

The Queen of the Valley.
Women's Issues



Philippa Peters

An "Adult TV" Novel

Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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THE QUEEN OF THE VALLEY 3: WOMEN'S ISSUES

by Philippa Peters

Volume 25 Issue No. 2 19 October

Of course, Jane was only joking about me. But she liked the joke, introducing me as her “wife” when we went out. It was so embarrassing to enter *The Jaundiced Eye* or *Sylvester's*, have the hostesses smile at me and say that they'd get a table ready right away for Jane Edwards's wife.

Bonnie was amused by it all. “You sound just like a man,” she giggled at me. “No, not your lovely voice, but the way you're behaving! No, you're not being demeaned by being called a wife. It's what you *are*, after all, isn't it?”

I shouldn't have been such a girlfriend to a ‘girl’ who was just like me, a boy in truth. Bonnie was going to marry her boyfriend in time and legally be his wife. I didn't know how she planned to do that, but I didn't question her about it.

Jane was at the root of all my problems. She wouldn't let me wear pants anywhere. If I wasn't all sweet and girly to her, she'd get really snappy with me. She ordered me to go out with Bonnie, to exchange girl talk and buy some new, feminine lingerie for myself. I shivered, but I did as ordered. I always did! It was so long, nearly ten months since I'd started this project—to be a girl for a day, Jane had said, telling our readers what it was like to be a man in a dress.

I'd done that for her. Not for myself, of course, oh no! I wasn't getting anything out of this daily dressing as a girl but constant bouts of embarrassment, lately. Now, everyone was calling me a wife or Mrs Edwards, as Jane had introduced me afresh to the Garth waitresses. I tried to explain to Bonnie how embarrassed I was, but she didn't understand at all. She'd have loved her David to introduce her as his wife-to-be, I was certain. She wouldn't have been embarrassed at all.

My embarrassment, luckily, became overshadowed by a far greater sensation. We were in *Sylvester's* when it happened. We were just debating whether we should go over and talk to the 'Misses Beman'. They were in an animated conversation with the tall, handsome guy I'd seen at the Prom with Donna Gardner, as 'she' was then.

Suddenly, Ellen Beman got up and stormed out as Tom, looking very womanly and pretty in a yellow dress and gold jewelry, got up to stop his wife leaving. John Stephens pulled on 'her' arm. 'She' sat down, flustered, in a rustle of petticoats.

"Okay, girl reporter." Bonnie laughed. "Which do you want, the boy or the girl?"

"The girl," I said, a tingle of emotion going through me.



“Well, she’s over there,” said Bonnie, picking up her purse and handing me the check. “I’ll catch Ellen. You get Tom.”

With Bonnie scooting away, I couldn’t tell her she’d got it wrong. Well, she’d have known it, as she did. She just wanted me to talk, ‘girl to girl’, which neither of us were, to Councillor Tom Beman. I nervously approached the booth where the Bemans had been sitting. I always found it difficult to invade people’s privacy and ask them questions. The public might want the answers—but I wouldn’t give them if I was the one whose privacy was being invaded..

“Michelle Little, ‘girl’ reporter,” said John Stephens, emphasizing what he knew was untrue, to the golden-haired woman beside him. He gave me a lopsided smile. “Don’t miss a trick, do you?”

“My, my p-partner,” I said. “B-Bonnie Helman, she’s going to talk to Ellen.”

“You think her storming out is a news story?” asked John Stephens, while the woman beside him just looked at me as if I was some kind of annoying insect.

“She was very angry,” I said. “If it’s personal, I’ll go away.”

John Stephens actually smiled at me. He was a millionaire. He owned the Valley’s bank and was financing the new highway, Jane had told me.

“A considerate girl reporter,” Mr. Stephens said, his hand resting on the woman’s feminized hand beside his. ‘She’, Tom Beman, made no move to push him away. He was leaning into her as if he was consoling her. “We should take advantage of her, Laura; have your side of the story told before it all hits the fan.”

“What would you like to know?” asked Councillor Tom ‘Laura’ Beman in a soft, trained, womanish voice, just like mine.

“L-Laura?” I squeaked. ‘Laura’ turned her lovely, madeup eyes to the man beside her and smiled.

“John calls me that when we go up to Brampton,” ‘Laura’ Beman said very femininely. “It’s a lot easier to use a woman’s name up there. People there think I’m Councillor Beman’s wife. I hear a lot of people are calling *you* a wife these days, Michelle.”

“It’s not true,” I said hastily, wondering how such rumors got around. It wasn’t as if I was anybody in the Valley. She—Tom, Laura, Tom Beman—was the important figure who was gossiped about all the time, not me.

“Ellen said something to the hostess about seeing her in court,” I said. Mandy, in her black strapless evening dress even though it was lunch time, was talking to the girls at the bar, gesticulating with her arms as if claiming she’d done nothing.

“She probably meant me,” said Councillor Beman, shifting and re-crossing his legs in a rustle of silk. I loved the white, high-heeled sandals he, ‘she’, was wearing. “Ellen just broke up with me.” She surprised me by beginning to cry. John Stephens put his arm about her and hugged her.

“Maybe it’s not a good idea to talk now,” John murmured to ‘Laura’. “I’m sure Ellen will reconsider. This will blow over.”

“Is it over you, um, Laura, dressing as a woman?” I asked. Councillor Beman’s lovely eyes opened wider.

“I’m not going to dress as a man ever again,” ‘Laura’ said while John Stephens tried to shush her. “John’s always been my political manager,” she patted his hand in womanly fashion as she said that, her bracelets jiggling at her wrist. “You can print what I

said, Michelle. Let those who voted for me know I'm a full-time woman now."

