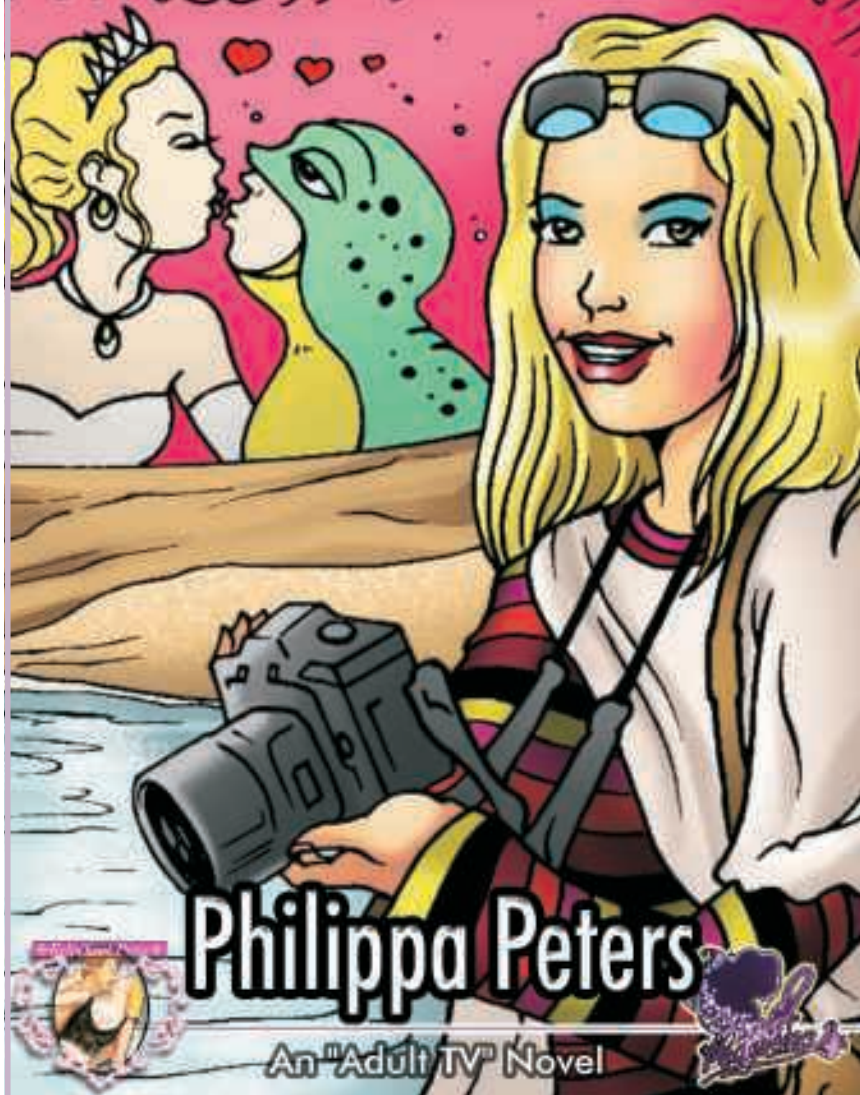


The Queen of the Valley:
Girl Reporter

Princesses on Parade



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder. This material is intended for persons over the age of 18 only.



Copyright © 2018

Published by Reluctant Press
in association with Mags, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotes contained within a critical review.

For information address
Reluctant Press
P.O. Box 5829
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413
USA

Call toll free (800) 359-2116

reluctantpress.com & magsinc.com

New Authors Wanted!

Mags, Inc and Reluctant Press are looking for new authors who want to write exciting TG, crossdressing or sissy TV fiction.

Stories should be in Word or Rich Text format, and around 24,000 to 30,000 words in length. Reluctant Press also prints some shorter stories in the 19,000 to 24,000 word range.

If you think you have what it takes, this could be your opportunity to see your name in print on a real book, commercially published, and get paid for it.

Contact

**magsinc@pacbell.net, reluctantpress@gmail.com - or
call 800-359-2116 to get started.**

YOU CAN BE PART OF OUR FAMILY

If you aren't part of the Reluctant Press family, then you aren't receiving our Newsletter every month. The Newsletter includes previews of the latest books, news, make-up tips, columnists — and more!

Joining our family is easy -- just make a purchase of any size directly from us, and you'll receive our newsletter absolutely free for up to one year. Or, you can have a trial subscription for a limited time by sending your name and address to Reluctant Press, P.O. Box 5829, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 ...be sure to ask for a free trial subscription.

THE QUEEN OF THE VALLEY: GIRL REPORTER

by Philippa Peters

Volume 24

Issue No. 6

16 February

We almost had a normal newspaper again before Brian Carpenter caught Dave and me, locked together in a tumultuous kiss, in the stock room. It would never have happened if, for a month, I hadn't been constantly dressed as a woman by Jane Edwards, my supposed girlfriend.

The last issue of our newspaper, *The Queen of the Valley*, had been sold out, largely because one of the paper's reporters had been stupid enough to be 'transformed' into a girl, and was telling everyone what it was like to be all girly, every day of the week for a month.

Jane had promised Brian, apparently, that it would boost sales in the Valley if there were weekly updates on our feminized reporter's progress in becoming female. This was in the Valley, where so

many men were being forced into wearing dresses. She'd been right. Everyone wanted to read about me and what it was like to wear panties as a woman, to be a man's dance partner, to wear a wig, a bra and false breasts, stockings and makeup, all day long.

Yes, and the silly male reporter—me, now called Michelle instead of Mike, and deliberately treated as a girl by the other reporters and workers on staff—also had to do all kinds of female activities while dressed. Not the least was to attend classes at Del Monte's on how to be a woman, as well as to go clubbing, on dates, as a girl, with 'her' girlfriends every evening. Oh, yes, and like any girl, she (me) had to allow her 'dates' to take her home. Our assistant editor, my girlfriend Jane Edwards, insisted on that. And yes, I did have to 'reward' my date in the traditional way—with a goodnight kiss, and thanks for the lovely night he'd given me, the 'girl' he had dated.

Jane and Tania had made bets on when Dave—the best kisser of women in the Valley, they'd assured me laughingly—would make a move on me. They'd deliberately left him alone with me. And Dave was gay! He'd attacked me right away, kissing me, telling me how pretty I was as Michelle. I just wasn't strong enough to keep him off me.

When I told the women how he'd kissed and fondled me, they'd laughed more and told me to enjoy it while it lasted. Now I'd know what it was really like to be a woman! And didn't Dave kiss a girl so adorably? I never admitted that he did. Not to them. But he did. I had to admit it to myself.

This time, when Brian caught us, I'd been in the stock room dressed as Michelle, looking up previous election results, when Dave snuck up on me. I'd jumped a foot when he started lifting my skirt and gently caressing my legs, panties and tush. He'd spun me around, hugging me. I resisted, but his kiss took possession of my mouth, making me tremble weakly and put down my work. Ooo, I did what he loved Michelle to do! I lifted my leg and squeezed

against Dave, letting all the absurd female passion—which Jane said everyone felt when kissing Dave—overwhelm me.

Dave and I were in the stock room for over ten minutes, his hands stroking my panties against my tush as I let him bury his tongue in my mouth, my eyes closed as I felt so feminine, so female. I really understood what those ‘girls’ in the cages at Franco’s felt.

Brian came in as I was moaning, begging Dave to do that again, caress my smooth, hairless thighs, as I loved him doing that. Brian was livid when he saw what was going on. He had Dave and me march into his office and sit there like little children. I femininely crossed my legs in my tight skirt. I knew my makeup was smeared and my hair, an ash-blonde wig, was a mess. It normally tucked behind my ears because Jane insisted I wear a ribbon in my hair to make it do that. Dave had eased it off. He liked Michelle’s hair all about ‘her’ face, caressing his neck when ‘she’ kissed him.

Dave caressed my soft hand in his as we sat there, me so girlishly nervous. His other hand was on my leg, trying to get up my skirt. Appalled at him and at myself, I fought but couldn’t get free. Brian came back with his coffee and saw us writhing still, Michelle being so girly. He really got mad.

“You Goddamn, effing, stinking *queer perverts!*” the owner of the paper screamed at us as I tried to protest my innocence.

“It’s not my fault,” I squeaked, my voice high and lilting, like a girl’s. It was changing since my lessons in acting and speaking like a girl at Del Monte’s.

Jane had spun her uncle some story about me, about her ‘research’ on what it was like to be a transvestite. In the end, *The Queen* would come down on the side of Right and Good. We’d denounce Tom Beman and his cronies for what they’d put poor, innocent men through. Only I’d have to wear women’s clothing, and be treated by all the staff as a woman



all the time, to make the stories she was writing about Michelle (me) ‘real’. Yes, it was all for the story, to sell more papers, to raise the price of advertising in *The Queen*—so Jane said.

But now Brian saw that I wasn’t as innocent about dressing like a girl as Jane said I was. Brian stared at me, fighting with Dave’s hand, trying to pull my skirt down as a girl should.

“Here we are,” Brian roared at the pair of us, “on the eve of the most important election in the history of the Valley, and what are you two *sex perverts* doing? Jane told me you weren’t gay, Mike! You’re only doing this *Transformers* thing to help the paper’s circulation! You hate this, Jane told me—but what do I see in the stock room? You making out with Dave! As if you’re really a girl! You’re not the virgin Jane says you are, *Michelle*.” There was a definite sneer in the last word.

“I—I’m *not* gay!” I managed to say, getting my hand free from the grinning Dave Richardson. “*He is!*”

Brian was stunned. He stared at Dave, who opened one hand in a gesture, like, ‘What can I say?’

Brian looked back at me, at the top I was wearing and the fake breasts protruding from my chest. He looked at my stockings and my high heels. I felt awful, as I had for ages, since Jane had tricked me into dressing as a woman continually. Brian had only seen me once or twice since I’d been ‘transformed’, staring at me in shock while Jane was whispering in his ear. He hadn’t talked to me.

I’d become used to the excited, rapturous edge to my emotions as I dressed fully as a woman every day. I spoke like a woman, talked about womanish things, fashion and perfumes, had lessons on being a woman, and giggled about the silly things that men do all the time. I had a girlfriend who made me dress just like her. Jane had hidden all my male clothing as well, making me go into *Transformers*, almost every day, to be transformed into whatever type of woman I

had to be for the newspaper story she'd thought about.

The Morality Party was saying the most horrible things about men in dresses, about men like Michelle Little. I agreed with them now! I wished I could write that in my 'confessions' on what it was like to kiss another man, my date, in the movies, or dance club. But Jane edited my writing.

Yes, the columns attributed to me said that I loved being a pretty woman, loved compliments that I never got as a man, and loved swishy, silky women's clothing. Jane wouldn't publish anything I wrote if there was a possibility it would kill off chances for a guy like Tom Beman, a guy in a dress, to be elected.

"What happened to the man who wrote all those great editorials for me?" asked a bewildered Brian.

"Jane happened," Dave interrupted. "It's true, Michelle. She's just like her sister. Have you seen what Estelle Edwards is doing to poor Donna Gardner? She wants me to come around to her house and party with Donna! That's a true story."

"Those girls are my sister's daughters!" said Brian furiously. He stared at Dave. "Is this what the Valley has come to? Debauchery everywhere?"

"No, Mr. Carpenter," I whispered to him, unable to find Mike's—my—proper voice. "Jane's my girlfriend. I'm part of a news story about what's going on in the Valley." I indicated the skirt and top I was wearing. "Dave won't keep his hands off me."

"Because you like it so much, Michelle," said Dave with a crooked sort of smile. "It's true," he went on to Brian, as I protested and shivered. "Michelle *loves* to make out with me in the stock room!"

"That can't be true," Brian grunted. I felt so ashamed. I blushed and fidgeted. Brian had seen me, kissing Dave, being pressed against him like a woman. My face told him I wasn't an innocent little

‘girl’ as I was supposed to pretend I was. I could see, by the look on his face, that he was changing his mind about me!

“We’re journalists, for heaven’s sake,” Brian said disgustedly. “We *report* this sort of stuff. We don’t *indulge* in it. You, Mike, if you’re gay—”

“Call her Michelle,” said Dave. “She flushes and gets excited when she’s called that. She likes to be called ‘she’ as well.”

“Enough, Dave,” said Brian, as I uncrossed my stockinged legs and tried to hit Dave. He held me off easily. “Mike, Michelle, I want you to go home and come back in your own clothes. I want to see you as a man. Dave, no more teasing Michelle. It’s sexual harassment, what you’re doing to a woman! I don’t want Michelle suing me because you can’t keep it in your pants!”

Dave looked as stunned as me. I heard my heels clicking as I fled in distress out of the office. I looked back. There they were, watching me swish, as I was so used to doing. I felt worse than humiliated. I turned and bumped right into Jane and Tania.

“What’s going on?” asked Jane. I sobbed a little at all the shaming I’d just suffered. Jane marched me right back into the office.

“Michelle’s not going home,” she said furiously to her uncle. “Michelle is not changing into boy’s clothes. Michelle is going to go to the Ladies Room with Tania to fix her makeup!”

I went with Tania, shaking all over, and powdered my face. I did my lips, glossing and coloring them in a red shade Jane liked.

“You really are a girl now, aren’t you, Michelle?” asked Tania.

“No,” I whispered, quivering. “I’m going to do what Brian says and change back. This silly transformation story with Jane is over.”

Tania sighed. "Girl," she said, making me shiver more. "You just don't know our Jane very well, do you? Now she's got you where she wants you, her dominated, submissive partner, you don't have a chance of getting out of her clutches until she decides it. She's having too much fun with you. I can't believe how much she's changed you in just a month or so. What are you going to be like, what are you going to be doing, in a year?"

I staggered back in my heels, taking only short steps because of my skirt.

"You look much nicer, Michelle," said Jane when I nervously returned to the publisher's office. She held my hand as I sat down again. Dave Richardson was gone. "Doesn't she, Uncle Brian?"

Uncle Brian gave me a look that would have curdled milk. "All right—Michelle," he said to me. It looked like he'd bitten into a lemon. "Jane needs you to be Michelle for a little while longer. Just stay out of the stock room, young lady. That's all."

"Come on, Michelle," said Jane, her arm about me as she stood. "We have a paper to make. You can write the editorial. You know what Brian wants. He wants his Morality Party to win in a landslide. Write an editorial that makes our side come out and vote for Greg Jara, Donna Leslie and John Lewis!"

Amazingly, with all sorts of weird emotions passing through me, I got back to my job. Sitting in my tight skirt, I wrote the editorial Brian wanted.

"It's time to put the Valley back to rights," I wrote. "We've endured one whole year of what John Lewis has labelled 'organized perversions'. It is time for the Morality Ordinances, forbidding men to wear female clothing, to be enacted again."

I went on and on about the spectacle of an 'all-girls' school, and the accommodation Principal Teller would make, which he wouldn't a year ago.

Now, he'd let boys like Helen Danson, a 'sex change', be treated as a special case.

Actually, I found that reasonable. I became confused the more I wrote. Didn't I want the Valley to be what it once was? The resort being built was running sex tests on all its workers to make sure men who worked as men were men, and women who worked as women were *not* men—but was that right?

A list of the Morality Party candidates ran on the front page, with a story about the resort's progress. We were back to being sort of normal—until you turned to the inside. There you would see the *Transformers* ads and the second story about me, 'Michelle', doing women's tasks every day, keeping myself pretty and in a dress, going out with my girlfriends to play with my boyfriends.

On the back page, opposite Tania's bits about new acts in the clubs, there was a rundown of other candidates—the 'no morality' group, in Greg Jara's words. There were Joe Gibson and Al Bass, nightclub owners and employers of female impersonators. There was Jean Del Monte, whose model of the year was a boy known as Karen. Mary Lou Conan was the wife of a sheriff who looked more like a woman every day. Lois Anderson and Amy Collins, of the Ladies Auxiliary, had applauded the repeal of the Morality Laws.

One candidate, Ellen James, was Tom Beman's wife, while Sharon Thomas was 'Julia' Linton's wife. Tom Beman's political literature showed him as a woman, as he'd been challenged to be. There was Lois Slayton, the woman who'd thought men should be more feminine, and Kate Schultz and Anne Jenkinson. Both had letters published in support of Tom Beman and Lois Slayton. All opposed the Morality Party—but it had such a strong lineup, it was favored to win in a landslide, I'd concluded in the editorial.

Opposite the report on Slayton and her friends were pictures of a high-strutting, feminized Pete

Smith in a classic pose, one leg over his head, his panties on show. Where could he be hiding his male package? I asked myself. I'm sure anyone looking at it thought the same, their eyes wandering from the political article to the men-posing-as-girls as they did so. Yes, they'd be looking at me on the inside pages as well.

The Foxy Sisters had returned to the Garth. Roseanne and Corinne were as sexily feminine as ever in split dresses to show off stockings and black garter belts. Jackie Ray looked really nice with shorter hair and more feminine makeup. 'She' distracted me. I ignored a Greg Jara ranting article to look at Jackie. I shivered at what I saw. Without growing my hair much more, I could have it cut and styled as girlishly as hers.

Tania's column began with a nice paragraph about Jackie Ray, female impersonator. "Not that anyone would know, on entering the club (Sylvester's)," Tania wrote. "Jackie is lovely in an evening dress and padded, I think, in all the right places. Apart from her impressions of Mariah, Norah, Britney and Cher, Jackie also has her own voice. She's impressive in sultry ballads that her predominantly female audience loves.

"Karen O'Day on piano provides lively, listenable dance music. It's a treat for the eyes to see pretty Karen's red-tipped fingers flash over the ivories. Karen, of course, used to play with Vic Perrone, where she was known as Alan O'Day.

"The Foxy Sisters' raunchy show returned to the Garth. I must say that the 'Sisters' look much better this time around. Their wigs and dresses seem to be much more glamorous. These two guys had me convinced—until their panties came off. Then, it was 'Oh, brother!'"

I said we were nearly a normal newspaper—but my part wasn't in any way 'normal'. There I was in a page-length photo, a huge 'Michelle' over the whole

page. It made my stomach churn as I looked at the woman I'd become in a month.

Of course, the text Jane wrote was much tamer than the life I was really leading at Jane's house, or at work, where Dave told me he was my boyfriend. I'd be dating him really soon, he jested with me, knowing how embarrassed I was. His stock room kisses hadn't slowed down in intensity or ferocity. I went nervously to work each day, Jane doing my makeup perfectly in case I had a run-in with Dave. I had to keep my trembling lips glossy and pink, as he loved them like that.

The article on 'Michelle', with Jane's and my by-line as 'Mike Little', reported that "It's been a month that I've been in women's clothes. I've moved into Jane's house so she can assist me each day in my transformation. It's been the kind of experience that makes me wonder if I'll ever be able to buy pants and tee-shirts for myself again!"

