."

"Is there any other business?"

"Adjourn!" "Seconded!"

"It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn. Refreshments are in the game room. All in favor of adjournment?"

It was all over and Carol was ushered from the room into the back room as the officers stood guard, waiting for the ballot.

"It looks bad," Mrs.. Norton observed, taking Carol's hand. "You did well, but they are not easily moved. It seems so cruel."

"I know that you tried."

"Perhaps next meeting," Mrs.. Bowers promised "You were a perfect doll up there. And I am sure that Mrs.. Leeds was won to your side; she likes women who can be precise."

"Thank you, I hope so." Carol countered, a bit exhausted by his experience.

"We will visit you," Mrs.. Sims promised, taking his hand in hers and patting it. "We promise you that you will not be lonely."

"Thank you," he repeated, looking at the clock. "How long?"

"Why, I should say three minutes, maybe longer," Mrs.. Bowers said, thankful that the finance vote was on a mail-in ballot. She then began to talk about the latest fash-

ions o release the tensions and soon Carol was lost in the delight of their small talk, knowing that they were friends.

Suddenly the side door opened and Mrs.. Locker entered, carrying a sheet of paper and handing it to Mrs.. Newer, while gazing at Carol as if amused.

“Well, dear,” Mrs.. Newer began, glancing at the figures with concern. “I think that we had better join the other ladies.”

Escorting all of them into the hall and through the talking groups of women who stopped talking when they passed, and followed in turn down the hallway and stairs into the bubbling confusion presented by the talking women in the game room.

Carol noticed that they seemed to be aware of his presence, but their glances were of polite toleration. He tried to think of when he had experienced that expression from women before, and then he remembered how some of the girls had viewed Caroline when she changed to teen dresses!

“Ladies, Please!” Mrs.. Newer exclaimed raising her hands as she stepped unto the stage in the game room. “May I have your attention?”

The crowd calmed down as all eyes turned towards Mrs.. Newer.

“Ladies the results are in,” she announced, unfolding the sheet. “It was a close vote. 573 for and 55 against.”

A sigh passed through Carol as he happily moved to the stage upon her gesture requesting him, as the women crowded around him and congratulated him.

“Our newest member, Carol Jean Turner.”

Applause sounded throughout the room as the women murmured, asking that he say something.

“Thank you, my dears,” Carol stated with a pleased half curtsy. “I shall try to do my best to honor your trust in me. And please feel free to visit my home at any time; the coffee is on and I shall be happy to have you as my guests.”

He glanced into their happy faces and knew that they were willing to accept him, it was a good feeling to be wanted.

“Thank you again.”

“Come dear,” Mrs.. Newer stated, leading him to the beginning of the refreshment line so that he could meet each woman as she passed.

Carol silently undressed in the bathroom thinking about the excitement of the day and of how pleased June was with his good news and of how she warned him that it was now just the beginning, and the from now on he would have to keep those who had voted him in as well as win over the few who had rejected him.

Stepping into the shower, he turned it on and while he washed he mentally reviewed the new schedule that his membership had assigned to him. There were the adult art classes and the children. Then, the afternoon at the day nursery. And then the sittings for the five portraits that he had agreed to paint. And the bridge club. Really, it would be a very busy life.

As he rinsed off he thought of his visit to the Towner Club after the meeting.

When he and Mrs.. Norton, Mrs.. Sims, Mrs.. Bowers, Mrs.. Simpson, and a half dozen others decided to have cocktails after helping clean up the refreshment area. As they entered, the Men's Club was adjourning to the bar and they were joined by many of the husbands.

But, what surprised Carol was the fact that even though they knew who he was, there was no kidding or teasing, in fact the men were quite the reverse to the point of holding his chair and speaking to Carol as if he was one of the women present complimenting the dress noting that Carol was lovely and ordering pink champagne as they did for all the ladies.

There was an embarrassing moment when Carol arose to go to the bathroom, only to be very politely blocked from the Men's room by the club manager who pointed to the door marked Ladies.

“But,” Carol protested, blushing. “I am a male.”

“If I did not know that you were Carol Turner and I saw you dressed in that fetching dress,” the manager announced with a shrug. “I would be very skeptical of your protests.”

“But you know,” Carol stated, a bit embarrassed as the others glanced their way, but, seeing the situation only smiled knowingly and turned back to their conversation dealing with skating rink that the Society wanted.

“I can not go in there IT IS against...”