The baldness of that statement shook me to the tips of my high heels. My loosely brushed hair flickered about my neck and ears at such a statement. "You don't mind if I write that in *The Queen*?" I asked her.

Laura smiled. "You're the right person to break the news, aren't you?" she said to me. I could sense the kinship she claimed, with another man in a dress like her.

John Stephens stood up, asking Laura to say nothing more, as he hustled her out of *Sylvester's*. Bonnie passed them on the way in.

"The Bemans have split up!" Bonnie said excitedly to me. "Ellen just gave me an interview on the street! She was heading into the Courthouse to meet with one of the Wyatts to file her petition for divorce! This will be the biggest news to hit the Valley since Tom first put on a dress! What did he say?"

"It isn't Tom any more," I said. "It's Laura!"

Bonnie's thin eyebrows almost disappeared into her bangs. "Laura!" she breathed excitedly. "That's a lovely name for a lovely woman, isn't it?"

"What else did Ellen Beman say?" I asked.

"The usual platitudes," sniffed Bonnie, making a derisive face. She consulted her notes. "The last two weeks have been so very difficult," Bonnie read. " 'My husband has refused to dress as a man again. He won't have his hair cut. He told me he likes to dress in women's clothes now, that he feels more fulfilled that way, blah, blah.' Oh yes, Ellen gave him an ultimatum. He chose, she says, to leave her to go and live with John Stephens."

I gasped and looked at Bonnie who was coyly smiling at me. “Word it that way and you’re implying—” I began.

“I know,” said Bonnie. “We really should talk to Laura and get it straight. Has she really left her wife for a man? John Stephens is so rich! You know what Marilyn Monroe said about money on a man being like sex appeal on a woman.”

We grabbed our purses, stopped in the ladies’ room to re-do our lipsticks and brush our hair. I consoled Mandy, who was having a conniption about what Ellen had said. We told her not to tell anyone else, as Ellen wasn’t talking about her but only about Laura.

“Laura who?” Mandy wanted to know.

“Read the next edition of *The Queen*,” I told Mandy. “We’ll have the full story.”

I was wrong about Mandy not being called to court. She was, to testify about the late suppers Ellen’s husband and his political manager had in *Sylvester’s* several times per week, about the way John held Laura’s hand and how they laughed and giggled together as Laura never did with Ellen.

Yes, Ellen Beman filed for divorce, giving her husband’s adultery as the cause of the marriage’s breakup. And yes, she cited John Stephens as ‘the other man’ in the case.

The following day, Bonnie and I hired a car and went up to the Stephens’ ranch on the edge of the Northern Forestry Reserve, but John Stephens wouldn’t let us meet and talk to Laura at all, even though he knew very well who both of us were.

“The whole thing is devastating to Laura,” Stephens said. “She pleaded with Ellen to understand. I pleaded with Ellen as well, to save their marriage. But Ellen’s adamant. I understand Ellen want-

ing a man in her life, and so does Laura. Laura just can't be the kind of man Ellen wants any more. And yes, I'm going to vigorously—you can quote me, *vigorously*—defend the charges Ellen's levelled against me."

We didn't get to see Laura, but Bonnie and I were excited when we got back to the offices, talking about what we'd write and how we'd divide up the story. Strangely, there was a visitor in the interview office, talking animatedly to Dave Richardson and Jane.

"Donna Leslie?" I asked Jane, who came out to see us.

"She saw it coming," said Jane with a grimace. "She says it's only the first of a string of divorces that are going to happen. She warned Ellen, she says, when Tom began modulating his voice and dressing so much more fashionably than his wife.

"She's talking about John Stephens as well, and his yen for men in dresses." Jane smiled at that and rolled her eyes. "She says he tried to be Donna Gardner's boyfriend, last year, but Estelle cut it off. Huh! Estelle would be delighted to have Donna be anyone's girlfriend."

That was a real eye-opener for me into the relationship between the sisters. Jane often went off when we were at home and never said where she was going. I just had to wait at home like a good little wife, her latest joke. I think that Jane must have been visiting her sister on some of those occasions. She often treated me differently when she came home, making me obey her a lot more, and making me dress really sexily even though it was just the two of us in her house.

"Give all your notes to Dave," Jane told me when I related the story Bonnie and I were working up about Laura and Ellen.

I was stunned. I protested, but it was no use. I wasn't going to get the front page and a by-line. Bonnie was almost in tears when we handed our work over to the gloating Dave Richardson. Our facts made Jane's editorial authoritative, as she piously told the Valley not to gloat over the break-up of the Valley's most prominent political couple, or the reasons for the break-up. That was awful and bitter for both Bonnie and me.

It was so much bilgewater, as was Dave's article. He wrote it as if he'd been the one doing the interviews we'd done. He did at least get a picture of Laura and John, getting into a car, leaving for 'a week away from it all'. John's arm was around Laura's shoulder while she looked as lovely as ever, her hair newly styled and so long about her neck. I loved it that mine was so much improved as well—and then I felt so guilty about the way I was feeling, thinking so much like a woman these days.

Bonnie was our school reporter still. Jane sent her out to Tyson for a story about cheerleaders. I don't think Bonnie liked it, but it was what she was supposed to do for *The Queen*. I liked her piece mostly because of the 'girl' who was featured, 'ready to cheer on her brother in football.'

Kelly Davies had ribbons and braids as well as a short cheerleader skirt, 'her' top having a big 'T' between her breasts. "What's that for?" the Tyson boys used to chant in my day. "Titties!" they would roar at the end, thinking themselves so funny. This year's cheerleaders, said Bonnie, when we gossiped about it, strutted and wiggled for the cheering crowds whenever they heard that cheer.