Jane called it "being honest with my 'public'." I was being recognized in all the clubs and restaurants I went to with Jane now. Guys and girls wanted their pictures taken with me, a celebrity in our town. I heard cries of 'Michelle' wherever I went. I had to smile and wave, or Jane hit me on my shivering tush.

"I'm so used to having a soft, airy dress about my shaven legs," Jane wrote as me. "I love the perfume Jane puts on me each day. I've faithfully followed the regimen of voice control I'm learning at Del Monte. Up to now, I've met only sympathetic store clerks who recognize me as a man in a dress—until this last weekend in Brampton! Whoever I spoke to, who didn't know me as Michelle Little, called me 'Miss' or 'Ma'am'! Ooo, I really loved that."

As herself, Jane had written, "Michelle is just loving her work so much! Our evening out at the Ellis Ballroom, dating two men (!), was a complete, feminine joy for both of us, from the beginning to the end of the night."

At the end, Jack wouldn't go home until he'd kissed his struggling girlfriend (me) a hundred times outside Jane's house, amusing of all our neighbors—or so they informed me the next morning. Everyone, it seemed, was watching me transform into a young girl, thinking I wanted what was happening to me.

"I've never seen Mike as animated and happy as Michelle is," Jane wrote, committing me to yet another month as a woman. "Now, he really knows how easily a Valley boy can become a Valley girl!" The caption with my picture said that Michelle loved the way other men and women treated her, now 'she' is a woman.

"None of this is true!" I protested to Brian—but that's what went out in the paper about me, Michelle Little.

At least the *Transformers* ad didn't have my picture again. It had 'Charles' before and 'Charlotte' after. As in all *Transformers* pictures, the girl was gorgeous.

Melanie's had taken up the challenge of transforming men into women. It had new pictures of Joe Lyon, a 'policewoman', all blonde hair and cute, girlish features, and Andy May, the utilities clerk, in a petticoated dress that looked so good on her. For an embarrassing moment, I thought Jane and I should see if we could find one just like it for me.

The election dominated everything, however. The letters in this 'normal' newspaper were all about the only election issue, men in dresses. Meredith Arnold wrote about the leaders of the Morality Party scaring her with their intolerance, especially as her husband, 'Angela' Arnold, was now a more loving husband than ever. "She wears her corsets and stockings every day to put food on the table. I would like to see my husband, Jim, again, but not because of the ridicule and name-calling men like Angela have endured. They've put up with being called 'she' and 'her' along

with the female names they have to use—and they’re all law-abiding citizens, not perverts!”

Ronald Scott, only fifteen, wrote about his father. “My father works for the council. Or should I say I now have two mothers. Belinda wears more makeup than my Mom now. Please vote Morality and give me my Daddy back. I don’t want to have to be a girl, either, when I go to Tyson next year.”

The last letter before the election was from Mark Evans who wrote, “I don’t care who wins the election. I won’t be voting. I do hope the Garth and Roxy stay open, though. I really love the girls there. So nice!”

Dave was away for a while—deliberately, Jane said. I wasn’t to be trapped in the stock room by anyone but her, she leered at me.

Our newspaper was predicting a landslide for the Morality Party. The Garth was pretty gloomy, as was the Ellis, on election night. “Hey, girl,” said one guy to me. “Are you as pretty without all that paint and padding? Give me a kiss, darling. It’s going to be back to the salt mines for all you drag queens tomorrow.”

“Don’t listen to him,” said Jane, taking my arm and making me swish away from the joker. “Now that I finally made you into a woman, Michelle, no matter what the result, you’re not going back, ever again, to being a grungy, nasty man like that one.”

Volume 24

Issue No. 7

16 March

“They’ve finished all the counts and re-counts,” said Tania Scott, hanging up the phone in our office in *The Queen of the Valley*, “and the election turned out to be just as we predicted, a landslide!”

The smile on her face and the sparkle in her eyes told the full story. It had been a landslide, but not the one predicted in our editorials, for the Morality Party. No, the landslide had been in favor of the opponents of Morality.

“All twelve seats?” asked Brian J. Carpenter, editor and publisher of *The Queen*.

“All twelve seats,” said Tania happily. “No Jara, No Lewis, No Leslie, not one Morality Party rep elected at all.”

Brian looked stunned; then he glared at me as if it was all my fault. “We’re going to have three years of Michelle dressing like that?” he snapped.

I shuddered. Dressing “like that,” like a woman, hadn’t been my idea. But honesty compelled me to admit that most of the fault was mine. I was sitting there in my tight corset, my bra padded to make me more womanly in shape, in a gaff and woman’s panties, stockings and a straight skirt, and pink, puffed-sleeve blouse. I wore earrings, bracelet and a necklace, high heels on my feet, and a wig on my head! My face was cleverly made up, with Jane’s help, to make me look like Michelle, girl reporter.

I was sitting there as a girl. I’d long ago begun to like all the weird emotions that flooded through me when I was treated so much more nicely than when I was a man. I didn’t question Jane any more about what I was to wear each day. I just got dressed as a girl and swayed down the street with her into Raybold and the newspaper office where we both worked. I didn’t object to being called ‘Michelle’ or to being told that I looked nice and smelled sweetly as a woman should.

I should have stopped this whole charade. I could have. I should have said I was only doing this to help the newspaper sell more copies. But I was even signing my checks now as ‘Michelle’ Little. I had ‘her’ driving licence and credit cards in my new name. In all the Valley businesses, men in girlish clothing, like me, had only been too happy—delighted, in fact—to help me become a woman, just like them.

Some I knew from the fashion, charm and femininity classes I took at the Del Monte School. There were twenty-two men in my class who were training to be

women, just like me. Jane made me go. My voice was now a woman's voice, everyone said. I didn't sound like a Mike any more, everyone told me. I sounded like 'what I wanted to be'. I sounded like Michelle.

"If you dismiss her," Jane said to her uncle as he glared at me, "we'll go to court! Here in the Valley, we'll win."

Jane sounded very persuasive as she said that. I shuddered as Brian Carpenter, my boss, glowered at me. "Dave!" Brian said to the only other male-dressed figure in our editorial conference. "You write up the election report." He sneered. "Did you speak to the *Misses Beman* last night?"

"I got photos as well," said Dave, showing us the picture of two women, holding up each other's arm in the traditional signal of victory. The blonde on the left was much prettier with her permed, pinned-back hair in a ponytail and her exquisite eye makeup. She even seemed more stylish in women's clothes than the other woman on her right. "That's Tom Beman on the left," Dave said, more to Brian than anyone else, "and Ellen James Beman on the right. They're the first husband-and-wife team ever to sit on the Council."

"You call that a husband and wife?" snarled Brian Carpenter. "Not in my newspaper!"

Dave looked pointedly over at Jane, who made a face at him where her uncle couldn't see it.

"Jane!" Brian barked at her. "Get over and see when Lois Slayton is going to call the first meeting of the new Council."

"*Lois Slayton* is going to be the new mayor?" asked Tania in surprise.

"She's got the support and the votes," said Dave with a grimace.

"She'll wreck this town," grumbled Brian. "Look what she's done in the last year. She's made us the laughingstock of the state."

"No-one in this state knows or cares about what we get up to here in the Raybold River Valley," snapped Jane. It was only too true. "The capital isn't concerned about 'local issues', nor is our State Rep. We can only be a laughingstock if there's someone, out there, to tell what fools we're making of ourselves."

I know she was only saying that to get her uncle to go along with her manipulations, but, hearing Jane made me cringe inside my female dress. I was thinking I was the biggest fool of all.

"Tania," said Brian, dividing up publishing tasks. "Get on the phone as entertainment director and solicit advertising from all the usual clients. There's a new club, the Amadeus, opening. I promised them a review if they bought a display ad, which they did."

"And what is Michelle doing?" asked Jane as Brian snapped his ledger shut, beginning to rise from the editorial table.

"Layout," Brian snapped.

"Write a nice editorial, Michelle," said Jane, winking at me. She knew how I hated being the one to assemble ads, re-write Classifieds, edit Letters, and write the editorial, which was the only thing Brian really studied word by word. I'd assign column inches to the other reporters, too. It sort of made me editor of the issue, but I wanted to be like Dave. Really! I wanted to write a lead story. I wanted by-lines to add to my very thin resumé as a reporter for *The Queen*.

"I don't like this idea of men using women's names when they're dolled up to serve us in the Council offices," said Brian abruptly.

"Michelle will add that in, Uncle," Jane said sweetly as the meeting broke up. She told me to talk to several stores who regularly placed ads with us.

Given the strange political times, several had held back but now wanted to confirm, with Michelle, that there'd be space in the local news for their ads for the upcoming month.

I knew we couldn't fit everyone in, every month, in only one issue—but Brian solved that. Susan Brown, the mail girl—just eighteen, and in love with working for a newspaper—brought me a terse memo from Brian with our new increased rates for all ads.

Susan's mother Dee Brown, manager and owner of *Transformers*, laughed when I apologetically told her the new rates. "We expected it," Dee said. "Is this really Michelle I'm talking to? You sound so different! You sound so, so—"

"Awful," I said with a shiver passing through me.

"Oh, no!" said Dee. "You sound so *womanly*! I can't believe your progress in such a short time. I think your transformation is a real success!"

"From your point of view," I said shakily as the fax of her new ad came in. It said clearly now, 'Transformations of the most discriminating of men.' The pictures of Jules and the blonde Julia—the same person in before and after pics—were quite dramatic, as they were each a wonderful specimen of the gender their names implied.

"Love you, Michelle," said Dee as she hung up. "And Susan idolizes you as well!"

I hardly had time to think of a teenage girl idolizing me, someone she knew was a transformed man. I didn't understand that. But I had work to do. I started off the editorial with just writing, 'DEFEAT, DISMAY, DISGUST', in capital letters as a heading. I had to write it as Brian would have, in his voice, so to speak. It came more easily than it should have.

"In a decision the Valley is sure to regret," I wrote, "voters turned their backs on the Morality Party and

put their trust in a bunch of woolly-headed civil libertarians.

“Perhaps the Morality Party was too strident, too negative, too apocalyptic for voters raised on warm, fuzzy, liberal thinking. We believe so.

“At least, Mayor-elect Lois Slayton has had the good sense to insist to her colleagues that the infamous Jara Motion, passed in a fit of irrational anger by the last Council, be re-visited and set aside.

“Such good sense, and from the woman who urged men to be more feminine in September! She particularly suggested that Council employees who dressed completely as women should even adopt female names while at work.

“Many have. It’s quite disconcerting for those of us here at the newspaper to find that Andrea and Josephine, who look so pretty at the Council House, are really Andy and Joe. We look forward to equally good sense from the two Ms Bemans.”

At our next editorial conference, Brian told me grudgingly, unable to look me in my madeup eyes, that he really liked the editorial, especially the last line.

Susan brought me the mail. Forty people already had got letters off to us about the election. The very first one had to go in the paper: “Dear sir,” it began. Only a very few ever said, ‘or madam’, but then, we set up the column with all the letters beginning ‘Dear sir’. “I voted for Tom Beman in Lower Valley Ward. I just couldn’t see how the shutting down of night-clubs, firing Council and Valley employees who have only done what Jara sarcastically made them do, will help the Valley’s unemployment problem. Besides, I like the idea that it isn’t what you wear, but what you are, that counts! LeeAnn Baron.”

Brian added an editor’s note: ‘And what Miss Beman is wearing is OK with you? Well, Tom is the prettier one, so we can see why you voted for her!’

Samantha Roberts wrote a letter that seventy people seemed to have copied, I figured out later. "I expect you'll get a lot of letters crying doom and gloom after the election. But did you see the street party after, on Raybold? Cops were dancing with bouncers! I got hugged and kissed fifty times or more. It's such a relief! Just so long as I can go on wearing my hair long and my girl friend's dresses, I'm happy - Samantha Roberts."

There were lots about the street party. "Where were you reporters?" Mike Ferran wanted to know. "All the impersonators and go-go girls came out of the clubs and were giving it away for free, if you know what I mean, right there on the street. All the good-looking guys were smothered with 'girls'. I gave up trying to tell in the end and just joined in the fun. It was great! And Lolita and Claudine, I do really love you. I do. I don't care that you're guys!"

There was another letter in support of Antonia Taylor, a young boy-girl who'd been beaten up on New Year's Day. It was well written and ended with 'She told the guy honestly who she was and he started beating on her. I hate men like Gary Miller.'

I had to shiver at that as I thought about myself. Jane was always thrusting me at men, to dance with them, to smile and flirt like her, in the clubs we went to regularly. I'd never been out so much in my life, but it was all as a girl! And guys seemed to like coming on to me, even when I told them I was Michelle Little of *The Queen of the Valley*. Sometimes I thought, in fright, of what some guy who'd heard of me would do to me, when I told him who he was plying with drinks and complimenting on her girlish ways.

I must have been dancing with the only men in the Valley who didn't read our newspaper. All the women and girls we met knew right away who I was, as did all the girlie boys. I still really didn't know what to call them. I didn't know what to call *myself* as I put on my

makeup, brushed my hair, changing my dress to something thin and sexy for a girl.

Then I went out for a night on the town with my girlfriend. Sometimes, as Antonia Taylor had found out, being a woman was very frightening. Ah, but the kisses I had to give, Jane insisted, to the men who walked us home. Oh, I was stirred up so often that I just had to let my girlfriend make love to me when the men were gone.

Jane told me as we snuggled in bed that Lois Slayton had been unanimously selected as Mayor. Tom Beman, she said, “looks so darling these days. Poor Ellen looks so dowdy beside her husband. His hair is so golden and curly. I think he must be going regularly to *Transformers*, like you, Michelle darling!”

“It was funny as well when they dropped the term Chairman from the words used for committee members of the Council,” said Jane as she caressed my nightie against me. “Al Bass and Joe Gibson opposed the motion as ‘the only two men present’. Then Anne Jenkinson reminded them that Tom Beman was also present. He was sitting with the women and looked just like them. Al Bass amended his comments with compliments to both Ms Bemans on how pretty they looked. He and Joe opposed as the only persons ‘dressed as men’.

“The Council took that up and changed the rules be so that any female-attired persons be addressed in the feminine and be allowed to use the Ladies’ facilities in all Council buildings. They extended that,” Jane ended with a laugh, “to include everyone in the Valley, which is going to ruffle a lot of feathers.”

“That will still be in force after the repeal of the Morality Code?” I asked her with a shiver as Jane touched me under my nightie where I liked to be touched as Michelle.

“Oh yes, darling Michelle,” Jane said to me. “We girls are quite safe now from men’s prying eyes.”

Dave gave me his election report the following day, caressing my shoulder and making me quiver. He whispered, "Stock room," in my ear. I shivered even more as I shook my long, blonde hair, my wig so lovely on me, I thought.

Dave was not supposed to do that to me any more, not since Brian had caught us necking like crazy in there. It was why Brian was so mean to me lately. I couldn't blame him. It wasn't my fault. Dave was the gay man on staff, not me—or so I tried to tell Brian. But one look at me in my pleated dress, my legs crossed, in stockings, and my figure padded like a woman's—well, it belied everything I said to Brian. He didn't believe me even though he knew I was living with Jane, who was so affectionate with me.

"Are you done now?" asked Jane, coming in and frowning at Dave. I think that she'd seen his hands on me and seen how I jumped and jerked as I reacted to him. I still had my legs crossed. That much I'd remembered to do.

"I have the back page and editing Dave's work to do," I told her.

"Good," Jane said. "Come and find me in the Garth bar. I'm interviewing another reporter for *The Queen*. Brian's agreed our circulation can pay for an intern as we'll have to do a special soon on Prom." She smiled at my aghast expression. "Principal Teller cancelled it last year but Donna Gardner says she thinks it's a lovely idea! We get new dresses, too, at the paper's expense, Michelle. And a makeup session at *Transformers*! I've booked you in now as there's bound to be a huge demand for transformations this year for Prom. Don't you think it's exciting!"

Exciting? Nauseating, was my thought.

Tania came by, dropping me her column and ads for the back pages. Oh gosh, the boy-girls on the back page couldn't have been girlier, I thought, waking from the nightmare dream of me, being a 'girl reporter' at a Prom Dance, surrounded by men in

dressess. No, I thought, it won't be that bad. It won't be that bad.

Pete Smith was draped out all across the column of Roxy's ad, in a bikini and feminine pose. "Classy strip-tease! -Tania Scott," read the only words about Pete. How like Joe Gibson to use Tania's review. He was now making his ads sexier as the Revuebar had another cute girl in almost nothing, 'dancing' in their ad, while the Foxy Sisters were their usual glamorous selves. Bobbi Jones looked almost normal, like a normal woman—that is, like Mandy, the featured violin player on the Amadeus night club ad for its 'Grand Opening'.

Tania had started her column with that. "A new nightclub opens in the city this month, Amadeus – the Nightclub," she'd written. "It's a wonderful place to go for dinner with a loved one and to listen to some wonderful Mozart. The Amadeus Appreciation Society promises to be the 'house band' for the new enterprise of Councillor Al Bass and his partners. Mandy, Julia, Ashley and Felicity know how to set a most elegant mood, not only playing Mozart, but Bach, Brahms and Mendelssohn. Then with dinner hour completed, the four 'girls' of the quartet played lively show tunes and music that was so romantic! I had to grab my squeeze and head out on the floor, something I don't feel the need to do among the teens of the Garth, Ellis, Franco's or the Roxy. Looking forward to guest artists at Amadeus now that the club is establishing itself!

"Caught Bobby Jones' act as well this week at the Ellis ballroom. Bobby is quite the blonde bombshell and so are the Sweethearts. I don't think half of the audience is aware that Bobby and the Sweethearts are men. Certainly, by the way the 'girls' sing, it isn't easy to tell. Vic Perrone's orchestra, by the way, totally supports their blonde girl singer, but they are much changed since Christmas with an all-girl sax section and Kay Armstrong, a pretty lead trumpeter. Hmm, wasn't it Ken Armstrong, the lead trumpet last year? Certainly, Ken's sister, hmm, is just as good a

player as Ken, and her sexy walk in her lamé evening dress gets a lot of applause.”

I was thinking of Kay’s ‘sexy walk’ as I went into Brian’s office and gave him the local edition. When I took a quick look back, he wasn’t watching me as he usually did. I don’t know why but I felt disappointed. I hoped I wasn’t losing my feminine attractiveness so quickly.

Volume 24

Issue No. 8

14 April

Bonnie Helman didn’t know whether to stand or sit, to extend a hand or just to smile at me when I joined Jane and her in the Garth Coffee Bar.

“This is Michelle,” said Jane, introducing me. I felt shivers go through me as the cute, ponytailed, brownhaired girl looked at me and smiled tentatively. “This is Bonnie Helman.”

“I’ve been reading all about you in *The Queen*,” said the girl, blushing. Her smooth clear skin almost invited a touch. She was lightly, professionally made up, as a girl would be for a job interview. She clutched copies of the recent issues of our newspaper, those with the record of my transformation from Mike to Michelle. “I was expecting there to be another article about you in the last issue.”