“Perhaps,” the manager apologized politely. “But I do not think that you understand the instructions that we all have received concerning you. They are rather pointed and I assure you that, since it was your own desire, we all shall carry them out.”

He reached into his pocket and handed Carol a folded mimeograph sheet suggesting, “If you wish, you may read what it says now.”

PUBLIC NOTICE

BRIAR VILLAGE LADIES' SOCIETY

TO: Whom it Might Concern

Let it be known that, from this date forward Carol Jean Turner, a resident of our community, shall be considered by all as a member of the Ladies' Aid Society and as such shall require whatever respect due to a married member of the female sex.

Henceforth it shall be proper to address this person as you would a child, without the use of a prefix, as “Carol”, “Caroline”, “Carol Turner”, or “Carol-Jean Turner”. Under all cases of address avoid the masculine forms, and do not speak to Carol as one would to either a man or a child, unless, in the latter case, and it is obvious that you are older.

Carol has been granted the right to dress as a woman and it is understood that no store shall sell objects to Carol which a man shall consider as limited to his own sex, nor shall any man give to Carol such items. No store selling items for women may refuse to serve Carol unless the owner may feel that Carol does not present the manners or dress

of the feminine sex. In these, and other violations by any party, it shall be required that all incidents shall be reported to the President of the Society so that she might take corrective action.

In all situations Carol shall be treated and considered, as is Carol's wish and ours, in the same way one would a member of the female sex. All facilities and services belonging to women shall be utilized by Carol as will all services and facilities exclusively used by men shall be denied.

These rules of conduct and treatment of and by Carol shall apply in order that Carol may feel more accustomed to those many situations and tasks which are a part of membership.

Mrs.. Janet Newer, President

When Carol told his wife of the notice she merely shrugged, and observed that they had taken a very practical approach to the problem in that if Carol were to be seen by strangers only those in the village saw that Carol was not a woman. And such matters as bathrooms were quite in line with the physical facts of such places as the Nursery Wing of the Community Center which did not have a men's room. Also the very fact of Carol's using such facilities marked the fact that no woman considered it to be of concern that Carol was male; nor then, could any man.

Her blunt observation held the insult of the women towards him but at the same time Carol knew that the look of tolerance that he had been given by the women was that look given between women who consider themselves as equals and rivals.

Turning off the shower, Carol stepped from it and removed the shower cap. Using bath talcum and cologne, Carol finished up by slipping into a baby-blue pair of ruffled baby doll, short pajamas. Taking the blue satin dressing gown from the door Carol slipped into it and opened the bath room door to reveal June sitting up in bed and reading a book.

Smiling, Carol walked to the bedroom door and turned off the overhead lights but leaving the bed lamp on. Stepping by the bed, Carol stood quietly until June closed the book and looked up with a smile.

"I see that you are refreshed and beautiful," June noted, watching with interest as Carol allowed the gown to slip to the bed, revealing all to the glare of the bed light which shown clearly every line beneath the blue silk. "Come here," was the command, as the sheets and covers were drawn back to allow Carol into bed.

Suddenly strong arms pulled little Carol close as their lips met in sudden passions.

"Caroline, my little one, please."

Carol tenderly undid the brocade pajamas and while kissing, carefully caressed his wife, feeling the strength of what delicate fingers stroked almost in awe, for here was a strong body that vibrated with every touch.

As Carol and June began their love petting, June's' lithe powerful fingers curled into his blue nylon ruffled panties and slowly drew them down. She then took Carols' gently heaving breast and caressed them until Carol responded in feminine cries of passions, causing strong delighted laughter from June to fill Carol's ears.

“If you should have a baby,” a voice whispered to Carol tweaking a sensitive pap. “We should have them stimulated for nursing; what do you think?”

Carol could not reply, for great waves of passion consumed the delicate body and Carol crawled into those strong arms resting upon two heaving pillows and....

Finished, Carol slept in those arms like a child as tender lips touched Carol's in a kiss before shifting the childlike form placing Carol's sweet lips to her bosom, as she held the curly head in her hand as one would a nursing baby.

“You have had a busy day, my little domestic,” she murmured, looking down at his peaceful beauty and holding him close amused at her own thought of what Carol might think if he awoke as he was. “Now you are my little baby, and so sleep gentle one.”

A tender hand rested upon her bosom as Carol's body slowly moved into the natural baby nursing position, causing June to kiss his curly head.

“Good night mommy.” a soft voice murmured, completing her joy.