So many girls wanted to be cheerleaders, Bonnie reported, that each year in school now had a squad. The Senior Squad had to enroll in Beauty Culture. Those 'girls' travelled with the revived boys' football team. Popular Miss LeeAnn Charles had the Senior Squad, while Miss Shanks, Miss Letman, and Mrs

Edwards had the tasks of teaching new girls how to be the type of cheerleaders the boys in Tyson wanted to see.

“You know each of the cheerleaders has a special boy she has to sit beside on the team bus,” Bonnie said. “She has to encourage, reward and cheer him for great plays. You should see them on the way back from a game. It’s like Makeout City!”

“Don’t knock it till you’ve tried it,” I murmured to her. Bonnie grinned at me.

“It’s working,” Bonnie said ruefully. “We’re undefeated on the road this year. Ron Burton, the quarterback, told me they can’t let the girls down as they’re so sweet to the team.”

I had work to do. I was on Layout again. There was the usual huge ad from *Transformers*, only it was advertising Halloween specials. Yes, Halloween, I thought, with butterflies in my stomach. I’d avoided it in recent years, but Jane said we should make a really big splash this year, on ‘our’ day.

Rayburn Stores had an ad of Pamela Harris in her underwear. Her body was scandalously feminine. *Jane Fisher’s* had expanded and was selling dresses as well as wigs, but, oh, did their wigs ever look so good. I just wished my blonde-dyed hair would grow more quickly. I wanted really big hair like some girls in the clubs. They looked so beautiful, so girlish. I wouldn’t mind visiting *Jane Fisher’s* for a holiday special.

Ooo, what was I thinking? I must find a way out of this stupid Valley—and soon!

Our classifieds were changing. ‘Mrs Roberts, the widow of Dr Roberts’, whom Bonnie said she’d visited as a kid, ‘wishes to announce the forthcoming marriage of her son, Kenneth, and Sharon Tolman, of Upper Raybold. A bridal shower for Kenneth will be held at *Sylvester’s* on 4 December with the nuptials on 11

December, Judge Emily Cortwright presiding. Open reception at *Sylvester's*. All classmates of happy couple invited.'

Bonnie studied that for a while before saying, "That's Kendra! She's so femmy! She must be the femmiest person I've ever met! What's she doing marrying a woman?"

"Kenneth is marrying Sharon," I told her but Bonnie shook her head.

"I bet this is Kendra getting married," she said forcefully. "I'll check it out."

"For the next paper," I told her.

Another classified ad read, "If you look good in a dress, we can find a place for you in a growing entertainment industry. Female impersonators are at a premium now! Great money! Joan Treadwell, agent."

"You follow that one up." Bonnie smiled. "I'll chase down Kendra Roberts. I know she's going to be chagrined at her mother for calling her 'Kenneth'. She hasn't used that since she entered grade school, I'm sure."

The letters naturally were about revoking the Dress Code and the lack of response by the men of the Valley, men like me, who were still in their frilly panties and dresses.

"So the Dress Code is revoked," wrote Arlene Ford (wife of Council Clerk's representative, Jenny Ford). "I know my 'little woman' isn't going back to pants and drab men's wear. Jenny's a different person, so much nicer, since she reluctantly agreed to wear her panties and skirt each day. We intend to ignore the ruling. I want my Jenny in pretty dresses!"

"Why the surprise that our boyfriends are still in frilly panties?" asked Alison Rogerson in her letter. "My Annette and I have never been so close! My mom

doesn't care how many sleepovers in babydolls my friends and I have. It's so much fun to share lippy, nail polish and each other's clothes. I wouldn't want to do that with a football player. Yuck!"

"I was glad to see our lady cops haven't been replaced by men yet!" wrote Joyce Endicott. "They're so much nicer to look at and talk to. And their uniforms this summer were so lovely! No wonder the crime rate is down in the Valley!"

Tania's column for the back page had an incredible new picture of Bobbi, as I still spelled her name. She looked so cute and feminine. I think she must have had cosmetic surgery as her face was subtly different, thinner and definitely womanly. I really should have talked to her and got to know her while I had the chance but, by the changes in her now, I doubted she'd be interested in a man like me any more.

Tania saw me moon over the picture. "Should have struck while the iron was hot," she said sympathetically.

"Well, she was more interested in Dave," I sighed to her.

"Not for a long time," Tania said. "You and Jane ..."

"We're still a couple," I said, flushing.

"She doesn't know how to treat a boy like you," said Tania impatiently. "Whatever happened to Murray, was that his name?"

I blushed at that. It seemed that the whole Valley knew Michelle of *The Queen* had had a fling with a guy called Murray at the Continental North.

"Dave booted him out for his current charmer," I told her. "Dave says Murray's gone to Brampton to find work."

“Pity he’s gone,” said Tania. “Kenny Baby”— that was her squeeze or husband, though his name often changed in her columns—“and I will keep our eyes open for you, Michelle. You deserve a nice guy who knows how to treat a girl like you. But one guy it *won’t* be is Vic Perrone.”

“What happened there?” I asked, my throat dry at what she was saying to me. I did not need a nice guy. I needed to *become* a nice guy again. “How did he ever become Victoria?”

“Money, pure and simple,” said Tania in disgust. “Eloise Waters tempted him. She wanted a great band at the club in Princess River, in the Marquee. ‘Victoria’,” she said with a sneer, “can put great combos together. You should see your Bobbi with an I, just to watch and admire a woman like you. She’s a pretty fabulous chick, too, isn’t she?”

“I think so,” I admitted, ignoring the other part of the remark, though I was tingling all over as I did at compliments.