“The election intervened,” said Jane to the girl who spoke just like her, and sat just like her, in a straight, tan skirt, blouse and pretty bow at her neck and in her hair. “Now all this stuff in the courts and the Davies incident at their house, which Michelle had an excellent report on, has bumped our report on Michelle again from the April issue.”

I had to shiver. I’d had no inkling from Jane that I was still going to be in the limelight. I didn’t want anyone to write about me again. The knowing looks I got from women were making me quite frazzled. I had to be as feminine as I could, of course, with the way

that women looked at me, as Bonnie was looking at me now.

"Pity," said Bonnie. "I really liked reading all about Michelle's transformation. I was hoping to read about problems she might be having—"

"Michelle isn't having any problems in being a woman," said Jane, signaling to the waitress who sashayed over to us with the bill.

"Hi, Michelle," Chantal said to me with a sassy smile. "You look so pretty in pink. It's really your color." She had come on to me when I was Mike. Since I dressed as Michelle, she made a point of flirting with me and complimenting me as a woman. I didn't know how to handle her at all.

"That will be it, Chantal," said Jane snappily. Chantal sashayed away with Jane's credit card. "I really don't like the waitresses in here making eyes at my girlfriend," she said to Bonnie, who looked a little nervous. "Luckily, I hear that you won't have that problem. Your boyfriend is pretty supportive of you, isn't he?"

Bonnie seemed a little frightened as she nodded. We went back into the offices of *The Queen of the Valley* where the first person we met was the new mail girl, Susan Brown.

"Bonnie!" Susan squealed and ran over to hug the girl we were with. Bonnie looked a little surprised as she let the girl hug her and kiss her soft cheek. "Are you going to be working here as well?"

"I'm just an intern for now," said Bonnie. Jane had given her a job, I learned. "I've graduated from school so recently. I'll be reporting on education and helping with reports on the Prom."

"Oh, you've got to put me in that article!" squealed Susan again. She began describing the 'divine' dress she was going to wear.

"Sounds lovely," said Bonnie, trying to edge away from all the enthusiasm.

"Oh," said Susan. "I have to tell you, Bonnie, that I'm Susan now!"

"Oh, yes, Susan," said Bonnie nervously, glancing at me.

"Dee is really being so supportive of me," Susan went on. "She made me get the most expensive prom dress in *Transformers* because she says a girl should have one night when she's the belle of the ball! Not that I'll be that! That will be Debbie Allen. Everyone knows that! Where are you getting your dress for the Prom, Bonnie? I bet everyone will think you're one of us, that night."

"I haven't thought," said Bonnie, a catch in her lovely soprano voice. "Quinlans, Rayburn, Melanie's, I don't know how dressed up I have to be!"

"Very," said Jane with a grin.

"It was so nice to see you again, Susan," said Bonnie—but Susan wanted to go shopping, that evening with Bonnie, for the 'perfect dress'.

"I'll tell Mummy you're working here," gushed Susan. "She's going to be so happy to know you'll be here to mentor me."

"Let me finish my interview and orientation first," said Bonnie with a nervous giggle as I confirmed to myself that Bonnie Helman was a boy-girl just like me. Susan Brown must be one as well.

"You know Susan's parents?" I asked Bonnie as Jane shuffled the orientation on to me.

"Dee Brown?" asked Bonnie uncomfortably. "Yes, well, Raybold isn't that large, is it? All the long-settled families are so intermarried. Mummy and Daddy know Dee well. I think I'm related to St—Susan. We're related to the Edwards sisters as well, Mummy says."

Nothing like a little nepotism to land a job, I thought, as Bonnie explained that she was part way through her degree and needed a little time off before she went back to State to finish up. A little time to live as a girl, I thought, away from where people knew her as 'Bruce Helman' and wouldn't understand. But here in the Valley, we understood girls like Bonnie very well.

On the way home that night, I tackled Jane on the topic of Bonnie. "She's a boy-girl like me, isn't she?" I asked as we minced along in our high heels, skirts swishing, to Jane's house.

"Like you?" Jane asked in mock dismay. "Oh no, darling Michelle, Bonnie isn't like you at all. She has a boyfriend. She likes *men* in bed when she makes love."

"I hate you being so crude," I had to tell her in my lilting, feminized voice. I had to prepare for my classes at the Del Monte School. I had to take three dresses in, of various types, that I would be taught how to model. Then, we 'girl students' had to present a real fashion show of evening wear at Quinlans. It was going to be a long night.

Jane gave me the personnel jackets from *The Queen of the Valley* for both Bonnie and Susan. I wasn't sure I should have seen them. They lived on the same street. Susan Brown's mother had died when she was very young. Her father's name was listed as Donald and someone had written, 'Dee', in brackets after that.

Susan's and Bonnie's school pictures were pretty close. Both were good-looking boys, a little dorky, perhaps. Their first pictures in wigs and white ribbons and dresses with petticoats were hilarious, but I don't think that either would have liked me seeing them as they had once been. Now they were Bonnie and Susan, girls.

"Satisfied now?" asked Jane with a smile. "We girls at *The Queen* outnumber the others, five to two now."

I had a story on the second page of *The Queen* with my byline on it. I'd been the only one working when the police radio squawked about deputies asking for backup at the old Hobden residence. I knew that was where Earl Davies, boss of the resort we were all counting on to inject money and development into the Valley's economy, lived.

I hustled over as fast as my high heels would carry me and got to be a girl reporter. "Screams and sounds of breaking furniture brought police to the old Hobden home on Raybold Avenue early this morning," I wrote in my article.

"Earl Davies, chairman of Davies-Valley Resorts, was taken into custody by Deputies Lois Wright and Jenny Salazar." I knew their proper names were 'Len' and 'Martin', but they were using bright new name pins that referred to them as 'Lois' and 'Jenny'—so I went with that. It was a hard sell, but Brian gave in to calling them by their female names, below their pictures, in the end.

"Charged with several counts of drunken assault, Earl Davies, one of Raybold's leading citizens, was held overnight," I'd written. "Mrs Renee Davies refused to confirm police reports that the confrontation occurred when one of the Davies' twin sons returned home from a date in a beautiful, pink, prom dress.

"Mr Davies, according to police reports, saw a boy and a girl locked in a romantic embrace on his doorstep, 'kissing passionately.' Davies thought that the boy was his son and went to call him in, only to find that the boy was from last year's football team and the girl was one of his sons, Kelly Davies.

"An appalled Earl Davies assaulted his son, ripping off his long blonde wig, which led to Kelly being defended by his date. Police were called to arrest John Quinlan, nineteen, but declined to do so. They had to arrest Davies when he became abusive to Lois Wright, calling the deputy several unprintable names.

“Mrs Davies begged officers not to arrest Earl Davies, said neighbors, because he didn’t know about ‘Debbie’. The case goes before Judge Emily Cortwright in two weeks.”

I had to beg Brian to print my story. He snarled some nasty remarks about the fact that I, Michelle, would want such a story printed, a girl reporter like me. Yes, he actually described me like that which amused my colleagues.

“Everyone is talking about this,” Tania said in my defense, as Dave nodded. “There’re all kinds of rumors. Michelle, our girl reporter”—I cringed at that—“has done a great job in telling what happened at the Davies’s house. It’s the unvarnished truth, just what we should be printing.”

“You have to support Michelle in this, boss,” said Dave. Brian gave me a look that made me want to shrivel up in my panties and short skirt. “That picture of Kelly Davies and John Quinlan at the pre-prom dance is priceless. I didn’t realize she was so tiny and gorgeous. Quinlan towers over her even though she’s in high heels.”

I’d managed to get several snaps of Kelly and John on the dance floor. It had got a lot hotter on the Davies’ doorstep by all accounts. Several people had seen them, smiled at the boy-and-girl doings, and passed on by.

“All right,” Brian said. I got a stroke from Dave as he went by me, and another from Jane. Both made me tingle all over.

The big news of the month, though, was the complication of the Valley Council’s rules. The new Council wanted to change us all back to normality. But when had the Jara Motion come into force, and when could it be set aside? Judge Emily Cortwright ruled that it would be September before the repeal could be voted on or come into effect. Council put off its vote until then, which meant that the men who’d dressed

in women's clothing for six months and more still had another six months to stay in their skirts.

Also on the front page were photos of Sheriff Joanne Conan and Deputy Lois Wright directing traffic. Both looked very womanly in their long hair, makeup, and padded women's figures. Joanne Conan's 'Acting' status was removed from his designation as Sheriff. Dave had interviewed Conan in his womanly dress. "It hasn't been that difficult," the Sheriff had said in response to a question about dressing like a woman. He called it 'teasing' and 'namecalling' what his 'men' had gone through, on the streets.

"We really have discovered, however," Conan said, "how the other half lives. I think we're better men for it."

Another six months in dresses and skirts? "It's no different from what we're doing now and have done for the last year," says Conan, hair all freshly, femininely styled, with a pretty, lipsticked smile. (So reports Dave Richardson, I thought. What a bitchy comment!)

Why the new designation as 'Joanne' Conan? "My wife," said Joanne Conan of Councillor Mary Lou Conan, "has been talking to Mayor Lois Slayton about that. She pointed out that those who adopted feminine names like Lois Wright and Josie Lyon weren't hassled at all, as were those of us who still wore our male name tags. I actually found that true, today. As Joanne, I was addressed quite respectfully when I went out on calls."

Dave followed the whole thing up by talking to Mary Lou Conan. She said she suggested 'Joanne' to her husband. "I feel a lot better when he's out as Joanne rather than John," she said. "You can see it everywhere. Criminals don't know if they're being checked over by a man, or a woman, particularly if the deputy's made some effort to apply the dress code. It's much easier for a woman to break up a fight than a man."

“And sometimes very embarrassing,” said Joanne.

“Oh, that’s another story,” laughed Mary Lou Conan, taking her husband off to a Ladies’ Auxiliary meeting.

“Bonnie is going to be a big help to Michelle,” Jane said seriously in our editorial meeting. “She’s so close in age to the Tyson girls, they think she’s one of them. And if you read all the ads we have now, do you see how many are mentioning the Prom this year?”

“I can’t believe this classified ad from Quinlans,” growled Brian. “Hiring staff to work with Prom dresses, gender immaterial. They’ll provide clothing and training, support and even cosmetics, for those they hire.”

“Jane Fisher’s wants you to have perfect hair for the Prom,” giggled Tania. I noticed how Bonnie squirmed at that, and realized how I must look to everyone when I felt as Bonnie clearly did.

“The Del Monte School,” read Jane. “Tune up female graces for Prom. Here’s a picture of ‘Miss’ Karen Holcomb, who’s going to teach boys and girls how to be Prom Queens.”

“*Transformers*,” pointed out Tania again. “Prom Specials. Transformations. First Timers our Specialty.” She glanced at me and smiled. I felt chilled as I readjusted the way I was sitting, making my crossed legs tighter. I felt a little threatened. “Wow, look at Roberta. What a change from being Robert!”

“I do have Michelle and me booked at *Transformers* for the big day if Donna Gardner lets it be,” said Jane. “I have you in as well, Bonnie, but it’s at a different time.”

Bonnie was startled. She nodded and blushed as the others looked at her and smiled. She was so cute and pretty. I could see that Dave didn’t quite know what to make of her. I was not about to enlighten him.

"We don't have much room for letters," Jane complained. She, not I, was doing the editorial work. "I can only get two in the space you guys left me."

"You could cut your own columns," murmured Tania, laughing as the other real woman in our group stuck out her tongue at her.

"This one from Natalie Boone I was going to junk, but she does say our editorials are pitiful," said Jane. Brian actually grinned and looked at me for the first time—taking in the effort I'd made to be feminine, I think. He actually winked at me, making me blush, which I hate doing.

"Why don't you admit how gorgeous Tom Beman looked on Election Day? I'd vote all the time for someone as pretty as he is," Jane read. "Oh, and Tania, Fiona Graham—you know her, Simon's wife—she wants to tell you that the audiences at the Ellis are sophisticated. They know the genders of Bobby and the Sweethearts, and don't need it rammed into their heads all the time. She thinks Bobby is very glamorous. Well, Michelle agrees with that, don't you, darling? Oh, this must be the daughter, not the mother, Fiona, because she says that her boyfriend looks like her since they've dyed his hair. And one more cliché for you, Tania: blondes like Terry and Fiona do have more fun!" It was Tania's turn to stick out her tongue at Jane.

"Can't we clean up the back page?" Brian Carpenter asked with a frown. He turned over the columns and pictures of busty blonde women we featured there. "I'd like to see a real woman on this page for once."

"Kelly Rogers," said Tania with a smile, indicating the blonde woman in the ad for Roxy's, "is a woman now, Brian. You have your wish!"

"*What?*" Brian shouted.

Tania had her column with her, and so she read the first part to Brian. "Kelly Rogers has returned mi-

nus a few parts of her life. Yes, Kelly is back to strip and entertain at the Roxy without any male equipment. She's had the change which, in no way, diminishes her act."

"Go-goshdarnit!" snarled the editor of our paper. I felt just as rattled by what Tania had revealed. What must Kelly look like now when she did a strip-tease? I felt really queasy just thinking about it.

"Kelly dumped her boyfriend along the way," Tania went on, her reading as excited as the way that she normally spoke. I looked to Bonnie. She was looking at the floor, her crossed leg swinging a little in tension, as I realized mine was as well. "Mel Jones is no longer her manager. 'It was mutual,' says Kelly. 'He didn't want me to change, but I'm ready now for a real man, who'll treat me as the woman I am.'"

Tania showed us the lovely portrait of Kelly that adorned the Roxy ad on the back page of *The Queen*. 'THE RETURN OF MS. KELLY ROGERS,' it roared in capitals at us. There was a subtitle, 'Looking for a Real Man.'

"We giggled about that in Kelly's dressing room," Tania went on. For a moment, I didn't realize she was still reading from her column. "We talked about men and how free she now feels in doing her act. I told her I notice that in her act. I even find her more alluring than ever." Brian snorted at that and muttered under his breath.

Tania ignored him and went on: "Kelly puts on her g-string and pasties and smiles at me. 'Sorry,' she says. 'Some things about me I can't change.' But seeing Kelly perform, she really has, changed that is. She really is a woman on stage now."

"Wow!" said Dave, pointing at the ad for Franco's Revuebar. "Who's the little cutie?"

"You can read," laughed Tania. "Alison, 'Miss Franco', March."

“Non-stop 8pm-3am,” said Dave. “Every day?”

“Every day,” said Tania. “They’re still pretty full at the end, though it’s the amateurs, not Barbara, Cindy or Tiffany, up there in the cages.”

“Amateurs?” asked Brian.

Tania sighed. “Doesn’t anyone read my purple prose?” she asked dramatically. Bonnie beside her smiled in delight. Oh, that girl was going to be a charmer, I thought. Tania was grinning at Bonnie as she picked up her column and read: “Caught the acts at Franco’s last week and one of the ‘amateur’ contests. I was surprised at the number of entrants as well as the number of women in the crowd.

“It was Shania who let me in on the secret. All the girls there had entered boyfriends in the amateur contest, boyfriends they had primped and prepared to win the ‘prettiest girl of the night’ contest.

“Shania was annoyed that her boy friend, Denise, whom she introduced me to later, didn’t win. The auburn-haired Denise, in a minidress showing off her pretty legs, was more phlegmatic about it. ‘I have to work on my voice,’ she said in her squeaky, baby-girl tones. ‘And my dancing wasn’t as sexy as Alison’s. She deserved to win!’ *He* deserved to win, I corrected Denise, who giggled at me before disappearing into the throng of dancing, gyrating, mini-skirted girls on the floor at Franco’s.”

“Do you go to Franco’s?” I asked Bonnie as the conference came to an end.

Bonnie glanced around at Jane, going over her editorial with Brian and the general layout of *The Queen* for April. “My, my f-friend,” she said, “likes it a little quieter. We, we go to Sylvester’s a lot, or the Amadeus now.”

“Yes, I saw the ad for Sylvester’s,” I said. “Jackie Ray looks gorgeous, doesn’t she? But the surprise to

me is Karen O'Day. I could scarcely believe the picture of her that Tania printed."

"Oh, we saw her last night!" said Bonnie enthusiastically. "She was in this sequinned, midnight blue dress that she seemed to be poured into. She looked and played fantastically well. My, my f-friend thought so, too." She flushed as she said that, and jumped when I put my manicured hand out and squeezed hers.

"It's quite all right to say you have a boyfriend around here," I told her with a friendly smile.

Bonnie nodded and smiled weakly. "You and Jane," she said hesitantly.

"Are girlfriends," I told her. "I think Jane made that very clear. It's not in the newspaper, not yet, but I'm sure she's thinking of publishing something about us. I don't want her to, but lately I don't seem to be able to stop her doing anything she wants to do."

"It's like that with me as well," said Bonnie with a bright smile. "You must be a submissive like me, Michelle. I'm a bottom and my boy friend is a top. I bet Jane is a top as well, like her sister, Estelle. You and Donna must both be bottoms."

I shivered to be compared to Donna Gardner, whom I thought of as a wimp. But Bonnie's words had a ring of truth to them. I tried to be more aggressive in bed with Jane, but she forced me down. It was so much easier to give in to her, to let her make love to me, to let her decide what she was going to do to me.

"You can try a little, Michelle," Jane told me as we cuddled in our nighties for sleep. "I like that but don't think for one moment that a girl like you is ever going to be on top of me unless I want you there. You're my girlfriend now, Michelle darling, and I love you. But you will do as I say. If you don't, I'll get Estelle to come over and discipline you properly!"

Mayor Lois Slayton is the most popular woman in the Valley right now—we all agreed on that at *The Queen*. In her first month as mayor, she set aside social issues ‘for now’ and produced a New Economic Plan for the Valley, the first I’d ever known a Valley politician doing. There would be a new road built to Brampton, a four-lane blacktop eventually.

Dave Richardson got the story, of course, but he wrote it well. Raybold Roads was a new company, financed by a consortium of businesses in Raybold, Slayton, Slayton Lake, Gaynor Ranches, and Upper Raybold. Even *Transformers* made a sizable investment in the road. So did the Maya Sorority—but we didn’t print that in the list of ‘supporters’, even though we had it.

A lot of Slayton’s plan had to do with tax exemptions on working farms and businesses employing over three, six, and twelve persons. The Valley would get a boost from Davies-Valley Resorts which, when open, would provide at least six hundred jobs, according to Eloise Waters, the new Acting CEO of the company. She’d been out on a long trip and booked in *eight* major conventions for the summer at Princess River (the new name of the resort).

Eloise worried me a little by saying that ‘not all’ of the conventions were gay or lesbian groups. Earl Davies was screaming that she was filling up ‘his’ resort with gays and lesbians, and filling staff positions with drag queens, female impersonators, girly-boys, and shemales. Earl wanted the ‘Drag Resort’ closed until his court cases were all cleared up, while Renee Davies, his wife, gave Eloise Waters the job of making money from the resort. Renee thought the idea of ‘Princess River’ was “just wonderful!”