Tania had started this month’s column with Bobby, spelling it with a ‘Y’. “At the Ellis Ballroom,” Tania had written, “there are big changes. Gone is Vic Perrone, as ‘Victoria’ Perrone is leading an all-female-dressed orchestra at Princess River.

“In the Ellis is a smaller, tighter, female-dressed combo who are more adept at modern ballads and sounds. What hasn’t changed is that Bobby, once Bobby Jones, leads the band in song stylings from Mariah to Rihanna.

“Brought forward much more are the Sweethearts, a cute trio, whose female voices are much improved. Out with falsetto and in with the real thing! Terry Dupree is especially improved. When Terry and Bobby do the duet, *The Boy is Mine*, the audience and the dancers all stopped to listen and gave a great round of applause.”

The Ladybird Club wanted first spot again on the back page. It showed four of their impersonators in costume with the names beneath as the women they were imitating. Slayton, such a small hamlet north of us, was going to be visited by Marilyn, Cristina, Judy Garland and Cher.

Skirting the Issue, the play at the Mitzi Dinner Theatre, was still running and using Tania's review to good effect. "Real chemistry in this comedy. When they kiss, sparks fly! – Tania Scott."

Kelly Rogers was blonde and apparently in a new revue at the *Garth* while Jackie Ray and Karen O'Day were still at *Sylvester's*. I loved watching and listening to them. They really were so feminine. I never felt that they were impersonators. I'd have taken Valley visitors to that show, not said a word. They wouldn't have known the classy girl singer was really a man like the others in the music trio.

Jane saw the way I was looking at the drawn-up October issue of the paper. She came and put her arms around me and hugged me. I felt a little flicker stirring in my panties as she kissed me lovingly.

"Halloween's coming," Jane said with a smile. "You'll lead that assignment. Dave is useless at it. You and Bonnie should really dress up on Halloween. It'll be the last gala, this year, at Princess River as well. Did I tell you I bought a Tinkerbell costume for you there? You should be a fairy for Halloween, Michelle. It's the theme for this year's parade but the Tinkerbell costume isn't pretty enough. We can do a lot better. I've got *Transformers* working on it. I promise you that Michelle Little is going to be the Queen of Halloween this year!"

I'd thought I'd never make out in the stock room again. Well, I didn't—with Dave. Jane was the insatiable one who couldn't wait for quitting time. She led me into the back room. It wasn't just kissing and fondling that she wanted from her 'wife'. On her orders, I

lifted my dress and let her take down my panties, knowing exactly what I was doing as she, Jane, made love to me fiercely, wanting me to be all delicate and ultra-feminine. Yes, that's the way I felt all through our intense lovemaking, me being totally a woman, a lesbian, in Jane's arms. I think the possibility of being discovered really added spice to her lovemaking. I know it did to mine.

We must have made out for over an hour until she was sated with her 'wife'. Oh, how she slapped my tush and laughed at me as I put my panties back on. She kissed me then and told me to wait until I got home, where we would start round two. Oh, that was even more blissful for the girl I'd become, more blissful than the starting round on the job.

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No, I wasn't a fairy for Halloween. I was Mae West. I tried to act like her. It was easy around the office and such a laugh with Jane, Bonnie and Tania, as they trained and prepped me for my big night as one of the queens of Halloween. Once we hit the streets, however, me in a long, very tight gown and blonde wig, Jane in a tux, it was nothing like being with friendly, supportive girls.

We went out later, when all the children and young teens had been taken off by their parents or shooed away by our very feminine police force. From the first, it was frankly terrifying. There were so many people, all in costume, so many much prettier girls than me on the streets, hanging off balconies and squealing their heads off.

Yes, it was so noisy. Girls' voices screamed at me, 'darling' Mae West. I was urged to join in everywhere, in the constant parades, girls everywhere, girls like me. I wore a large hat with feathers, strutting like a

movie star. Jane there to make sure I sashayed as Mae West would have done. Guys just flocked around me.

Not just guys. On this particular Halloween, real girls had decided to get dressed in boy costumes to be polar opposites of their 'girlfriends', many scantily clad as fairies, Arab princesses or famous female celebrities, like me. The whole night, in part, was a role reversal. It became really different when the boys from the farms and ranches came in dressed simply as cowboys. The 'slave girls' around me almost devoured them.

Jane wanted me in character all the time. The jelly-type mounds attached to me bounced like Mae's, delighting the men as much as they'd pleased me at first. Oh, I did feel so feminine for a while. I even loved being held and hugged and kissed, by darling men, of course.

"I've come up and you can see me now," one beery wag answered my imitation of 'Mae' to the delight of his friends.

I had to kiss him. "I've kissed better lips on a dead mackerel," was one line I used that had our little audience sniggering. "Such a big fuss over such a little thing," was another as I jiggled my tush up against the poor, half-drunk, foolishly smiling guy who just wanted to lay me, probably thinking I was real. I don't know why, but that thought made me feel really cute and femmy, as Tania had said I was.

I shook my hips to and fro and sashayed about all the parties. Jane, in the tuxedo jacket and pants, made me visit up and down the strip. Soon I did start to love being a part of everything going on.

Jane ran two extra pages in *The Queen*, later, about the 'different' Halloween that had enthralled the town. There I was, pictured, doing my best to be Mae, a milling crowd of men around me. I did see a

cowboy and a dance-hall queen being flashed and pictured by Bonnie, 'our' Playboy bunny. Only when I read *The Queen* later in the week did I realize the cowboy was our mayor, while the dance-hall queen was her husband, Doug!