Brian wouldn’t let Jane or me write the editorial this month. He had Dave do it. I have to admit Dave wrote a good piece. “So if the Valley is opened up to

new ideas and new people, will this be a good thing or a bad thing?" he asked in his lead.

"Eloise Waters put a positive spin on her exploits to bring people in to the Princess River Resort. But the fact is that transgendered people, transvestites, transsexuals, their supporters, wives, children and husbands, if you can believe it, will be occupying the beach houses and sandy beaches of the resort built largely with your money. The Valley, under Eloise Waters' vision, could be a transvestite capital, like another San Francisco—not just of our state, but of the whole nation.

"So what does this have to do with roads? Roads, good roads, bring people in and people have ideas. With all the transvestites here in June, July and August, we will be infested with transvestite ideas. We will take their money on Raybold and Glass to let them ogle men entertaining us as women. We will have our young men and women dancing and loving these holiday makers. What new ideas, what diseases, will these strangers bring into the Valley?

"All we have now is one transvestite doctor to counter a plague! Perhaps the road isn't such a good idea after all."

Dave, as usual, gave me his usual charming smile and told me what a fantastic girl I was. He wanted me to finish off the layout for him, of course, and asked how he could pay a lovely girl like me for doing him such a favor. Luckily, Bonnie was around as he tried to trap me against the copier room door. I was able to push him off me after just a peck on my cheek.

"Mmm," Dave murmured, his eyes gleaming at the astounded look on Bonnie's face. He patted my tush, his hand following the outline of my panties. My heart rate shot up but I got away before he could say, 'stock room'. If no-one had been there in the office, I might, eventually, have gone with him for a quick kiss or two. But, of course, with Dave, there was really no such thing as a quick kiss or two.

So, I didn't tell him that his bit about the only doctor being Julia Linton was wrong. I had the news report and, since Dave had given layout to me, I made sure my article began on the front page with the story and picture of Janice Long, a surgeon and friend of Julia Linton's, who was opening a 'cosmetic surgery' clinic in the old Herald Building on Upper Church Street.

My article began with the question I'd put to the attractive blonde woman who said she was Janice Long when I introduced myself nervously as Michelle Little, girl reporter. "Why cosmetic surgery, when the Valley has real needs for many other kinds of medical specialties?" I asked her when we met.

Janice's replies made up the bulk of my article, as follows: "I was talking to my friend, Julia Linton," said Dr Janice Long. "She told me of the numbers of procedures she gets requests for, daily, in her offices. I was intrigued that so many of her male patients wanted such simple procedures as rhinoplasty, new noses," she added as I struggled to spell that in my notes, "and augmentations."

Janice looked me over pointedly. I felt a strange twinge go through me that wouldn't go away even after I left her office. I knew she'd recognized me for what I am, a man, and saw me as a future patient of hers, applying to her for a breast augmentation. Just the thought of such a procedure made my head spin. Oh no, I was never going to get such a thing done to me, I said to myself.

"I can do a lot more," Janice Long had gone on in our interview. "I can do so much more for a man who really wants to be feminized, face and body reconstructions as well as T and A work. I can offer that as well to the women of this community. There is no reason today why anyone shouldn't be as beautiful and as femininely attractive on the outside as they are on the inside."

Dr Long pointed to her own beautiful nurses, Ellen Temple and Louise Dupuis, as walking examples of the work she did.

I even got a second article in *The Queen* this month, as I wrote the article on the girl chosen as Prom Queen at Tyson High School. The blonde-haired girl was stunning in her long, dark blue, evening dress, a frilled, reverse halter holding it up to her lovely, bare shoulders. Her arms and whole body, in fact, were so feminine.

That's why I wrote, "To the surprise of no one, the Autumn Dance Queen, Debbie Allen, was also chosen Prom Queen at Tyson this year. What is a surprise, however, is that Debbie will have to graduate this year as David Surtees, her real name.

"I hate it," said Debbie fiercely. "She is leading a campaign this year to allow students to choose the names that they wish to have on their graduation certificates.

"I'll talk to staff and parents," said Principal Donna Gardner. "I know it's going to be a surprise at graduation this year when we introduce so many pretty girls with boys' names." She was surprised when this reporter suggested that her statement should be reversed, smiling and saying that she had no comment on that.

"Since Debbie was chosen Queen, Dick Renner, 20 (assistant manager at the Garth Tavern, and Debbie's escort for the evening) became the King. Asked if he knew that Debbie was once David, 'King Dick' laughed. 'We've been dating for a year now,' he said. 'I'm a physical guy. Does that tell you all you need to know for your family paper? I can tell you that Debbie is the Queen of Tyson cheerleaders because she's the prettiest girl in and out of school!'"

There was to be an extended paper in June, with at least two extra pages of pictures and comments from this year's Prom. Bonnie and I took most of the pictures. I wished I could publish the pictures I took of

Bonnie. She looked to me like the prettiest girl in school.

Her dress from *Transformers*, orange and black, was striking and gorgeous, showing off Bonnie's lovely skin and complexion that was so absolutely girlish. I saw so many girls just staring at her as she took group pictures. We would only print a few, and the rest we'd give away to the girls who wanted them – meaning that everyone would have pictures of themselves at the Prom.

I was dolled up, of course. Dee Brown and the 'girls' at *Transformers* took a day to give me and fifty or sixty other girls the most fantastic experience of our lives. I loved the fact that I was there with so many other girls, like Bonnie. We all shared the experience of being expertly dressed from our bare, hairless skins out.

The girls at *Transformers* had all kind of tricks to make us appear more rounded in all parts of our bodies. We all appeared to have cleavage, even someone as flat-chested as me. We all had nails to die for. We all had our own perfumes, our own makeup and emergency kits in our purses. Emma Royston opened hers. There was an extra pair of panties in her purse, and six condoms of different kinds.

"I don't even know who I'm dating tonight," Emma said to Susan Brown, who was telling Emma seriously that she might need fresh panties later on in the night.

"All of us have male escorts tonight," a boy who'd entered *Transformers* with me, and was now leaving as a very attractive girl called Katherine, told me nervously. "My girlfriend says they're going to want to see how far they can get us to go. It's in their instructions!"

"I don't believe that," I told Katherine, as excited girls in lovely dresses milled all around us. Three limos took little groups off from *Transformers* home. But some went to Tyson to meet, for the first time, the

men, their 'dates', that Student Council had assigned to all girls, no matter their true gender. Yes, every female dressed 'deb' had to have a date of her very own.

"You don't have to do anything you don't want to do with anyone else tonight," I assured Katherine. Shirley, who came up and nervously took Katherine's hand in hers, was shaking her long, red hair and laughing excitedly as Kathy's earrings tinkled against her neck.

"But I want a boy who—" began Katherine. Shirley tugged on her hand.

"She's the girl reporter," Shirley said with a big smile to her friend. "You don't want your Mom and Dad *reading* about what we're doing tonight!"

Katherine started giggling. So did a whole bunch of delicately dressed girls, hair pinned up, their makeup so strikingly female and feminine.

"Why do we have extra panties in our purses?" a girlish voice asked.

"You have to give the first pair to the first boy tonight who—" said Katherine, dropping her voice. All the blondes, brunettes, and redheads moved in close, cutting me off from hearing what she said.

"Oh," said the blonde who was standing in front of me. "I should have brought *several* extra pairs of my own, shouldn't I?" That brought a gale of feminine laughter from the girls with me, waiting for the limos.

Bonnie came out then. "Were you as randy and horny as this group of girls is tonight?" I asked her. "Or is it just talk?"

Bonnie smiled at me. "At my prom, Michelle," she said, looking absolutely gorgeous when she smiled, "I was still Bruce. Oh, I wish I could really be one of these girls tonight. Michelle," she bit her lower, glossed and painted lips. "This is my escort tonight, David Schultz."

I actually shook hands for the first time in three months, as the tall, good-looking guy looked me over. I felt my temperature rising at his scrutiny of me as a girl.

"Your boyfriend," I said to Bonnie. She nodded and gave a lovely smile to the guy who put his arm around her.

"I wish I'd taken you to your Prom with you dressed like this," said David Schultz, which made Bonnie lift her face and kiss him lightly on the mouth.

"So do I," she said shakily as all three limos arrived together. The last of 'us girls' went off to the assembly points where corsages and escorts awaited.

Bonnie Helman didn't mention any of that, of course, in the great article she wrote about the Prom. 'Prom is a Glittering Affair' was the headline she chose. She wrote in a breathless, girlish style that was perfect for the affair we went through.

"What a glittering, glamorous affair this year's prom turned out to be!" Bonnie wrote in her first by-line piece for *The Queen of the Valley*. "Last year George Danson, whom most people know now as Helen Collins, was forbidden to wear a dress at school by then principal, Michael Tiller. The protest at Tyson in support of Helen's 'civil rights' led to so many boys wearing dresses at school, and promising to do so at the Prom, that the event was cancelled.

"This year, Principal Donna Gardner, as he is known to everyone, restricted the Prom to Senior Girls only and their dates. With a huge one hundred and fifty students in their final year, the Prom should have been for just that many people.

"But over a hundred students of Helen Collins' graduating class supported her and demanded tickets as 'Senior Girls'. Students' Council was happy to meet the demand and co-ordinated the search for male escorts for all Senior Girls.

“We had the hardest time rounding up enough men,’ laughed outgoing Student President Linda Emerson, ‘particularly getting dates for our tallest girls. After all, they have to be in high heels like the rest of us, don’t they? But with a grant from the Ladies Auxiliary, we succeeded in rounding up a man for every one of the 233 girls who needed one for the Prom.’

“Melinda Wells, 18, was one of the excited ‘new’ girls to be attending the Prom. ‘I never thought I would,’ Melinda confided to me. Mel was a computer geek (her words) and very shy around girls. He didn’t join Helen’s protest last year. It was only when the girls in his class waylaid him, transforming him from the skin out, he says, that Mel became ‘one of the girls’. Like a duck to water, ‘she’s’ blooming in ‘her’ new role.

“Angie Stanton enrolled Mel in a class at Del Monte’s and ‘Melinda’ was born. ‘I started going out to the Garth or the Roxy with Angie and met Steve,’ Melinda’s date for the Prom, ‘out there gawking at all us girls. We danced quite a bit. Oh, he wanted to date me! He was astounded when I told him I was a boy. He told me I should always be a girl. And since then, I have been!’ Melinda giggled as Steve came over and put his arm about her waist. ‘He made me invite him to the Prom as my date. He tells everyone he’s my boyfriend.’”

There was a most intriguing photo with the story of Melinda Wells, petite and with masses of chestnut-colored hair, looking devastatingly pretty in her strapless red evening dress. Her white wrap about her shoulders was being positioned by the ex-football player, so tall, masculine and athletic beside her. Her makeup was really well done by her mother who’d helped ‘her’ be so extremely attractive, as a girl, for her Prom Night.

“Mrs Audrey Wells,” Bonnie had written. I liked her concentrating on just one person at the Prom in her article. The extra pages in the next edition of *The Queen* would take care of all that actually went on at

the Prom itself. “Mrs Audrey Wells, a chaperone, couldn’t get over how gorgeous Melinda looked as she danced happily in the arms of her beau.

“I’m flabbergasted,’ she said. ‘I knew Mel wouldn’t go to the Prom. But look at Melinda! She’s so feminine and lovely in that fabulous dress she and her girl friends found for her in *Melanie’s* boutique. Not only that, she’s in feminine lingerie from head to toe. I never looked as good as she does in her makeup, perfume and long hair. She is so happy as her boy friend, Steve, is so attentive. Oh dear, there they go, kissing again. I have to tell her to take Steve for a walk in the Flower Garden.’

“Mrs Wells went off. Steve and Melinda went to the Flower Garden, where the decorated swings were occupied by many ‘courting couples’ and where gentle kissing and petting were the order of the day.”

I thought the article excellent and loved the way it was written. Brian, of course, wanted to know why Bonnie hadn’t concentrated on one of the ‘real’ young women who attended Tyson, and told about a real girl’s preparations for the Prom. Even though we all came to Bonnie’s defence, I know the editor’s words crushed her for a while.

“You met Bonnie’s boyfriend?” asked Jane when the conference was over. “Who is he?”

“The son of one of the Valley’s Councillors,” I told her. Yes, David was the son of Kate Schultz, whom I knew fairly well. She’d written us a letter saying this was all a fad, this feminine way of dressing, like ‘glitter rock’ She didn’t see the harm in it. I wonder how she felt now—if she knew—when she saw her son dating a pretty girl like Bonnie, who wasn’t really a girl.

“That would make quite a story,” said Jane with a laugh.

"After the way Bonnie was in front of Brian today," I said to her, "you want to do more to her? Crush her even more?"

Jane stared at me open-mouthed. "Quite a soft side we have now, don't we?" she laughed at me. "Romantic, girlish, sentimental, next you'll be all teary-eyed and weepy."

I could feel that sentiment rising in me. I felt so sorry for Bonnie and the words a thoughtless Brian had used to her. Yes, I was teary-eyed. It wasn't a bad thing to be, was it?

"All right," sighed Jane, shaking her head at me. "Tell me all about your date with Alan. How did you end up in the back seat of his car this morning? Why didn't you bring him in? I wouldn't have minded sharing him with you at all."

"It wasn't like that at all," I protested feebly. No, I wasn't going to tell Jane all about Alan Farrell, the escort chosen for me for the Prom.

I'd been a little surprised at how tall Alan was when Bonnie and I met him at her house. He'd arrived with two lovely corsages for us girls, and buttonholes for David Schultz and himself. He knew David, having been on the school's basketball team, several years before. Now he had a year to go for his degree and was trying to get money, any way he could, to pay for another year at State.

"How much is the Student Council paying you to escort me this evening?" I asked my date, who'd paid me all of the usual compliments though he knew Bonnie and I were working that evening as girl reporters.

"Three hundred dollars," he admitted, getting all red-faced about what I might think of him for accepting money to go out with me.

"How long do I have you for?" I asked Alan with a sassy smile. I was looking at myself in the mirror of

the Schultz's foyer as I did that. I could see by the way I stood and the way I was smiling, my eyes so large and femininely painted and outlined, that I was flirting with him.

"Until midnight," said Alan. "If you want to go longer, I get paid a bonus, another two hundred."

"I'll have to make sure you get your bonus," I told Alan coquettishly. He looked pleased. Inside I was kicking myself at being so silly and so female. But then Alan put his arm about me to escort me to his car. Bonnie and David immediately cuddled up in the back seat, just a boy and a girl together, as I shifted my skirts over my stockings and looked down at my high-heeled, open shoes. They showed off my painted toenails that all we girls had received at *Transformers* earlier that night.

"I didn't go to my own prom," Alan told me. He had his arm about me all the time, as we mingled with the beautifully dressed teachers and their escorts, the girls with their boyfriends. Even Donna Gardner and Estelle Edwards had escorts of their own. "I was kind of geeky."

Alan still was. Did he think I was a real woman? He knew that Bonnie wasn't. I think both of us glowed, however, and became more girlish, out with boys who treated us with all the attention a boy should give a pretty girl.

Yes, I saw Bonnie go into the Flower Garden with David. I should have turned Alan down, but he was so nervous about asking me to go where so many girls were going with their escorts.

"I'd love to go into the Flower Garden with you, Alan," I said coyly to my 'date', squeezing his hand. He lifted me into one of the garlanded swings, decorated with flowers. Oh, it was so wonderfully feminizing! We became a 'courting couple' just like all the other pairs in there.

Alan was hesitant about kissing me. I had to gently kiss his cheeks and flirt with him as we'd been taught to do at Del Monte's. That got his fire lit, so to speak. I really was a girl out with her date at the Prom, Alan becoming steadily aroused with my flirting as I became really worked up myself.

I had to re-do my makeup, especially my lipstick, along with hordes of girls doing the same thing in the Ladies' Room. Then I had to go back and smile shyly at the boy who'd kissed me so wonderfully for so long. He promptly kissed me again, right in front of everyone.

"Oh, Michelle," said Susan Brown as she went by me in her white dress, her beau draped all over her. "You and your man should get a room, shouldn't you?"

I had a job to do. I had photos to take and stories to write. Alan's arm was around me as I took pictures, everyone smiling at me. He helped me with the pictures I took. I danced the garter dance with him. Alan knelt in front of me and ran his hands up my energized, femmy leg all the way to my stocking and my girlie garter which he took off. I shuddered in pleasure as he wore it on his arm as a memento of me, his Prom date.

All the girls were giggling as the music stopped. The guys got to do it again to our other leg, being told to take their time and do it right this time by the band leader. I think it took Alan the whole two minutes to find my garter, to caress my thigh and slowly take my garter from my trembling body.

We kissed, as boy and girl, while we waltzed. I gave up entirely thinking I was anyone else but Michelle. My date danced with me into the wee, small hours of the morning, hugging and kissing me between dances. It was a Cinderella evening, I thought, sure that someone, sooner or later, was going to tell Alan just who he was clinching and lip-locking with. But no one did. We took Bonnie and David home, to her



house. They went in together, waving goodnight to us as Alan drove me home.

“Let’s get in the back seat,” Alan suggested as we drew up in front of Jane’s. “It’s much more comfortable.” I could guess what for. I didn’t want the wonderful, femmy night to end; so I went with Alan on the back seat. I felt so totally weird as I let him lie on top of me as Jane does. I let him kiss me and decide what we should do as Jane does. The funny thing was that I didn’t stop at all as I should have. I didn’t stop his hands getting inside my clothes.

I knew that a man was going to touch me sexually, and I didn’t stop him. I just went completely tingly all over. When Alan wanted me to touch him, I knew it was what girls like me were doing all over the town with their boy friends and escorts. As Bonnie had whispered to me, “We girls have to pay for the wonderful night we’ve had. We have to please our men!”

I shouldn’t have let Alan penetrate me. But he wanted to so badly. “I want you as a woman,” he whispered to me. “I want to be inside my woman.” And with all the pleasure I was getting from his caresses of my legs and panties as well as all the kisses, it really wasn’t very much to lift my dress, move my legs a little wider around him. Then I was being rocked on a man’s penis just like a girl. It was the first time I’d ever touched a man like that. No, I didn’t count Dave’s fondling me. This, with Alan, was really being a woman; and I wanted to be one. It was so exciting to arouse a man, to make him so frenzied, so in love with me as a female. Shaking all over in terrified ecstasy, I assisted him in every womanish way I could. Afterward, he kissed and stroked me and whispered how wonderful a girl I was. What a fantastic night it was!

The girls were right. I did need another pair of panties. Alan wanted mine as a trophy of our night together. He wasn’t disappointed at all that I was a boy-girl. He said he was thrilled as he rose to the occasion.