Mayor Slayton had to go to the Roxy because Al Bass had the great idea of handing out awards for civic service on Halloween. Lois Slayton was honored for all she'd done getting our new road built, and for the 'New Economic Plan' that seemed to be making the Valley flourish in so many ways.

Eloise Waters, in a tux like Jane's, squired Martina King of Trans-it Adventures. They were honoured at the Roxy as the 'power couple' of the year. Martina was dressed like a fairy and was busy throwing 'fairy dust' on all kinds of young men but, luckily, without a great deal of success. I say, luckily, because the guys she was trying to attract were tough guys from the Upper Valley who kept demanding from all of us in dresses, "Are you a real girl? I only wanna fuck a real girl!"

"Forget it," Eloise told several of the most belligerent, who were spoiling all the girlie fun. "Just go with the flow, boy! If she looks like a girl, treat her like one!"

I had to say to one guy who taunted me, "You've had too much to drink, Mr Cowboy. You've gone soft on me." The guy laughed, thank goodness, and promised that, when "hard times" returned, he'd be looking for me.

The club parties couldn't be contained. Show-girls—show boys, I suppose, like Chantal—spilled out all over the streets as Raybold and Glass were closed to traffic. The mild weather brought out almost everyone in the Valley to celebrate. The year could have gone so badly but ended up with a boom, money and jobs, largely because of the new resort.

I'd never seen a joyful Halloween like it before. Bands like the Deaf Lizards did a set, in front of the Ellis, as did Jackie Ray from the *Sylvester* balcony. Bobbi and the Sweethearts added to the carnival atmosphere, again outside the Ellis.

The Queen of England and Prince Albert arrived at the Ellis Ballroom in a coach from the resort to declare the festivities a 'bloody great success'. Everyone loved Prince Albert's mustache and Victoria's crown and her long flowing hair. Everyone knew they were the Taggarts, Melissa and John.

I put their pictures with the column, Bonnie's and mine, and clearly wrote that John was on the left. Both Bonnie and Jane still said how well Melissa behaved as the Queen! And John was so perfect with his military bearing and waxed mustache! I had to ask Jane who was on the left according to the caption. It took a long time for the penny to drop.

"That's John Taggart!" Jane screamed at me the following day. "The Queen of England was John Taggart!" I could imagine how wonderful John must have felt putting that one over on everyone. And Melissa was a perfect Prince Albert, I must say, as well.

The *Transformers* ad for November showed Tom 'Tara' Elliott, the Queen of the Ladybird, and Ben 'Belinda' Thomas, a harem courtesan, novice Queen of the Garth. Both were so beautiful and so shapely in the fine undergarments that *Transformers* used to make men appear like women in every way. We got a shot later of Tara Elliott "fainting" into a grinning Al Bass's arms.

Al didn't let Tara go, Bonnie confided to me. Bonnie went up to Slayton to get pictures there. Al Bass, Bonnie said, took Tara home at the end of the Slayton party at five in the morning. By then, they were completely amorous with one another, said Bonnie. Or they were asleep with their lips and bodies locked together; Bonnie couldn't decide which.

We got pictures of brides in several places. The Three Brides had a little skit about Looking for Husbands. Barry Smith, Stan White and Gerry Hewes, in a strapless dress, outshining the others, captured willing guys up and down the streets but there was always something wrong, the size of the guys' you-know-whats, the way they kissed or the fact that they didn't know how to hold a bride.

The brides led a whole crowd after midnight to the Continental North party. They were at the center of attention as they took over the top floor with their bridesmaids. They did ask me to join them—but Mae West wouldn't play second fiddle to anyone, as I told them.

“When the kids were put to bed,” I wrote in *The Queen's* account of Halloween, “the adults came out to play on a Halloween unlike any in the Valley's history for numbers and the gaiety on display.”

I couldn't go to everything, but I did hear much of the music and the raucous crowds. On the platform in front of the Roxy, the Wannabes, four blondes in short black dresses, Gary, Norm, Brent and Stu, performed as a girl singing group and really turned on the crowds in the street. They just looked so cute. They were all from the Tyson High School class of two years ago.

This year's twelfth-year grad class parodied them on the back of a truck across the street. This year's class were all brunettes, Greg, Bill, Tom and Paul, their short dresses just covering their panties and no more. They called themselves the Ponytails and sang as well as the Wannabes. Each group taunted the other, 'stealing' boyfriends for extended necking sessions as well as arousing 'men', their girlfriends, with their sensuous, erotic dancing.

It was chaotic and wonderful as we all danced and cheered and were hugged and kissed. We drank barrels of alcohol! Many were getting really high, but the

best thing to me was the cops out there as targets—targets for kissing, mauling and caressing, often by more than one guy at once. And the great thing about all of it was that the deputies only laughed and kissed back! I saw Josie Lyon point to one guy on top of a car. He jumped down. The two kissed and kissed, before heading to the North Continental. And when the cops diverted girls with open drinks back into the clubs, everyone assisted them in keeping order.

Guys stood with their arms about pretty deputies like Giselle McKenzie and Rachel Smith, a huge favorite of the crowd for all the high kicks she did along with the Wannabes.

Bonnie and I tried to get all the excitement on the pages of the paper, including the Garth's King and Queen—role reversal again. Jane claimed it was a tradition of the Valley, but Bonnie said she was poking fun at me. Bonnie had never seen anything like what was taking place in the Valley. The unlikeliest of men were parading in skimpy dresses and pretending to be women, while their wives seemed delighted to be soldiers, sailors or policemen, lording it over their 'wives'.

And which man did Michelle, aching for love as Mae West had never done, end up with? I was in a passionate kiss with a really nice guy who followed me from the *Garth* to the *Roxy* and finally to *The Jaundiced Eye*, plying me with drinks from which I took only sips here and there. He was dressed like a caveman and had muscles that once I would have envied.

I'd just decided he could take me to the North when Jane came waltzing up beside me in her black bow tie and jacket, looking like her sister. She didn't carry a lash, as her dominant sister did, but I could almost hear it crackling as the caveman tried to tell her I was taken.

“My wife,” said Jane with no little dignity and force, “is a whore, but tonight she’s coming home with me. Tell your big ox, Michelle, you prefer women to a man like him. He couldn’t afford you, anyway.”

“You couldn’t prefer her to me,” said the caveman, putting a huge hand on my tush. Jane laughed as he pinched me hard.

“She, she’s my husband,” I murmured sweetly to my would-be lover, who was frightening me.

Oh, he was angry! He shoved me hard, and might have done more, but Rachel Smith and Cindy Rennie were right there behind Jane. Swearing, cursing, and calling me all the most horrible epithets for a woman, my would-be lover was transported in cuffs to a jail cell for the night. I went home all aroused and trembly for my tux-clad ‘husband’, who treated me as any dominatrix would for that one night. It was such a change from everything we’d done before that I even enjoyed it, because Jane really did.

The biggest ‘real’ news of the month wasn’t Halloween, of course, but the opening of the toll road from Princess River to Brampton. There was quite a ceremony at the Riverbend tollgate. Mayor Lois Slayton was there and called it ‘fitting’ that Princess Mari-gold, with Princess Margot and Princess Guinevere, should be the ones to cut the tapes and officially open the blacktop road.

Without Princess River Resort, the road would never have found backers and have been built, said Mayor Slayton. Not only the Princesses were there but the Senior Squad cheerleaders, including Kelly Davies, ‘daughter’ of the man who got the whole resort idea going.

Eloise Waters praised the lovely girls who danced, wiggled, and gave out gifts to those entering that day. Eloise also announced that a contract signed with Martina King and Trans-it Adventures and Tours

meant that there would be conventions and cotillions on every major holiday at Princess River.

“We already know we’ll be full from April to September next year,” Eloise announced. “And much of the following year we’ll be expanding. Hopefully, these pretty cheerleaders will be Princesses by then.”

“How classy of our mayor, Lois Slayton, to stand back and allow others, *Princesses on Parade*, to open our new connection to the world,” wrote Jane in an editorial that must have made the whole Valley blink. *The Queen of the Valley* was actually praising a politician!

“In office for just eight months, Slayton has done more for the Valley than ten previous mayors,” Jane wrote, surprising me. “The mayor, of course, was busy praising the beleaguered Councillor Tom ‘Laura’ Beman. It was Beman who came up with the idea of the resort, interested Earl Davies, recruited Eloise Waters to work for Princess River Resorts, and got banker-rancher John Stephens to agree to bankroll the project.”

“All I had to do was to sign off on all the work already done by these people, particularly my friend, Laura Beman,” said the mayor, according to Jane. “That’s what makes what is going on now, all the snide remarks about her, so wrong. So what if a man wears a dress? So long as he does his job on the Council as he should, we should tolerate the expression of his own sexuality.”

“The road,” Jane finished up, “will mean a thirty-minute trip to Brampton, on a safe blacktop road, instead of the three- and four-hour boneshakers we residents have put up with for so long! The old road will be closed now, to prepare for winter. So, thanks to all of you, to pretty Princesses and cute cheerleaders, from a grateful Valley, from us at *The Queen*. The Valley is now open to the world!”

Dave not only wrote the piece on the opening of the road, but he was in court to follow the opening moves of the Beman expedited divorce trial. Josephine Wyatt didn't take Ellen's case; Lacey Smith did, which caused more than a little surprise.

As part of her suit, Ellen James Beman, a Councilor like her husband, presented photographs of her husband, as a woman, kissing John Stephens when Stephens was her husband's 'date' at various Council functions. Ellen Beman alleged that her husband shared a bed with Stephens at his ranch and at Brampton's Mark Hotel.

Josephine Wyatt was representing John Stephens in the suit as he'd been named as the 'other man' in the divorce action. I didn't know Stephens was the Bemans' best man at their wedding or that he was in high school with Tom. Wyatt says that there are 'innocent answers' to all the allegations; John Stephens was just being a good friend to someone who'd been a friend for years.

The picture of the two arriving at the ranch after a week away was like looking at a married couple, the way she (Tom Beman, Laura now) was dressed. She was really elegant as she held hands with John Stephens, even though neither would speak to Dave Richardson.

Jane chose a letter from the mail bag attacking Dave. Joe and Jane Lyon asked for more balance in writing about 'Laura' Beman, that's what they called Tom, and less publishing of rants by Donna Leslie.

Martin Cross was at the opening ceremonies for the toll road. "I don't know her real name," he went on in his letter, "but Princess Marigold has to be commended on her role. She was so sweet and lovely. Can I find out her real name from you?"

Jane was really nasty in her Editor's Note, writing: "Martin, sit down first. All Princesses from the Resort

are male. Are you sure that you want 'her' real name?"

She could just have told him to ask Princess River, or even Marigold herself if he got to dance with her in the Charming Marquee. I'm sure Marigold wouldn't have lied to him. I hadn't lied to any of the men I'd kissed on Halloween about my gender. I didn't have to, of course, because they all seemed to know me, Michelle, the 'girl' reporter, and what I was.

An old name popped up in the last letter Jane chose, former Councillor Greg Jara. He attacked Mayor Lois Slayton for being biased, I presumed about men in dresses. "I mean," wrote Jara, in one part of his letter, "does Doug Slayton only wear his dancing girl outfits on Halloween? I don't think so!"