In bed later, with Jane beside me, I knew I must have been out of my mind—but it was so fantastic as he told me he loved me, Michelle! I remembered rolling up, my legs around Alan and letting him penetrate me as if I was a woman. I recalled with a shudder the soft folds of my dress all about me as I bounced and tugged at him desperately.

I promised Alan he could date me as his girl friend—while telling myself all the time that I was just doing this for the story Jane and I were writing! I promised to go to a hotel room with him next time. I demurely, girlishly, told Alan I loved him – he made me feel so much like a woman - which pleased my ‘boyfriend’ no end. Yes, I was now a real Raybold Valley boy-girl.

If the light in the house hadn’t gone on, and Jane hadn’t come to look for me, I’d probably have gone back to his lodgings with Alan and made love with him for much, much longer. I really wanted to, but Jane called and I obeyed.

I had to finish the layout of the paper the next day and hurry it in to Brian, yawning all the time after the night I’d had. “You and Bonnie both have smiles on your faces today,” groused Brian. “Amid all the yawns. I guess you both had a good time at the Prom last night. You sure cost us enough with your gowns. You should be like *her*.”

Brian smirked as he pointed to the new picture of Kelly Rogers on the back page. She was pictured from the rear, nude. ‘Come and see ALL of Kelly at Raybold’s leading nightclub’ read the slogan of the ad for the Roxy.

Denise, I noticed, had made the ads as Miss Franco, April, while there were two beautiful, classy girls in the Amadeus ad. Ashley looked so sweet in her gown as a member of the house band, while Melissa Nader, whom I’d never heard of, was shown as ‘guest artist’.

Transformers had its usual transformation miracle, Herbert to Elizabeth, and a lovely picture of a sweet girl I recognized, Teddy Miller, who was ‘Amanda’ at the Prom. Yes, I knew her. She had been the one coming out of the Flower Garden, hugging her escort so intensely, her makeup all mussed, giggling her way into the Ladies’ Room. I’d passed her with Alan and thought smugly how I was going to look just the same in a little while.

I had to read Tania’s column to figure out the top display ad on the back page. It was the Gary Davies Show. A blonde, sexy Gary was shown at the microphone while a line of white frilly petticoats and black stockings and garters showed a chorus line of dancers. It was the name of the club that was new.

“The new club, ‘The Jaundiced Eye’,” Tania wrote, “opened this month on Lower Glass, and who better to open the cabaret than Gary Davies! I had to blink twice when I met ‘Gary’ this time. He is definitely blonder, softer, more shapely than I recall from his ‘Gary and Pete’ days.

“Yes, I’ve had some work done,” Gary admitted, meeting me in his—or I should say ‘her’—dressing room. He wore his day clothes, a lovely grey-skirted ensemble with a pink blouse. ‘It’s nice of you to notice.’

“Well, who wouldn’t? Watching Gary in his imitation of Cristina in the show-stopping, *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi?* the other girls in the show doing impersonations of Pink, Lil Kim and others, is incredible! It’s so real! Gary, of course, has the body and the voice.

“It seems incredible that Gary can imitate Mariah, Cristina, and Beyonce so accurately. The six dancers with Gary provide us with Can-Cans, Apache dances, and modern dancing that would have them winning those reality shows on TV to find America’s next great dancer. Definitely a four star show at the ‘Eye’!

“Amadeus has finally branched out and brought in its first guest, pianist Michael (Melissa) Nader. Melissa’s Chopin Nocturnes remind me so much of Barenboim who, Melissa gushed to me, was her favorite. With the house band, a chamber quartet, a tasteful, wonderful, satisfying evening.”

I couldn’t have said it better myself, I thought dreamily, of my evening with Alan Farrell.

Volume 24

Issue No. 10

16 June

Alan still hadn’t phoned when Jane went out on a call about a car chase through the city. I’d just worked up enough courage to call my first male lover when Jane called me back, wanting me to record the story she said was going to be our lead story in June. She was right.

“It was just another routine bust for Deputies Lois Wright and Josie Lyon,” Jane said. She had to stop and laugh many times in her story and repeat to get her words clear. “The campsite between Slayton and Upper Raybold, empty for upgrading, is where this couple in the car were going at it pretty hard, according to police audio and video recordings. The woman’s bare legs were high in the air and visible from the back seat.” I had nervous visions of Alan and me and someone recording what we’d been doing.

“The deputies, Lois and Josie,” Jane carefully enunciated their names and giggled, “intended only to warn the pair, but their approach was noticed. There was a scramble in the parked car. Suddenly it took off towards Slayton. Speeds reached over 140 mph as Lois and Josie called for help.

“The car, trying to hide in Raybold back alleys, was finally intercepted by Sheriff Joanne Conan as it stopped to let out a half-naked woman.

"To the surprise of the sheriff, the woman was Giselle McKenzie, the first female officer employed by the Valley Sheriff's department.

"Her companion, former Councillor Tom Wayne, member of the Morality Party, was arrested after crashing into Sheriff Joanne's cruiser. Wayne demanded that Giselle be arrested as well, accusing her of fraud and sexual misconduct as she wasn't a real woman!

"This 'female' officer," laughed Jane, stressing the quote-unquote as she said

'female', "was employed to search female prisoners in prison. Joanne Conan arrested Giselle (though not for defrauding Tom Wayne), interring her with male prisoners, as it was a 'very serious' matter.

"Likely, we'll now have to have gender tests for positions such as hers," said Sheriff Joanne Conan.

"The headline," Jane said, "has to be 'Valley Cop Caught Having Sex', 'She's Not the Girl We Thought She Was,' 'First Female is Just Another Man', something like that. Oh, I've got marvellous pictures of Giselle in a short slip, her panties the only other thing she's wearing, being arrested by Josie Lyon, who looks really cute, Michelle—nearly as cute as you. It must be a woman in uniform!"

"No, Dave is not getting the front page," Jane said to me when she came in later for the editorial conference. "Over my dead body. Not with this story to run. Hello, what's uncle in a suit for?"

We went into the publisher's office where Dave, Tania and Bonnie were already assembled. Susan scooted in with letters that she put on Brian's desk. As soon as she was gone, Brian looked around the table at each of us. He looked me all over in my business skirt and light-blue silk blouse, and shook his head. I thought I was in trouble and squirmed in my silk undies as I crossed my legs in my stockings,

which Jane said I must wear even though it was summer.

“Well, here it is,” said Brian J. Carpenter. “I’m not going to edit this newspaper any more. You’ve all been covering for me this last year and more, haven’t you? So, from now on, my niece, Jane Edwards, is to be editor of *The Queen of the Valley*. There’ll be a notice to that effect in this month’s paper.”

Brian turned. Tania stood to hug him with tears in her eyes. Jane looked shocked as she hugged her uncle. He patted her back. He did the same to Bonnie. I think he’d forgotten she was a boy-girl. She was so pretty with her swept-back hair and clear skin, it was easy to see why any man would mistake her for a woman.

Brian shook hands with Dave who said, “We’re going to miss you, sir.” Then it came to me. Brian didn’t know what to do. I shivered as I rose but, suddenly, Brian seized me, hugging me as if I was a woman like Tania, Jane and Bonnie.

“Michelle, my girl,” he said gruffly. “I really appreciate all those words you wrote for me that you didn’t believe at all. Now, you work for Jane. You do the same for her and you’ll always have a job here as a girl reporter. Hmm, I could go on holding Michelle for quite a while, Jane. Why aren’t all women as wonderfully fragrant as her?”

We all laughed at that but I was teary-eyed, too. I got the final smile from the old man as he picked up his hat and walked out. We didn’t see him in the office again until he sold the paper, but that was a long way into the future.

“Goshdarnit, boss,” said Dave to Jane. “What do we do now?”

“Same as always,” said Jane. “I write the editorial. Dave, you’ve got the Court House and the Earl Davies trial. Michelle has layout and Tania, entertainment. I want it all to Michelle and on my desk, Michelle, yes-

terday. Bonnie, you and Michelle have been working on the Prom. I want the extra pages on my desk, as far as you've got, with all the things back in that my uncle edited out. We're going to tell the truth, everyone, and report everything. No more hiding stories from the Valley. Got that, Dave?"

Dave looked startled. I'm sure he was trying to work out just what he'd done. "Yes, boss," he said.

"Oh, and Saturday night is still on," said Jane with a smile. "You and Murray can pick Michelle and me up in your boyfriend's Rolls. No point having it, is there, unless you flaunt it?"

Tania was grinning openly as Dave gave Jane an awful grimace. Bonnie was staring at him in open surprise. I don't think that Tania had warned her yet about Dave as she'd warned me—about how his being gay didn't make Bonnie safe in any way.

"We, we have a date for Saturday?" I said to my girlfriend after the room had cleared out.

"You'll like Murray," Jane said with a nod. "He's gay but a really nice guy. The two of you should hit it off together really well."

"Me and a gay guy?" I croaked.

"Why not?" laughed the woman who always said she was my girlfriend.

Bonnie came back with the layout we'd made. "We set this up in three columns per page," said Bonnie, almost immediately picking up on the odd vibe between Jane and me. Her long, pointed fingernail pointed out the heading we'd used that scrawled across the pages, 'This Year's Prom —- Special Year-End Report'. Both of our names were in the by-line.

"We can change this," said Bonnie hurriedly as Jane frowned. "We had the pictures like this on the outsides and text down the center column. Of course, we identify each girl and her escort."

"It's all right, Bonnie," said Jane with a smile. "I like the way it's set out. I don't see any pictures of you or Michelle, though. I do hope you enjoyed yourself that evening. I know that Michelle had a gay old time."

Bonnie gave Jane a funny look. She'd caught the snide, bitchy remark, I should say, but then Jane was the only woman in the room. I suppose she was entitled to be the bitch.

"Th-This is Debbie Allen dancing with Dick Renner, S-Susan Brown in the background," said Bonnie, staring at the first picture. "Michelle thinks that we should change this second picture because it shows them again in a Clinch Dance. The girls behind are Tanya Butler and Janette Davison with their dates."

"Are any of these real girls or women?" asked Jane. Bonnie had to look all the way over to a picture on the second page. There, we'd caught Donna Gardner in a tango with her escort, John Stevens, the banker—owner of the JSGroup bank, and Tom Beman's campaign manager. I frankly found it amazing he'd be at such an event as the Prom, and as Donna Gardner's date. I knew the man had kids and a wife somewhere. I couldn't think why he'd be holding Donna and smiling at her as if she was a woman, especially in front of Estelle Gardner, Jane Edwards' sister.

"She's the only real woman," said Bonnie, indicating Jane's sister. I was surprised. I'd thought we'd caught a few real girls by accident.

"Good, good," said Jane, smiling and encouraging Bonnie with her touches that I could see that Bonnie didn't really appreciate. "Oh, that pretty teacher who's so surprised to be dipped by that man she's dancing with. I know her, don't I?"

"That, Leonard Charles, Miss Charles now," said a blushing Bonnie Helman. It wasn't *she* who ought to

be embarrassed, I thought angrily, at male teachers making such fools of themselves at the Prom.

“And the lovely Donna,” said Jane sarcastically. “I love those high heels she’s wearing. The Grads presented her with flowers, did they?” She was reading the caption and studying Donna’s cocktail dress, showing cleavage as the tiny straps went over her shoulders. John Stevens had his hand on her back and she was smiling, her mouth a very definite red. On the tango picture, I’d written, ‘Watch out, Donna! That’s his wife, Estelle Edwards-Gardner, watching from the sidelines!’

“We can take that out,” Bonnie said as Jane read it aloud.

“Oh no,” said Jane with a smile. “That comment is just perfect!”

We had pictures of the blonde, womanly Gary Davies, who had sung so well with the members of a senior school band, the Deaf Lizards—all boy-girls, despite what their name might have implied. They played in their prom dresses and looked so good.

Bonnie had pictures of all the teachers. They all wore huge white bows at the back of their hair. I wouldn’t have recognized Shanks and Letman, nor Charles, for that matter, though I’d been taught by all of them. A year as female teachers and they were all absolutely perfect in their roles, I thought. They were speaking and smiling as if they were women. Each, like Ms. Gardner—Donna, that is—had escorts just as I’d had Alan Farrell.

I was going to phone him, I decided. It was ridiculous that he didn’t phone me. I didn’t care if he said I’d have to pay him to go out with me. I could afford to pay for a new gown in *Melanie’s* that Bonnie and I had drooled over at lunch the day before. It would cost more than Alan’s fee for an evening, with the bonus. Oh, he’d earned his bonus for sure, and would again, I promised myself.

"These four girls were on the football team?" asked Jane with a giggle. The caption did read, "We would have been this year's linebackers!" says Natalie Simpson."

"Oh," Jane went on. "I recognize these last names from the uniforms last year!" She clapped her hands in delight as she looked at Stephanie Orloff, a redhead with long flowing hair over her bare shoulders, and Michelle Dorton, a smaller blonde in a short cocktail dress that showed off her stiletto heels and nice, slim legs.

Third was Grace Wilson, a brunette with her hair piled high on her head in an old-fashioned beehive. With her long earrings and long neck, the style really suited her and the long white dress she wore. She was holding Natalie Simpson's hand, their fingernails showing off the manicures they'd had at Transformers where I'd seen them, giggling together, trying to get their strapless evening gowns to stay up.

On the outside page, I'd placed a picture of Sally Karlson on 'the most thrilling night of my life!' She was the subject of her mother's letter in October. We caught her, smiling into the adoring face of her date, Brad Williams, the quarterback of the last Tyson football team.

"I'm with the most beautiful girl at the Prom," Brad told us, telling us to print that as we proposed to do. "I'll remember how sweet Sally is for the rest of my life." I think that they'd been in the Flower Garden, the way that they were hugging and holding each other. We took the picture we'd chosen of Sally and her beau.

Of course, we had to have a picture of Helen Collins, also known as George Danson, who started the protest at Tyson. She was in the arms of her boyfriend, Ronald Brinkmeyer. As she went by us, she waved to me and said, "See, Michelle! Now I'm legally at school in a dress!" It was such a lovely dress as well, with a tight green bodice and long, sweeping, gauzy skirts over green silk. I'd have loved to have

worn it. Bonnie said the same to me with a giggle when we met and compared notes.

As a parting tip to the last article, we had a shot of Melinda Wells and Steve Bishop heading off in his convertible to an aftergrad party at the Surtees house. "Orgy House tonight," Debbie Allen said to me as she passed by me with her boyfriend in tow.

"Did every girl in town get bonked last night by her date?" I asked Bonnie. She blushed and nodded at me.

"It's been a tradition long before I went to Tyson," she said. "That's why I didn't go. No one ever thought of all the boys, and how many of us were still virgins, as older guys moved in on the girls in my class."

"I hope David remedied that situation," I said to her. Bonnie was scarlet as she nodded to me and whispered that it had been so wonderful at last.

"You never bonked a boy before Prom Night?" I asked her. Bonnie laughed at me.

"I don't quite know what you mean by 'bonked'," Bonnie said, looking cute and girlish with her white teeth on her red, bottom lip. "But I wouldn't say I bonked my boyfriend. He's the one who bonked me!"

"So you're not a virgin any more," I said. Bonnie nodded enthusiastically and seemed most happy.

"You aren't either," Bonnie said, laughing at me. I had to agree with that, though I didn't tell her that Alan Farrell had been my first as well. We girls have to have some little secrets from each other. I was going to be going out again soon with Alan, I knew it—though I didn't quite know when.

Jane read what we'd written about the Prom and had us listen. "Principal Donna Gardner promised this year would be a Prom to remember," she read, inserting 'Don' I noticed in our writing and putting brackets around 'Donna'.

“ ‘Yes, I did expect the Dress Code to be gone and the Protest to be over when I said that,’ Donna told us in her well-modulated, contralto voice. (Jane hesitated and then changed the ‘her’ to a ‘his’.) ‘But in the end, it was no great hardship for my staff and me to co-operate with Students’ Council to make Prom the best it could be.’

“Did the Students’ Council insist that teachers all be female dressed? (Bonnie must have asked Donna that, as I didn’t.) ‘That wasn’t a hardship for teachers like my wife,’ Donna said.

“Romance seemed to be in the air as the two hundred and fifty couples threw themselves into the parts of gentlemanly escorts and femininely dressed, demure debutantes. There was a lot of smooching on the dance floor, and even more in the Flower Garden, which every girl visited more than once with her escort.

“Linda Emerson, the Students’ Council President, told us that. ‘We’re keeping score,’ she said. ‘Every girl is going to get her proper girlfriend experience tonight. We’ve made the men we’re employing promise that.’”

Oh! I thought. So, when Alan came on to me, he knew I’d let him have a few kisses at least, or he’d have been in trouble with Linda. She’s a very determined girl. I wouldn’t like her to be mad at me. She reminds me a lot of Jane.

“Even the would-have-been football team got into the act,” I’d written. “Steve Orloff was gorgeous in a gold Gagliano original, evening gown while Nate Simpson was most adventurous in a strapless, black dress with a slit to show off his stockings and garters.

“I never thought I’d be at the Prom as a girl,’ squeaked Natalie Simpson, ‘but this is so incredible. My girl friend, Linda, has been prepping me since last year! I’m a little jealous of her with Sam Bears, but then she told me how envious she is of my escort, Andy. He’s been so nice, so attentive. And he wants

me to go with him to the Aftergrad at the Garth! Linda's told me to go so long as I'm not jealous of her kissing Sam, as she's sure Andy will be kissing me a lot. I'm sort of worried about that. I mean, what if Andy doesn't like me kissing him? I don't know how to kiss another guy!

"Later, Natalie in the Flower Garden was clinging to Andy, and seemed to be having no difficulty at all in kissing another guy."

Jane smiled at the pair of us. "What a note to end on!" she said. "Oh, this coverage is going to draw hundreds of letters. Yes, we have to print this just as it is. And all the pictures. I don't care if it costs us a lot more. We'll add a page and increase our run by another two, three thousand. I'm sure when people talk about the Prom coverage, they're going to want their own copies!"

Bonnie left us happily to arrange for the pictures. "This thing on Saturday," I said to Jane.

"Michelle," said Jane, setting down her pen. "This is not us at home now, is it? This is us at work, and here, my girl, we work. You have the layout. I want to see Dave's story about the Davies trial before we print it. It does involve one of our oldest and most respected families, the Quinlans. Now, get on with it, girl. We'll talk about Dave and Murray when we get home. But for now, it's work time."

I had a hard time squeezing in all the requests from our advertisers. *Transformers* had its usual ad, but they were now advertising 'escort services'. I wondered what type, thinking of Alan, and whether I dared to phone him on work time. Marcia looked so fantastic in the *Transformers* ad, so much prettier than dowdy Mark.