Jane let Lois Slayton herself answer that one. "Unfair, Greg, very unfair," Lois wrote. "The Fancy Dress theme at our Council socials was proposed by you and Tom Wayne. As I recall, John Lewis and Walt McIsaac wore their wife's clothes two years ago at a Halloween bash. Leave my husband out of politics, Greg."

I hadn't seen the back page at all. I only read Tania's column and saw the ads she edited after publication. I loved her column as it wasn't about Halloween at all. It was about pantomime, which I'd loved in my home town as a child.

"Opening the Empire Theater, nearly two years in renovation, is a revival of the English pantomime, *Cinderella*," wrote Tania. "Much like burlesque, the pantomime is based upon the switching of roles between men and women. The story is always well known but never gets in the way of goofy comedy routines or schmaltzy pop songs.

"Barry Christie is the Wicked Stepmother, and exudes female bitchiness, his lines causing the preview audience to groan with delight.

“Karen Holcomb is a delightful Cinderella, full of dewy softness. She has skin that I would die for! The children at this performance lined up in an enormous line to get her autograph and tell her how they hoped to grow up to be as pretty as she is. Please, mom and dad, don’t let on that Karen, late of *Princesses on Parade*, is really a Ken and not a Barbie.

“The Ugly Sisters, listed as Mark and Mike Rennie, are anything but. They are accomplished musical performers and are more slutty and man-mad, than evil, to their beautiful step-sister. Jennifer Grant as Prince Charming is properly smitten with Karen Holcomb. There is chemistry between the two. Are they really kissing in the final ball? If not, they do a really good job of faking it.

“A wonderful evening. And yes, take the children.”

The ad for the Empire Theater showed several lovely girls and didn’t mention who was who. I knew Karen and recognized her. She looked lovely.

Below the other back-page ads was the one for Franco’s, featuring a lovely boy-girl as they did each month. ‘Kendra’ was a striking brunette girl, her curly hair in a ponytail, her mouth really vivid in her smiling portrait as Miss Summer. Franco was advertising a ‘Best Legs’ contest in the weeks ahead.

“You should enter that,” said Jane when she saw what I was turned to. “Just look at those gams,” she said. My tiny skirt covered almost no part of my stockinged thighs. “You’d be the winner for sure, Michelle!”

Volume 25 Issue No. 5 14 December

December was supposed to be a slow month, but a strange thing happened. Dave, who was on the story,

wrote: "On a rare icy day, the car carrying the people known as Eloise Waters, Chairperson of Davies-Valley Resorts Ltd, and Martina King, organizer of Trans-it Adventures and Tours, crashed into a newly erected power pole along the Valley Highway.

"Linton Clinic nurses reported the victims as 'two male occupants' of the Lincoln Town Car. The Linton assessment is true. Eloise Waters is a man, as is pre-op, transgendered tour organizer, Martina King.

"Earl Davies, on probation from Valley Court, was 'shocked and dismayed' by the revelation that Eloise Waters, his personnel manager and successor at Princess River, was male.

"Now we know why she, he, turned my lovely resort into a freak show,' said Earl Davies, indicating he'd immediately be taking over at the company he began.

"At the Linton clinic, Dr Alice North apologized for the 'inadvertent' revelation of Eloise Waters' true gender.

"The nurse who confirmed that information is in tears. We've sent her home,' said Dr North. 'I want to assure all patients who are brought here that, in the future, we'll be much more professional in our news bulletins.'

"According to North, the nurse should only have spoken of injuries sustained by the patient. Julia Linton, the Clinic head, agreed later. 'A person's gender is irrelevant to treatment,' she said. 'We can report that X has a broken leg and leave X privacy in all other matters. It will be this way in future medical situations.'"

There was a picture of Eloise and Martina in low-cut summery dresses, having a great time at the opening of Trans-it's 'Summer Dresses' adventure.

I was on the front page with a story! Yet another doctor had joined the Linton Clinic. I was sent by Jane to meet Dr Diane Lee. She was mentioned months before by Julia, but it took her a while to wind up her other practice and arrive in the Valley prepared for a new one.

“The Valley is so much more conducive to the patients and surgeries I’m noted for,” said Dr Lee, smiling all the time in our interview. “But I’m glad I can do so many other types of surgeries as well.”

“What is your main type of surgery?” I asked Diane as she asked me to call her. She was quite small and was wearing very high heels that matched her red, padded business suit. I think she had a high opinion of what the Valley newspaper meant to our small community.

“I’ve been doing SRS almost exclusively,” said Diane Lee. “I’ll have a lot of patients referred to me coming here, but Janice will take a lot of the load from me in cosmetic surgeries and facial feminizations. I treated the whole woman in my last assignment. This way, I’ll be able to do much more SRS and other micro-surgeries I’m trained for.”

“SRS?” I said weakly as Diane smiled at me. “Sexual Reassignment Surgery?”

“Exactly,” beamed Diane. “The new extension to the clinic along Church Street and Church Street Plaza will be perfect for me. My patients are going to be thrilled when they come here to convalesce as women in such a supportive place for women like us. The natural support groups will be a thrill for them. They’ll be out on the street and no-one, not even the Sheriffs, will challenge them. You have such wonderful entertainments here as well. I love the theatres and night clubs I’ve been to already!

“Once I’m known, I won’t need many patients from outside Raybold coming in. I might get enough work

from all the girls I've seen around here. Julia tells me you might be one of my patients soon, Michelle. I promise you'll be thrilled at the work I do. I make sure, in the surgery itself, that all my new women will be orgasmic very soon. I have some pamphlets for you."