Melanie's was featuring Josie Lyon and Andrea May, the pair getting more feminine and rounded in every picture I saw of them. *Rayburn Stores* had Pamela Harris featured in their ads. She was a pretty Miss Del Monte at Christmas as a model. *Rayburn's*

promised his and her dressing rooms and guaranteed privacy. I liked the dress Pamela was wearing and thought of going there. I knew Bonnie would love to go shopping with me.

The Princess River Resort was hiring ‘all kinds’ of staff. ‘Must be able to work with the transgendered’ said their latest classifieds. *Jaspers*, the unisex hair-dressing salon, was running its cute ad again, with pictures of Ron in the morning and Veronica in the afternoon.

As expected, the letters focused on the nude pictures of Kelly Rogers we’d allowed in the Roxy ads in the last paper. “That advertisement for Kelly Rogers was way out of line,” wrote Dave Berlin. “This supposed family newspaper of yours is too raunchy for me. Cancel my subscription!”

Sandy Lewis, I couldn’t make out if it was a man or a woman, loved the picture. “Loved the fabulous ad for Kelly in your paper,” she or he wrote. “You’re so brave to have run it! Kelly is just gorgeous. I hope she finds her real man, really soon.”

Jan Trevors was annoyed, I think. “My son sneaks off with the paper to read your Entertainment section,” Jan wrote. “He doesn’t seem to realize that there aren’t any real females in those pictures you publish. No wonder we are really ‘Queens’ of the Valley these days.”

Ralph Taylor wanted to know why we kept on omitting the Letters section of the paper. “I want to tell you how much I admire you bringing all the issues of the day forward. I like to read the goofy opinions of people in the Valley, though. It’s like having a Comics section in your paper. And no, Kelly Rogers is too beautiful not to be in your paper as she is. I loved the picture in your last issue. It’s pinned to my office wall.”

Later, Jane added a note that we had had twelve letters about Kelly Rogers, three opposing us running the Roxy ad, only one of which could be published.

The other nine were in favor of *The Queen* publishing the ad.

Tania's column matched the new ad for the Mitzi Theater, which was re-opening as a dinner theater. Of course they had a large ad, and Tania's review was just what they'd expect on the entertainment page.

"Dinner theater returns to the Valley this summer with the grand opening of the Mitzi Theater on Sand Street," Tania wrote. The first offering is from a local playwright, Everett Stewart. *Find The Lady* is clearly based upon some of the bizarre events we've been seeing in the Valley lately.

"Arnie (Ed Reece) is an actor who has a part in a play but can't find lodgings. Dashing to an appointment, he has to change into drag for a brief appearance as one character in the two-man play he's doing with Charlie (Franklin Smith). The hard-of-hearing landlady rents her place to Mrs. Armstrong. That's when the farce becomes a romp as the boys realize the mistake and seek to deceive Arnie's new landlady.

"Arnie and Charlie are in and out of drag as a variety of female characters, and play their parts with verve and energy. The preview audience laughed riotously at all the swipes at our Valley politicians and political parties. Complications arise as the landlady's son becomes enamored of 'Mrs Armstrong'.

"Are kisses exchanged? Of course, which shocked some in the audience, but it's always played for laughs as Mrs Armstrong spits in a bucket after each kiss. By the last act, the spittoon is overflowing.

"Light, not overpowered by plot, the play is a vehicle for two excellent comic actors. The play was commissioned by Reece, who drew in his New York friend for this summer-long performance. Given the dinner and alcohol that Ken and I consumed, this was an excellent way to spend an evening. We were saying that we could easily go back and see it again!"

The column was easy to arrange. Kelly Rogers' ad was just a head shot this time, while Jackie Ray and Bobbi Jones didn't need big displays, just their names. Gary Davies had the brashest ad, with the Can-Can dancers lifting their legs so high to show off their panties and black stockings, while Gary looked so feminine in a thin dress that showed off what had to be real breasts. Franco's featured a blonde, Sunny, who in profile, had a chest that was much like the one that Gary Davies was showing.

I tried to tell Jane that I didn't want to go out with Dave Richardson. I didn't want his hands on me at all. "You have Murray," said Jane sweetly. "It'll tick Dave off to no end, you know. He's been trying to get into your panties all spring and summer. He likes his girls to be virgins, and knows you qualify, sweet Michelle. Oh dear," she smiled wickedly as I re-crossed my dark-stockinged legs nervously.

"What?" I asked her.

"You and Alan Farrell," Jane said. "He did that helpless, hapless student act with you, didn't he? I should have warned you. Oh well, Dave probably won't mind that you're not a virgin boy-girl any more. Murray won't care."

"I'm not going out with a guy," I told Jane angrily. "I don't care if he's gay or not."

"Yes, Michelle darling," said my girlfriend smugly. I knew I wouldn't get out of it. I'd be going out with Dave and his roommate, Murray on Saturday.

I read Jane's editorial with the announcement that she was editor. She wrote all about Giselle McKenzie in her first editorial. "Lacey Smith, her lawyer, defended Giselle's indefensible deception as an 'error in judgment'," wrote Jane.

"Now Giselle might, as she tearfully claimed in her interview outside the Court House, be a woman in the future. We'll have to take his-her word for it. One thing is clear, however. Giselle is not a woman now.

"The worst part of this tawdry affair is the conduct of former Councillor Tom Wayne. Would the police have discovered Giselle on their own? Would Wayne have run from the deputies, not even slowing enough to allow Giselle to dress herself, if he hadn't known she was a man?"

"The police report is clear. Wayne ratted out and sought to blame Giselle. Giselle, honey, your 'error in judgment' was not in being dishonest about your gender. It was in ever going out with a man like Tom Wayne in the first place! That's why we feel such sympathy for Giselle, don't we, Ladies of the Valley. She's learned the first lesson of being a woman. All men are rats!"

Jane looked at me. I knew what she was thinking. I flushed as I hoped she couldn't read that I was thinking of Alan Farrell, what I'd done with him in the back of his car, right outside the house where Jane was wondering why I wasn't there in bed with her.

Dave brought in his copy of the Davies trial on computer disk. "This is all you're waiting for in order to publish?" he asked. "Great. Edit this, Michelle, and I'll treat you to lunch."

"Jane wants to read it," I told him. "Here she is."

"Leave my girlfriend alone, Dave," Jane told him as she came out of the stock room where Dave had been indicating for me to go. "I don't want her hair and makeup mussed. She has an appointment at *Transformers* before we go out to celebrate my promotion. You and Murray are buying."

"We're going to love it," said Dave, caressing me around my thin waist.

I was trembling as I sat down and read that Earl Davies had been given probation. Dave had clipped a large picture of a lovely, dark-haired girl hand in hand with a boy leaving the Court House. It took me a moment to realize that Kelly Davies and John Quinlan were the two boys who'd been kissing on

Earl Davies' front porch. It didn't look like Kelly Davies was a boy at all.

"Earl Davies," I read with trepidation at what the result of this might be for the Valley, "suspended CEO of Davies-Valley Resort Ltd, pleaded 'No Contest' to charges of assault on his son, Kelly, and on John Quinlan, son of the owners of the Valley's largest department store.

"Kelly attended court in a blushing pink suit. Kelly held John Quinlan's hand throughout the hearing. Judge Emily Cortwright asked Mr Davies what he thought of Kelly and the way Kelly was dressed.

" 'My wife has made me understand,' said a chastened Earl Davies, 'that I no longer have two sons but a son and a daughter. I'm not really cool with that but we're working on it.'

" 'What about Kelly's relationship with John Quinlan?' asked the judge. 'Do you accept that your daughter is quite normal in having a boyfriend at her age?'

" 'I couldn't at first,' admitted Davies. 'I still get very angry when I think of her and Quinlan together. But they've been very good. They go up to the Quinlan House to make out. John only has to give her a little kiss when they get back home.'

"Emily Cortwright asked for reports to be provided to her while placing Davies on probation for the counts of assault. Kelly Davies and John Quinlan refused comment as they left the courtroom together."

"What do you think?" Jane asked me of Dave's piece.

"Straightforward. Dry as dust. Factual," I told Jane.

"Yes," Jane said thoughtfully. "Dave's going to have to get a lot better, isn't he? I want a more engaging piece of writing than this. Watch out for fireworks

on Saturday night when I tell him what I want. Maybe, you and he are going to switch places.”

Me as the Valley Council reporter? I actually got excited thinking about it. I didn't phone Alan Farrell. I had a lot of making up and thank-yous to share with my adorable girl friend and boss.

Volume 24

Issue No. 11

14 July

Dave and our new editor had such an argument that we didn't double date that Saturday. The Princess Lake resort had its marvellous opening on the first, July weekend—and for the first time ever, I, Michelle Little, got the front page to record the fabulous opening. Dave was really ticked off at that. He had another furious argument with Jane about me and how I couldn't take his place.

He stomped out when Jane couldn't resist telling Dave that I was twice the man he was and could replace him any day. I didn't care for the look on Dave's face but I smiled at him, acting like the boss's girlfriend, acting thrilled about what it meant for a girl reporter like me.

Such was the hype generated by Eloise Waters and her staff that we actually had to have traffic control at the River Bend tollgate and entrance into the resort. I tried to capture the fun and excitement in my reporting but I think Tania did it better than me. She's used to writing such pieces.

My front-page story had the headline *Princess River Resort a 'Great Success'* with a sub-heading 'Crowds flock to opening weekend'. Then there it was, my by-line, 'Michelle Little – Princess River'.

“Maybe a lot were just sightseers, but the opening of Princess River Resort attracted massive crowds of jubilant, party-going girls and boys,” I wrote, “clogging the partially built Valley Tollroad for hours! That only meant that the party began on the road, where



strolling musicians entertained the crowd. Many didn't want to leave the music, to go into the resort.

"But they were sure glad they did when they got in there! The 'Princesses on Parade' along the Royal Road is spectacular, with over 20 gorgeously dressed princesses on floats slowly parading along the route, stopping every so often to present a little play involving rescues by handsome princes, frog-costumed young men being transformed by kisses, all the schmaltz that we girls have grown up with and love so much.

"It was a thrill a minute for the milling crowds! As a finale to the Parade, the lovely princesses come down from their floats, swirl in their lovely dresses, vamping the crowds before their attendants lead them into the Charming Marquee.

"Eloise laughed as she was questioned about problems. 'We could still use more hosts,' she said. 'When we have a convention, like our opening one, of transgendered people, they do first love all our lovely hostesses, so many of whom are just like them. But, after the nighttime shows and pageants, anyone in a thousand-dollar gown needs a male companion to complement her.

"'Luckily, a lot of our local girls have recruited what we call 'studs', for us. We have managed to fill our quota this weekend. But we can use a hundred to two hundred more hosts, whom we can train to give manly service to different kinds of girls who come here for the holiday of their lives!'"

Eloise also told me that over six hundred Valley residents had started at the resort at first but that number was now over one thousand employees, a lot of them part-time.

"I didn't want to step all over Tania's column," I said to Jane who nodded.

"Good lead-in," Jane said. "I love this picture of the princesses, Sally Karlsen and this Martina King. Is

he, she, as stunned as she looks in your picture? How can you describe the bathing beauties in the background as male participants in the weekend?" She smiled.

"Because that's what they are," I said to Jane, who knew that all along of course.

"I'm printing a letter from Sally's mother," grinned Jane, "about the Prom, inside the paper, which leads into that very well. And I'm adding Bonnie's little article about the crowds in the city on the front page."

I shuddered. "Is it a good idea to upset Dave as much as you are?" I asked her.

Jane smiled. "Just as *you* did, my sweetie," she said to me, putting her arm about my silky, very femmy blouse. "He's having to learn who's the boss of the newspaper, now my aunt's flipped Uncle Brian into the nursing home."

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said as Jane put her hand on my stocking and wanted to stroke my thighs under my dress. Bonnie saved me as she had, often, in the last few weeks.

"I made those corrections," said Bonnie, approaching with a timid smile on her lovely face. I just wished that my eyes were so big and beautiful. Just a few touches of makeup and Bonnie was a dream! The best thing about her was that she didn't take advantage of how pretty she was.

"Read it to us," commanded Jane.

"The exuberant crowds at Princess River spilled over into Raybold and brought increased business along the Raybold Avenue Strip," said Bonnie, pausing, waiting for criticism, and getting none, plunging on.

"We are doing twice the business of last year," said Al Bass, manager-owner at the Garth and Sylvester's.

“It’s incredible,” said visitor Al Mankin who came to Princess River with his transvestite girl friend, Debbie. ‘All the cops are in drag! You just can’t tell in the bars if you’re talking to a boy or a girl. Debbie just loves it! Are any of the entertainers here, women? It doesn’t seem so! I’m coming here again, with or without Debbie!’

“Al Mankin got punched then by the laughing blonde girl on his arm who began kissing right there in the middle of Glass Street. No one did anything but cheer them on. We’re so used to that, after the last year we’ve had. We’re really making the transgendered from out of state feel right at home!”

“Oh, I love that,” responded Jane immediately. “Dave Richardson couldn’t write a piece like that. Only girls like us”—I had to shiver as she included Bonnie and me in her definition of ‘girls’ with herself—“can write such nice pieces. Great, Bonnie! It will be a companion piece to Michelle’s on page one.”

Bonnie looked very pleased. Tania came in then. “The sorority is meeting?” she asked with a giggle. “And I’m not invited any more?”

“We just put the front page to bed,” said Jane. “I hope you’ve got the back page sewn up as well, Tania. Michelle left the entertainment news from Princess River up to you!”

“Great!” enthused Tania, hugging me as she passed by to lay her copy, and the entertainment ads, on the desk in front of Jane.

The ad column was dominated by PRINCESSES ON PARADE. The pictures of Debbie Allen, Karen Holcomb and Helen Collins were superb. The princesses were in ball gowns and bejewelled, bewigged and primped as if they were Barbie Dolls. They looked as if they were loving it. I’d have loved it, I thought, quivering, if I’d been in their places.

‘Join our guests nightly’ was one line below their pictures. ‘Local girls make twenty lovely princesses’

said another line before the *Princess River Resort* address was presented. 'Dancing with Prince Charmings until two' read the last line of the ad.

There was only room for one more ad on the page. That was for the Mitzi Theater. *Find The Lady* was 'held over for a second smash month'. Tania was again quoted: 'The preview audience laughed riotously - and I do mean that.' The image of the actors was different with one in male attire kissing the hand of the other as a female. Ed Reece, as the woman, looked as horrified as I do when Dave tries to kiss me.

"Wow! Absolutely splendiferous! Fireworks!" Tania had started her column and I was green with envy at her writing. "Big Band Swinging with Amadeus Strings in Support! Roadways and walkways lined with long-tressed, heavily made-up, bejewelled, gowned Queens! It was the perfect setting for *Princesses on Parade*.

"The princesses were all delicate, charming, pretty, epitomes of girlhood. To see them dancing with their twenty handsome princes on the floor of the Charming Marquee was a sight of beauty and enjoyment I'll never forget."

"You're taking me tonight," said Jane with a smile to me, Michelle. "Want to come?" she asked Bonnie, who smiled brightly and nodded.

"The fact that every one of the princesses is male," Tania's text went on, with Jane reading it, "in gorgeous gowns, high heels and tiaras, only makes the spectacle that more endearing and thrilling. Or chilling, if you aren't into that.

"Yes, I was sure that I wouldn't like it. I didn't. I *loved* it all! And I did get asked to dance by my own Prince Charming on the eighth roundelay, I think they call it. For just a while, as I was whirled around the floor, I felt that I was a princess, too!

"No wonder the crowds have been growing at Princess River! Handsome hosts for all the visitors! After

a day of being feminized, no wonder the 'tourists' I met were all talking of coming back or of extending their visits. Michelle Little, who went with me, said how lucky we were to live in the Valley as we were given season passes as members of the Press. How right my lovely, feminine colleague is!"

I was blushing as Jane finished. Bonnie smiled and nodding at me, while Tania was clapping her hands. "Don't change a word, Janel!" she pleaded. Jane grinned at her as she wrote 'Approved as is' on the page.

"Now to get Dave moving on what he has to do," Jane said. "Oh, I have to write an editorial too. I'll wait till I've been to the resort before I write anything. I think I'll have to be the heavy to you lovely young things, and point out the flaws you obviously weren't looking for."

But Jane was as enraptured as all of us with Princess River. 'Some Good News,' she called her editorial. "Yes, we do have good news to report," she wrote. "The Grand Opening of Princess River was a smashing success just as head honcho, Eloise Waters, had predicted." (No mention of Earl Davies and what he had intended the resort to be, I noticed.)

"With the toll road now under construction and the 'boom' in after-work entertainment, yet another night club opening in the Glass Street area, almost every business in town has a 'Help Wanted' sign in its store window.

"Such is the tolerance of current owners that gender is not a drawback in any kind of work. In shopping for a new bra, I was fitted in my favorite boutique by Laura, whom I have known as Larry, a babysitter for my younger sister, Melissa. I was fitted most professionally and expertly as well. I heartily recommend Laura at La Fortuna to any woman or girl who isn't as perfect as she should be.

"Digressions aside, Youth Employment Officer Sylvia Bennett says that all positions with the Council

are filled this year after an extensive drive last month. 'It's so much easier to hire someone when we don't have gender issues,' said Sylvia, whom I remember as Stan. I must admit that blonde, elegant Sylvia is a vast improvement over Stan. 'We have hired every girl graduating from High School. We don't care if there are different types of girls in our hiring. Until we get complaints, we are working all our girls in similar jobs to those they can get now at Princess River and along the Strip.'

"Good times, indeed, and we only hope they will last."

Underneath the editorial, an ad for the Del Monte School caught my eye, as it was intended to. It was a picture of a pretty, pony-tailed girl, all eye makeup and inviting, soft, full lips. 'Jacqueline Quinlan, age 20, Miss Del Monte', I read silently and looked at a smiling Jane, watching me.

"This girl is a Quinlan!" I said. "But she was in one of my classes."

"Yes," said Jane. "Take a look at the Quinlans ad at the end of the Classifieds. See, 'our congratulations to Jacqueline Quinlan, Springtime Miss Del Monte; come and see her in the Hairdressing Salon'."

"But she," I stammered, "and her brother—"

"Shows why the family is so tolerant of John's girlfriend Kelly Davies, doesn't it?" said Jane. "I tried to talk to Bill and Kathy about all this, but they refused. No interviews, and no comment, other than what we see in the ads they sponsor. But it's a story we'll follow. I think you or Bonnie should follow it up. I'm sure Jacqueline would talk to you girls, but not to me."

"Dave has two reports for this issue," Jane went on in an abrupt change of pace. "I'm sure he's going to be crabby that I've put the follow-up to the Giselle McKenzie story on page two. But the story has fizzled. Giselle got a slap on the wrist from Joanne

Conan and desk assignment. Even Josephine Wyatt, serving as investigating prosecutor, said Giselle's deception was 'administrative' since she lives as a woman and thinks of herself as a woman."

"Why is Josephine Wyatt the prosecutor in this case?" I asked.

Jane shook her head. "You think Dave should have mentioned that Giselle is Anne McKenzie's brother? No-one's saying anything about that but that's why Anne, our prosecutor, excused herself."

"The old family network?" I asked.

"Let's just leave that as Dave wrote it," Jane said with a nod. "It's not a bad little piece. I had Dave over to the Linton Clinic as well this month. Here, have you read this?"

My mouth dropped open as I read that Councillor Sharon Thomas had given birth at the Linton Clinic a week before. Elizabeth Juliet Thomas "looks like Julia, thank goodness," Sharon had said to Dave apparently. "Julia is the pretty one in our family."

Sharon's parents are accepting the birth very well, according to Sharon, even though, in her words again, "Elizabeth will have two mothers."

"Grandpa clapped me on the back," a smiling Dr 'Julia' Linton said to Dave as well. "He said he didn't know I had it in me."

"There's an announcement in the Classifieds," said Jane. "See. 'Both mothers are doing well.' Proud grandparents, Fred and June Thomas, Gaynor Ranches."

I glanced over the page Jane was compiling. *La Fortuna* had an ad for bras, *Jane Fisher's* for wigs, while *Transformers* was opening up a second store. Steve to Stephanie was another remarkable before-and-after display. *Dutton's*, the babysitting service, that was a long-time user of the Classifieds, had

an odd wording in its ad, I noticed: 'will train younger sisters (of either gender) for first work experiences.'

"If I could just decide on which Letters to use about Prom," Jane said crossly, "I'd have this issue done. What would you do with these, Michelle? You've done this before. Help me."

I read through the huge pile. There were eight in the little pile I had left.

"We've no room for that many!" said an exasperated Jane when she saw what I'd done.

"Only this one in full," I said, smiling as I held up Josephine Karlsen's letter. "These two in part and the rest as a list of one-liners."

"Oh!" gasped Jane. "Michelle, you're not only pretty but you have brains as well, in that lovely head of yours!"

Real compliments always made me feel so good, so feminine. I put Marisa O'Brien's letter first. She was a senior from the year that missed its Prom. "Loved your Prom report," she wrote. "But why so many photos of teachers, male teachers at that? Where were the real girls, as well, who made so many 'linebackers' into the gorgeous girls they are?"

It was a fair comment and deserved printing, I said to Jane. She was frowning, but not about Josephine Karlsen's letter. "You carried a photo of my son, Sally Karlsen, in your Prom Report," she wrote. "I know I criticized Sally in an earlier letter to your paper. But I cannot tell you how proud I was when she came down the stairs in her lovely dress. It was such a joy to get Sally ready for her big date. And Brad Williams was such a gentleman. Sally and Brad have been dating since the Prom. They look so lovely together. Sally's also hosting at Princess River this summer. Thank you so much, Tyson girls, for my lovely daughter!"

"Josephine Karlsen sounds flaky to me," I said with a shiver going through me as I read it again. "I can't believe anyone putting all that about Sally out in public."

"We should be glad they do," smirked Jane. "It gives us family stories to print!"

"Can you put anything in your paper that isn't about men dressing as women?" a Council worker wrote to us. "I really do get enough of this at work each day." Jane had already agreed to withhold the worker's name to print his, or her, letter, but she'd added an editor's note that these were the stories affecting all of us at the moment. She was sure it would all change in time as fashions change. She just piously hoped that our famed Valley tolerance wouldn't change though, ever.

I listed the lines from other letters. Natalie Simpson wrote that she 'Loved the Prom issue!' She should. Her picture and a report on her was in the coverage.

'Hated prom report!' wrote Stan O'Brien.

'Loved the prom issue,' Morgan Smith noted.

'Love the prom issue. More inserts like this in the paper!' wrote Wendy Ray.

'How about an Entertainment Issue? Illustrated, of course!' asked Mary-Anne Brown.

"There," said Jane, taking my hands and dancing me around the office. "Now we go shopping for new dresses, my girl. We go out and celebrate. If Dave is still sulking, we'll find some other boys to entertain us."

But when Jane phoned Dave Richardson, as I made up to be a sister to Jane in our new black mini-skirts and gold lamé tops, it appeared that Dave had had a change of heart. He and Murray were on their way to pick up us girls and take us out for a night on the town.

Volume 24**Issue No. 12****18 August**

Dave was annoyed when Jane told him about the paper's lineup of stories. I'd already danced with him, his hands all over me as he hugged me to him on the crowded floor at the Garth where the 'girls' of the Revue and Pete Smith were soon to appear.

Murray Painter politely asked me to dance with him. It was nice in the waltz just to lean against him and not feel I was in a wrestling match. Dave and Jane sat out the dance, talking feverishly at the table we'd come from. The band picked up the tempo. I would have retreated but Murray held onto me, his hand about my slender waist.

"Let's not go back right away," Murray said with a smile. "Let's let them work out their issues!"

Jane was wagging her finger at Dave as I did a little hustle with Murray. I turned once and suddenly his hands were on my tush, pushing me from side to side. "Sexier, Michelle," said Murray over my almost bare shoulder, my huge earrings bouncing as I had to move side to side so much more than I'd ever done before. Ooo, dancing as a woman just wasn't like dancing as a man! "That's it," Murray murmured as he taught me a new way to dance which seemed to lead to a lot of bumping into him and grinding against his body.

I was a little perturbed, but several girls I knew smiled at me as I was dancing. "Oh, Michelle, teach me how to do that!" said Renee. "You look so good dancing with that guy. Who is he? Your new boyfriend?"

"A friend of Dave's," I had to say.

Murray had me drink a little before putting the glasses back on the table where Dave was glaring at Jane. "Let's do the Bump again," said Murray with a

grin. So, I went and danced with him and felt so great, so girly again, as he taught me moves I'd never attempted before. Other girls around me were watching me and oohing and aahing as I did grinds. I could feel my temperature rising as I thought about what I was doing and what I must look like.

"Don't think about what you're doing!" Murray scolded me with a big smile. "Look, the show here is about to start. How about you and I cut out and go somewhere where we can keep on dancing?"

Jane was over by the bar talking to Al Bass. I waved to her. She gestured to me to go on without her. So, I left the Garth with Murray and danced across the street in my high, high heels, into Franco's Revuebar where there was nothing else but dancing going on. I'd never thought before I'd fit in, especially as a girl, on the Revuebar floor! It was all young girls gyrating there, but I did fit in as a girly girl. Alison, one of the contest winners, came and asked me to take a turn in one of the cages, as I was being pointed out as a 'sexy' dancer.

"You are!" Murray laughed at me. He kissed me. Wow, I felt something just zinging right through me.

I couldn't dance in a cage. I declined. Alison went on and asked another girl, in black stockings just like mine, a black miniskirt like mine, and long black hair over her top.

"See," said Murray earnestly. "She's just as fashionable as you, and doesn't dance half as well."

"She would if she had your hands on her tush, as you've had yours on mine for the last hour or more," I told Murray, wondering if he'd kiss me again. He did, lightly. Ooo-oo, I shivered at the stream of thrills that went through me.

"You know I'm gay," said Murray as we danced again together.

"All the best men are," I said and wanted to bite my tongue as I realized how flirty I was being with Murray.

I hadn't asked if Murray knew about me. I just presumed that he was being ironic, letting me know he knew I was Jane Edwards' girl friend, when he'd said, "Ah, Michelle Little, girl reporter." Surely, I thought, Dave had told his roommate all about me.

"No, Dave and I aren't an item," said Murray with a smile on his face as we casually stood by the bar, his arm about my waist. "He's far too dominant for me. He's always the top in any relationship he has. I guess that's why he and your roomie are battling. She's the top lizzie in your relationship, isn't she?"

"I beg your pardon!" I gasped. Murray leaned over me and kissed me quite firmly on the lips.

"A real submissive." Murray grinned at me. He might have spoken to Bonnie about me. "I can kiss a girl, you know. It's like kissing another guy to me. It's just later on. Only guys turn me on, just as with you, it would be girls."

"No!" I said to him, trembling at what he thought about me. "Hasn't Dave told you all about me, and about him trying to get me in the stock room at work?"

Murray's face was a picture of shock and amazement. "You're *that* Michelle, Mike Little?" he asked. He actually smacked himself in the forehead. "Gosh, you must think you're out dancing with the village idiot."

"Oh no," I said earnestly, squeezing him where my arm rested about him. He got the right message. Oh, the kiss we exchanged then changed everything about us. I was on fire. I tried to dance with Murray as Franco himself came by and told me I had to go in a cage as I was scorching up the dance floor. He even offered me two hundred dollars to dance for an hour.

Murray Painter recovered my purse for me, his arm about me as if I was a girl, sending thrills through me. We left Franco's—and ran right into the Capitol News crew being arrested on Raybold Avenue. There were all kinds of girls outside Roxy's, and the Garth, telling the deputies, Francesca New and Cindy Rennie, why the news crew should be arrested.

"There's Dave," said Murray, pointing to a familiar figure. Dave was smiling and charming Sabrina, a boy-girl everyone knew, a waitress at the Garth and a substitute dancer in the Revue. Sabrina was joined by others of her friends. Dave was making notes and smiling as he encouraged the girls to tell him what had happened.

"You can go with him," murmured Murray in my ear, both his hands about my waist pulling me back against him. "Or you and I, Michelle, we could go and get a room at the North for private dancing lessons."

I froze, knowing exactly what Murray was proposing. "But you're gay," I whispered back to him, unable to turn and face him.

"Let's find out if *you* are, pretty, feminine, Michelle," murmured Murray, putting his arm right around me. Idiot that I am, I went with him as if I was in a trance, to the Continental Hotel North where I had the most wonderful dancing lesson I've ever experienced in my life. And no, said Murray charmingly, I, Michelle, was not gay. He, Murray, was much straighter than he'd thought he was.

"It takes a good woman to bring it out in me," Murray said as I let him fuck me. That's what we called it because, as Murray says, that's what a man does to a woman. In time, our kissing led to me writhing beneath Murray on the bed, in my panties and my bra. I screamed that at him, begging him to "Fuck me! Fuck me, Murray! Harder! Harder! Faster! Faster!" but Murray only smiled and went at his own pace. Oh, it was just so absolutely thrilling for me to be a woman, as Murray seemed to know.

Murray showed me how everything he'd taught me about dancing I could do with him in bed. It was so fantastic, all the wiggling and touching I'd done on the dance floor, I did against him. I aroused him as a girl would her man, as he gently caressed and awoke my agitated male parts. It was so glorious to just let go and feel him all against me, in me, his hands doing what we'd done on the dance floor. I had a definite orgasm, though I didn't define it as such until Bonnie told me the following day what it was. I was an 'orgasmic woman' now, she laughed at me, hugging me and welcoming me to 'the club'.

I had tried to pleasure Murray as I was clinging so tightly to him. He'd turned me to face him and pressed me down on our bed. My pantyhose and panties were somewhere in the room but my legs were high in the air as I was being fucked by Murray with a tense slowness of style that made me orgasm inside and outside again. His hand caressed and directed my ejaculations even as he came inside me again and again.

Murray loved kissing me, loved the way I kissed, loved the way I curled beneath him, loved the way we fitted together. He loved my perfume, loved my padded figure and loved my male equipment. He showed me how to arouse myself and how to arouse him. The sixty-nine sexual position produced ecstasy for both of us, but he wouldn't ejaculate as I did. He turned me over, remarking how pretty women liked being fucked. I was a pretty woman with male equipment. That meant I liked it more, being fucked like a woman.

I was too far gone to do anything more than eagerly follow Murray's lead in everything that he wanted to do. He seemed to know that praising me as a woman was his ticket to arousing me. I was aroused again and again and was Murray's woman, the first he'd had in an age, he said. He and I had to have lots more private dancing lessons in the future.

I promised Murray that he could have me any time he wanted me, as we went out at midday finally, arm-in-arm, a real sway in my sexy walk. I'd been his woman all morning after I woke him. In my mini-dress and laddered panti-hose, showered and re-perfumed, I was so satisfied with what I'd learned about myself, that I liked having sex as a woman with a man more than I liked it with Jane.

That was when we met Sally Karlsen and Brad Williams, kissing in a nook at the front of the hotel as they waited for a cab as well. Then, Grace Wilson came down with another man, and two other couples from the Tyson Prom, still kissing and hugging as if the 'girls' couldn't get enough of the wonderful love they had just had, like me, with their boy friends.

"Hi, Michelle," said Sally Karlsen, coming up for air with Brad. Then Grace greeted me and the other girls whom I hardly knew. Our cab came first and so, flushing, hating what the girls were thinking about me, probably the same thing I was thinking about them, I got into the cab, sitting first and lifting my stockinged legs in after me. Murray was grinning as he followed me in, almost crushing me as he kissed me.

Everyone was looking at Michelle Little and her man. I just hoped they weren't thinking what a slut I was as everyone knew, didn't they, that I was Jane's girl friend. It was with regret that I kissed Murray Painter goodnight at noon and went in to meet Jane to face the music for 'cheating' on her with a man.

Of course, she wasn't there. Jane had had to go to the state capital to follow up on the story from the previous night. She didn't know when she'd be back. I, Michelle, was in charge. I should get on and jolt everyone about writing the next paper. She'd call me on the next working day.

I should have phoned Murray right away but the phone rang. Bonnie Helman wanted to shop and to see the *Princesses on Parade*. Oh, I was going to go

out with a girl friend. That was thrilling, though not as much as what I'd done the night before.

Bonnie recognized what I'd done right away. "Was he really that nice?" she wanted to know. "You're walking on the moon, you know." She was laughing at me. "That's what my Mum says to me after David and I make love. My Mum always knows."

"And she's cool with it?" I asked her.

"She has to be," said Bonnie practically. "I told her I would as soon as I found the right boy. She knows I'm exploring my sexuality with David." She said the last as if she was quoting a book. "So tell me all about it. I really don't get to share with another girl about sex. Please, Michelle, I'll, I'll share with you as well."

So, like the girl friends that we were, Bonnie and I shared stories about the men who bonked us. I had to admit that I could compare Murray to Alan Farrell. Bonnie was impressed but she didn't want anyone else but her David. She was in love with him, I could tell enviously. She had stars in her eyes. She was going to marry him and be his wife. She would never betray him, never. Not even the handsome Prince Charming who was really smitten with her in the Charming Marquee, could tempt Bonnie as mine tempted me. So, she kept me chaste for one night of my life. And on Monday, we had to get back to work.

Dave Richardson wasn't answering calls from Jane's phone, so I went up to the Linton Clinic. Julia and Janice Long were really excited that they were going to be joined by two other doctors in the Clinic, Dr Alice North and Dr Mary Drew, who were 'life partners', Julia told me with a smile.

"Lesbians?" I had to ask. The two 'women' in the office in front of me looked at each other and smiled.

"No," said Julia smugly. "They would be more like you and Jane, I think."

“Oh, like you and Sharon,” I said. Janice laughed hilariously at her working partner.

“She’s got you there,” Janice said, smiling at me. “You’ve forgotten, Julia. Morton Drew has had SRS and is legally Mary now. But they’re still together and so, yes, Michelle, they are lesbians. Alice would say so. Mary is a gynecologist while Alice will have a family practice like Julia. And here they are.”

Two women joined us in the office. Alice North was a slight blonde who smiled at all of us well-made up women in the office. “I use my maiden name in my practice,” she said. “But Mary uses her married name, still.”

I gave a little shiver as Alice looked at the lovely woman beside her who was looking guardedly at me. “Why do we have to get into this as the first order of business?” she asked crossly.

“You’re right, Mary,” said Julia as the brunette woman tossed her lovely, styled hair so femininely. “I’m sorry that question came up. My fault, I worded your status as life partners badly. Both of these doctors,” Julia told me earnestly, “are top doctors, looking for a safe place to work, as well as for peace and understanding. I hope the Valley will make them really welcome.”

“Oh, we will,” I said, scrambling to get her exact words in my notes.

“And we don’t mind, do we, darling,” asked Alice with an impish smile to Mary, “if you mention in your news story, Michelle, that we are life partners. We have been since I married Morton Drew. Nothing changes that.”

I took their pictures and some of Julia, who I thought had had breast augmentation, though I didn’t dare to ask. I’d never seen her looking so soft and womanly. I had to ask about her baby. She really smiled about that and showed me pictures.

“Her mummy’s little darling,” said Janice, smiling at me.

“Umm, SRS?” I began.

“Is sex reassignment surgery,” said Janice. “Not something Julia or I want, nor you, not yet, Michelle, I think. I don’t do that but I do know several excellent surgeons in the US, Canada and further apart, if you can travel and afford it. Would you like me to send you some literature about the process?”

“No!” I said hurriedly, but I think I’d confirmed that Dr Janice Long was just as much a ‘woman’ as me.

Bonnie came back from Tyson High School where, in another new story, the appointment of a new Principal for the next year was confirmed by Al Bass, chair of the Council’s education committee.

“I couldn’t believe it,” said Bonnie. “I really didn’t know what to say. Estelle Gardner is the new Principal, while Donna is going to become a Beauty teacher. I mean, Donna is classy and elegant and clearly knows so much about being a woman, but teaching it? To teenaged girls and boys? They’ll eat her alive!”

“She didn’t object to being demoted?” I asked Bonnie.

“Oh no,” said Bonnie. “She just sat there with this sweet smile on her face and said that she was ‘very supportive’ of her wife’s appointment in her place as Acting Principal.”

“Estelle was kind of sharp with me, saying there’d be no difficulties with Donna,” said Bonnie, shaking her head. “ ‘She will work very well under me,’ said Estelle. She said that Donna would make an excellent Beauty teacher. I think that was the first time Donna had heard that it was her.”

“Did you ask about what will happen when the Dress Code is lifted next month?” I asked.

“Estelle laughed at me,” said Bonnie, obviously aggrieved. “She was so condescending when she told me not to worry my pretty little head over that one. I think that she loved the opportunity to say it to me!

“She said I should interview Lee Charles about her holiday. Estelle said that Lee was delighted to be back in the Valley, wearing her mini-dresses with no hassles. Estelle also said that she’d made it clear to all the staff what she expected of them. If they wore a dress last year, they must continue! Which means all the teachers have to be in dresses for a year as the case doesn’t even go to court until the second week of term!

“She did say that Miss Charles and Miss Gardner, that’s what she called her husband, will be in class the first day.”

“I saw a note on Jane’s desk,” I said, “that said that Estelle Gardner was seeking a name change in court, reverting to her maiden name of Edwards.” I think Jane had got the note from someone in the Court House.

“Figures,” murmured Bonnie as she went off happily to write up the story.

The other part of that note was that Estelle had also entered a petition for Don Gardner’s name to be changed, not just to ‘Donna’ but to ‘Donna Edwards’ as well. I’d have to check with Jane about that as part of Bonnie’s story.

The letters were interesting. Erica Forrester had written, “I was down on Raybold Avenue with my girl friends when the Capitol News crew came along and started filming us. Then, they started asking us which of us were boys and which of us were girls. We ignored them but they wouldn’t go away.

“We ran down Brampton Alley but they followed us, telling Wendy, who is real, she looked good in drag. I broke my high heel running from them and split my new skirt! That woman only laughed at me

when I told her to go away. She offered me one hundred dollars to point out two boys in drag. I wouldn't do it or tell her she was looking at one. Luckily, Franco's was open! He let me dance in my stockings! Love Franco! Hate television reporters!"

So that's what it was all about! I wondered why Jane was so long at the capital. I should send the letter to Dave to use in his column; but Dave still wouldn't pick up my calls or talk to me.

Another letter was about the school and teachers. "I've heard that Miss Shanks and Miss Letman might not be back at Tyson," wrote Caroline Westman. "And not Miss Charles, my fave, either! I really don't understand why. I loved them all as teachers. They were nice to Protester boys as well as to the girls in class."

Might have something to do with the fact that the three teachers mentioned are men and don't want to be back in dresses in September, I thought, wondering if I should add an Editor's note to that letter. I did with a second note to check if we wanted to say that. Jane printed my note as it was.

Blake Morrison had heard this fantastic singer, Miriam McCoy, from outside the Amadeus. "My friends say she's really a man. I don't believe it. I heard her. No man can sing that high. Can you tell my friends they're wrong?"

I'd have to ask Tania about that one.

I had room for a short letter. Al Mankin provided it, making me shake as I thought about what he was implying. "Love your city and paper! Will be back soon, permanently. Al and Debbie Mankin."

I arranged the Classifieds beside the Letters, all aimed at girls, though several said gender immaterial or will train all candidates, male or female. All positions were being sought, from dancers to waitresses for a new club in Slayton, I saw. Something else to ask Tania about.

The *Transformers* ad this month had to be seen to be believed! It read, "We transform Chuck Sanders," a long picture of an ordinary guy on the left, "into Chantal, showgirl and stripper at Roxy's every night." On the left was this incredible showgirl, busty, shapely in a costume that showed off her long legs in pantyhose, her hair huge and three feet high! She was madeup fantastically with long dangling earrings at her ears. Her bra's straps were so thin as she leant forward, her long gloves making her arms so thin and feminine. She must have been on six-inch heels and she had those feathery things coming from the back of her panties.

"We will do the same for the discriminating male," read the ad. I wouldn't have minded taking them up on that, I thought. Luckily, Tania came in with answers to my questions.

"First," she said. "Look at this. It's the same ad as last week for *Princesses on Parade* but they've changed the pictures. Look at Heather Taylor. Those are real breasts, aren't they? And this Michelle Rodway beside her. Look at that dress and that neckline. Those are a girl's breasts as she's not even wearing a bra. And Amanda Miller, the third Princess. Look at her silhouette. What self-respecting man wouldn't want to get their hands on that!"

"They might be—" I began, feeling how my panties and bra were tightening on me as well.

"Oh, Michelle," said Tania crossly. "You're such a virgin!"

I blushed wildly at that.

"Well, you are," said Tania. "What you do with Jane doesn't count in keeping that score. We girls only count the guys we've slept with! Oh, don't tell me. Dave hasn't had you, has he?"

"Oh, no!" I said desperately, the heat rising in me.

"Thank the Lord for that," said Tania, staring at me. "Well, here's my column. I got a note on my computer from Jane to give it to you."

"Yes," I said. "I'm back at my old chore. Jane's in the capital."

"Chasing down who tipped off Capitol News to the debauchery of our little Valley," said Tania, with a shake of her head. "Seriously, Michelle, if we're going to be getting state-wide or national publicity for what's going on here, it might be time, my girl, to pack up your panties and pretty dresses and move on. San Fran is good at this time of the year."

"Let's get your column first," I said flippantly, a heavy weight in my stomach at what I thought Tania now thought of me. Tania, frowning at me, gave me her rough version of what she wanted printed.

"First," Tania had written with a glossy picture from some talent agency attached to her copy, "a little news out of Hollywood. Yes, you know the place. Recent Tyson graduate, Holly Irving, from Slayton Lake, has won a part in the latest high-school movie being shot in California.

"Eighteen-year-old Holly will be one of several cheerleaders in the comedy, 'Girls Love It', a provisional title.

"Holly was elated to be chosen a *Princess on Parade* but Jean Del Monte arranged for a screen test for her 'graduate' with Anthony Whitehouse, the director of the movie. He cast the pretty brunette right away!

"Second, Miriam McCoy is at the Amadeus. I'm not often fooled now that I've been doing this column for two years. Miriam fooled me completely! Her voice ranged from soprano to tenor but such was the natural, feminine lift to her tone, I was certain I was listening to a woman. When she took off her wig, I was floored!

“‘I’m trying,’ said Miriam, or Marvin, as her parents named her, ‘to live as much of my life as I can as a man. It’s so easy to be a woman for me.’

“Miriam’s voice never broke as a teenager. It deepened and her range expanded, but every time she sang people thought she was a girl until they saw him, Marvin, in his tux.

“‘So now my girlfriend does my makeup and dresses me,’ says Miriam. ‘She makes me a woman from the inside out, as I can work anywhere as a woman. I even sing all these romantic songs now. My girlfriend doesn’t mind if I do go out in drag, which is so easy here in Raybold. Actually, it’s easy anywhere now. It’s hard at times to revert back to being a man. But I hate it when people hear me as Marvin and call me gay. It’s so much easier to be Miriam.’

Dave and Jane didn’t say a word about where they’d been. They arrived separately and were in agreement right away.

“Effing publicity seekers,” grumbled Dave. “Pretending to be Capitol News, going up to everyone and demanding to know about boys in dresses in Raybold. You should have seen their faces when the deputies pulled up. Those skirts the cops wear, mid-thigh and with those little pleats in them, man, they look like hookers. But I wouldn’t dare to tell Francesca, or Cindy, or Joanne that.”

The last was said very sarcastically. “Did this news team know that they were being arrested by men dressed as women?” Jane asked.

“No,” said Dave.

“We don’t let on, either,” said Jane. “Guess what I found out. Capitol News uses them free-lance and now disowns them. We’ll put a picture of Sabrina Crew – with all that eye makeup, peroxide hair, bare midriff, and legs, she’ll love it – right on the front page. We don’t let on in quoting her that she’s a boy-girl. I’ll take the high road in my editorial. They

were disturbing the peace, defaming residents of the Valley, resisting arrest, yada, yada. How horrible and terrible. We'll call for Emily Cortwright to throw the book at them for their rudeness and arrogance."

"Anne McKenzie, the prosecutor, wanted their tapes," said Dave with a grin. "I don't know where they got their information, but they asked Anne and the judge herself if she was a man or a woman. They got three days for contempt of court! Still, Jane, this thing could be a huge black eye for the Valley."

"We'll just see about that," said Jane with a smile.

"Oh shoot," said Dave angrily. "I forgot Emily's your aunt a few degrees removed, isn't she? What do you know that I don't?"

"Nothing," said Jane sweetly. "Now, Michelle, darling. Tell me all the gory details of your night of passion with Murray." Dave's eyes shot to the top of his head. "I hope you and he have been more discreet than using the Continental North. That place is no better than a brothel."

Volume 25

Issue No. 1

15 September

Well, all good things must come to an end. The Valley Council voted unanimously, in front of an audience of mainly women, to set aside the contentious Jara Motion that required all employees to wear female dresses.

Dave Richardson was at his pontificating worst as he took the whole front page to write a history of what had gone "wrong" in the Valley. He wrote things like, "After one year, gender distinctions became blurred. 'Protestants' took to wearing dresses, growing their hair, plucking their eyebrows and turning Tyson into an all-girls school!"

He wrote about 'Valley Girls' but barely mentioned the teachers, Council employees, who all had to sign a contract promising to continue dressing as women for another year to keep their jobs.

Principal Estelle Edwards was quoted as saying that the only Dress Code now was neatness and cleanliness. Bonnie and I knew it wasn't true.

"She's running the school like a convent," Bonnie told me. "She might say that 'trannies' can wear the clothes of the opposite gender but they can't wear anything else, nor can any of the other boys who started in their Protest dresses. She makes them wear them since Nicole Dugan, the new Students' Council President, said that the Protest was on until she met with Estelle Edwards to settle a range of issues. Well, Edwards is not meeting. The boys are still in their dresses, which seems to be the way she likes it!"

Bonnie got to write an article on the rehiring of 'Miss Charles', 'Miss Shanks', 'Miss Letman' and 'Mrs Edwards', the new Beauty Class teacher, at Tyson. A picture of LeeAnn Charles was with the article when it was published, showing off 'LeeAnn's' long, *long* blonde hair. It had to be a hairpiece, I thought, but it did look so real.

"It won't be at all different from last year," Principal Estelle Edwards said to Bonnie. "We had fifteen teachers in female dress last year and they'll all be back this year."

I didn't believe it and told Bonnie so. Fifteen would mean that teachers we thought were women must have been 'trannies'. Nicole Dugan agreed with us. She thought there were only six or seven men who had had to cross-dress. "Miss Johnstone has us all confused," she says. "It's her voice, but she does look so girlish, and her makeup and hair are so divine!"

Principal Edwards was disappointed that ten per cent of the boys were in male dress on the first day of school. Bonnie swears that that's what she said—but



when her article was finished, Jane had corrected that to have Principal Edwards upset at the students who were carrying on the Protest, as 'only ten per cent of the student body is dressed as females.'

My streak of writing also came to an end. I guess I wasn't as forthcoming to Jane about Murray and me. Just by the way I behaved in bed, she knew that I'd learned some new moves and they weren't from her. So she 'punished' me by making me dress and make up like, well, like a slut.

My miniskirt was so high that every time I sat down, my panties were on show. I had 'big' hair, really! I might have been on the stage at the Mitzi Theater, so much makeup did I have on my eyes, cheeks and mouth. My tops were almost strapless save for the black bras I had to wear. I looked like I'd had a boob job each day when I went to work.

Worse was that, I was on layouts again. Dave, smirking and making eyes at me, was doing two stories for the front page.

When Jane was out once, Dave almost attacked me as he dragged me into the stock room, telling me to turn around and he'd give me what Murray had given me. He tried to kiss me. Actually he did kiss me, but I didn't tingle at all. I broke away from him and fought with him. I started squealing, causing Tania and Bonnie to run to my help.

One of the nicest words Dave called me was 'whore'. I suppose 'bitch' wasn't so bad, either. I didn't like 'prick-teaser' or other names Dave used, including slang words for a woman's vagina. I didn't care. I told him in front of the others I didn't want a gay man kissing me any more. I didn't want to be raped by a gay man like him; I was going to call my sisters in the Sheriff's Department to arrest him if he attacked me again.

Dave was stunned by what I said. "Way to go, girl," said Tania with an approving hug. I was trembling

when Dave stumbled off. Bonnie hugged me and smiled at me as well.

“You’ll have us to testify if he does that again, Michelle,” said Bonnie with a smile. “We girls don’t have to take behavior like that at work.”

“Nor do we girls have to take behaviour like that *out of work*,” said Tania dryly. We had a group hug and a giggle about that.

The funny thing was that, even when the Dress Code was rescinded at last, nothing happened. The cops were still in their mid-thigh skirts, still calling each other Francesca, Josie and Joanne, in lilting, feminine voices, while the city still ran with female-dressed workers named Andrea, Erica and Roberta.

As Jane pointed out in her editorial, it was weird. What was weirder at Tyson was that football was being coached by the Principal, Estelle Edwards, while the cheerleader squads were being led by ‘Miss’ LeeAnn Charles—the price ‘she’ had to pay to have a job in Tyson this year.

Jane called the editorial ‘Take a Horse to Water’. It was supposed to have been written by her uncle, the nominal publisher of the paper. The only point I could agree with was that our Valley, and people like me, were going to be the laughingstock of the country, when everyone found out about us and how we did things in the Valley.

The picture on the front page that was most telling was of Tom Beman, John Stephens, and Elaine Beman. Tom’s hair was longer than his wife’s. His dress was lovelier, his earrings more glamorous, and his makeup more feminine. It was funny that Stephens had his hand about Tom’s waist, while Ellen rested her hand on Stephens’ shoulder as he posed between the two femininely dressed figures.

I should have done the story. I was the obvious person, though I hadn’t met Tom Beman since the

election. Dave wrote that Ellen said she was expecting her husband 'back' very soon. The picture was of the three of them going to dinner at Sylvester's with Joanne and Mary Lou Conan.

"Each couple has similar problems," Dave had written.

"Tom was challenged because of his liberal views," Ellen was supposed to have said. "But he came through. It will be good to see him in a suit again and to have his hair cut!"

But the cops were still in dresses days after the decision was handed down, and the business at our newspaper hadn't changed. Quinlans had an ad that featured 'Miss Jacqueline Quinlan' in a low-cut dress promoting hairdressing. I shivered when I saw that 'Del Monte' models were in all departments. It was true! 'Girls' I had been trained with at Del Monte were at work all through Quinlans, as they were at Melanie's and Rayburn Stores. They all knew me, of course, and called me 'Michelle' so nicely, wanting to show me all the latest fashions and newest perfumes.

Pamela Harris was strutting in the latest short dresses in Rayburn Stores ads, while Josie Lyon and Andrea May were still showing off their shapely legs for Melanie's Boutique.

Transformers showed Abe transformed into Abigail. She wore a dress like Pamela's with just one strap. Those breasts, so prominently displayed, didn't look fake to me at all. Bonnie seriously told me of the new breast forms they had in *Transformers* that could make any flat-chested man look real.

I gaped at Bonnie. She blushed a little as she told me how she'd got her breasts, the hormones she was taking, and how long it had taken her to grow to a size that David found really stimulating.

"There's a letter in the mail about you," I told Bonnie, flustered a little by what we were talking about. She and I had said that, as girl friends, we

could really talk about anything and everything female and feminine.

A Tammy Wilson - "Oh, that's Grace's elder sister," said Bonnie right away - had written: 'You mention that Bonnie Helman, your Education reporter, graduated two years ago and is now an intern with you. I looked and all I found was a Bruce Helman who recently graduated from Tyson. Are they related?'

"Oh, she knows me," said Bonnie crossly. "Yes, they are related, Tammy," I read aloud as I wrote on the bottom of the letter. "Bruce became Bonnie when she became a junior reporter here at *The Queen*. Do you enjoy her writing? Many have said so."

"What's going to happen to that letter?" asked Bonnie.

"I'll put it at the bottom of the junk pile," I said and did. The junk pile is the massive file of unused letters that we keep for a while and shred when the shelf gets too full. But Jane found it and printed it, with a picture of Bonnie as well. Ooo, I hated her for that, for making Bonnie feel so bad.

Mostly we printed letters that praised Council for coming to its senses at last about the Jara Motion. Roger Ferlie, though, had a different take on it all. "I went into the city (Raybold is the 'city' to many farmers) to pay my bills and met a really nice lady, Andrea, who helped me so much.

"She was really nice. I see her in some ads in your paper. I guess I know who and what she is now. Andrea, you were so fresh and sweet, the daughter I never had. Please don't change back for this old codger's sake. It's a pleasure coming in to meet you each month."

"There's no way that Andrea May is going back to being drab, geeky Andy May," said Bonnie. "In fact, she may be quitting her job with the Council, but that's because her modeling career is taking off!"

"Dave Richardson's faxed me from the Court House," I said to an amused Bonnie. "The television crew has finally been released. What did it take, a month? Dave says that they had to give up their tapes and apologize for asking Emily Cortwright if she was a man or a woman."

Ben Kelly was saying that he'd never been in a co-ed prison before.

"There's no such thing here," said Bonnie. Then she caught on. "Oh," she said.

Tanya Clinton knew that as well, Dave had written. She'd also said she wasn't going to take her 'humiliation' lying down. She was going to be back with a new crew and expose the weird goings-on in the Valley to the rest of the world.

"Donna Leslie and Greg Jara," said Bonnie uneasily. "Tanya sounds just like those Morality Party hacks. That's all they talk about, how the Valley is being humiliated by what we are doing, Michelle. We need to be exposed."

I was more concerned with Dave having three by-lines in the current paper and me having none. I could have, should have, done two of those stories. Let him do the layout for a change!

I only had the back page to do, and a new ad for the new club in Slayton dominated the page. I wondered what Jane had made them pay to bump *Princesses on Parade* from its spot the last two months.

As Tania wrote, "Night life returns with a bang to Slayton this month! In a surprisingly professional show, these 'girls'—yes, Jeremy, it is a female impersonator revue at the new Ladybird night club—sing quite authentically.

"Cher might be an easy mark for an impersonator, but James Alloway catches every nuance in a sparkling performance." There was a long photograph of James 'Cher' Alloway, just as there was of David

‘Cristina’ Marlon. Both were in dresses, wigs and makeup that made them seem to be the two women.

“How many performers are doing *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi* lately? Yes, quite a few. David Marlon, however, is an excellent Cristina, exuding a female sexuality that makes you want more of ‘her’, this talented dancer and singer.

“Worth a visit, fifteen minutes of slow driving north.

“A new play, *Skirting the Issue*, opens at the Mitzi Dinner Theater. Yes, it’s close to the last comedy, with Ed Reece and Franklin Smith trying to help out girlfriends by keeping their apartment occupied while the girls are away from the rent-controlled place for a couple of months. With the landlord, his son, and assorted old flames showing up, these ‘girls’ can’t wait until their real girl friends get back. But when they do—well, visit the Mitzi and find out.

“In this performance we find that Franklin Smith, minus the fat suit, is as skinny and curvy as Ed Reece. I could feel sorry for Adam (Ron Burney), who falls in love with Cathy (Smith). There was real chemistry between them in this comedy. Smith is undetectable as a man in his panties, garter belt, bra, stockings, blonde wig, etcetera. When they kiss, sparks fly between the actors.

“Again, well worth a night out. Some very funny lines from Mr. Stewart, the playwright.”

“Those are two men.” Tania grinned at me as I looked at the ad for *Skirting the Issue*. It said Ed Reece and Franklin Smith under the pictures, but the ‘girls’ were in lingerie, high heels, blonde wigs and makeup.

“It looks like a girlie strip show,” I said to Tania. She exploded with laughter.

"That's exactly what it is!" Tania crowed. "I can't say that about one of our advertisers, but you got the message! I'm not cheating anyone with my review!"

Jane was pleased with the way I'd done the paper for publication. She came to my desk, put her arms around me and kissed me.

"What's that for?" I asked her shakily.

"It's because I love my blonde girlfriend," said Jane, ruffling my hair that I'd had styled at Jasper's. "I've been mean to you, haven't I? Let's go over to Princess River and dance the night away. Franco told me what a great dancer you were. I want you to show me what you're doing. I've got a chalet for the weekend. So let's take our bikinis and lie in the sun as well. It's time we had a little holiday together, my darling wife!"

TO BE CONTINUED