Those pamphlets caused me a lot of trouble with Jane. She accused me of wanting to have that surgery done. She was very angry with me and, I think, afraid for me, probably afraid for what it would do to the two of us. Hmm, it would be one way of getting out of Jane's clutches, I thought.

Dr Lee floored me at the end by saying she'd be joined here by her two children, two sons, later in the year.

I gasped and gaped. I learned, not for publication, that Diane Lee had once been married and had fathered, yes, that's what she said, she'd fathered two children. That, of course, wouldn't happen again as Diane had had SRS herself in Canada, several years before.

When her sons came to live with her, they'd call her 'Diane' and not 'Daddy'. If they ever wanted to call her 'Mummy', Diane said she'd just love it. Her divorce lawyers were working on the final accounting with Diane's former wife. It would be so good for her boys to get away from a hectoring mother, Diane's words, and get a new start in Raybold, the most tolerant city she'd ever been in, for transgendered people.

Jane did a gushing editorial on how the Linton Clinic had grown and progressed. "Not bad for someone who, two years ago, was to be run out of town for liking to wear a dress. Way to go, Joe!"

“That’s two favorable editorials in a row for transnics,” I said to Jane. I’d told her, but she hadn’t acknowledged it in *The Queen*, that Diane Lee was the fourth tranny doctor out of five we had now in the Valley.

“So? *The Queen* is changing its editorial spin,” smirked Jane. “Oh dear, I wonder what Uncle Brian would say—but I won’t find out, because he hasn’t bothered to read a word that’s appeared in *The Queen* since he’s been gone.”

“He wouldn’t allow this to be printed,” I said, smiling, as I read Bonnie’s account of the Rogers-Tolman nuptials. Yes, Kenneth Roberts was the girl whom Bonnie knew as Kendra. I think they’d been in some kind of transsexual group when they were younger, but Bonnie never really said much about her girlhood. She was shy about it, as I’d have been if I was like her, wanting so much to be a woman some day.

Bonnie had taken a picture of the wedding party with Mrs Joan Roberts on the left, and the smiling, adorable bride whom her mother kept calling ‘Kenneth’. A tall, dark, masculine figure in a tux had an arm about the bride and looked totally in command of the affair. Bonnie’s caption identified the groom as Sharon Tolman, while the bridesmaids were very familiar to me.

Debbie Allen and Sally Karlsen looked really sweet in their low-cut bridesmaids’ dresses, holding on to their bouquets of flowers. The dresses were in a dark, blushing pink and looked so neat. I mention that because newsprint just showed their dresses as grey. They were so much prettier than that in the original pictures.

Kendra’s bridal dress and veil came from *Melanie’s*, Bonnie wrote in her story. Sharon had once been married to Alan Powers, a man I’d danced with and kissed on Halloween. Sharon, owner of Tolman’s Computers, said she’d been a bride once

and didn't need the hassle again. Bonnie reported Sharon saying it was Mrs. Roberts who wanted Kenneth to be a bride. Sharon had no objection to it.

Judge Emily Cortwright married them as Kenneth and Sharon. They had a first-class reception at *Sylvester's* that Bonnie went to with her boy friend. She says she had a great time.

"Mrs Roberts knows me, of course," said Bonnie. "She said Kenneth started dressing as a girl in the protest at Tyson. She might have convinced herself of that, but Kendra's been a girl on every occasion she could for years longer than that.

"She told me Kenneth had been Sharon's girlfriend for a long time, which is so contradictory. Anyway, she's pleased Sharon is in charge of the marriage. She felt sure Kenneth would be a good wife to Sharon."

The last line of Bonnie's piece noted that, after the marriage, Kenneth was to be known as Mrs. Kendra Tolman. One look back at the wedding photos and I could see that was completely appropriate. I looked at Jane, who was busy on the phone. Is this what the future holds for me, I wondered? Was I going to be just like Kendra, and someday have everyone know me as Mrs. Michelle Edwards?

I shuddered at that thought and turned to the next mock-up Jane was working on. There was a notice there that *The Queen of the Valley* was expanding its news services. Two new interns—Alan Terrell, 19, and Breanne Newman, 20—were being added to the staff as Youth and Fashion reporters. Bonnie Helman was going to be 'in charge' of that department.

Right across the page from the announcement was an ad for the Del Monte School. Its picture was of a big-haired girl, Ellen Terrell, a "Miss Del Monte" for the Fall. I looked back. Only one letter was different in the spelling of Allen and Ellen.

That gave me two things to talk to Jane about. I had no idea we were ‘expanding’. What did she mean by Bonnie heading up a department? Was she over me, Dave, and Tania now? Oh, there were going to be fireworks, I promised, just as soon as Jane got off the phone.

I checked what Jane was doing with the letters, the classified and the other display ads. *Transformers* had its usual ad with an unusually sexy transformation—‘sexy’ in the sense that ‘Helena’ was terrific-looking, womanly, vivacious, while Henry looked like her dolt of a brother.

Josie Lyon, still a deputy, and Andrea May, still working for the Council, were the models again for *Melanie’s*, and both were changing. Their hair was longer, curlier, and their breasts were definitely noticeable. Yes, they could be padded, but I didn’t think so. They looked very real to me. Girls everywhere now, and boy-girls in particular, had spectacular figures. The Linton Clinic didn’t have to advertise its T and A work. One look down any Raybold street and you could see that Dr Janice Long was really hard at work, changing the look of our little town quite considerably.

The Benet Boutique was a new ad. It showed silhouettes of girls declaring it had everything for the ‘modern’ girl. It was selling ‘special undergarments’ to give every girl real authenticity. Oh, I thought with a shiver, I was definitely going to visit this boutique on Upper Glass Street, quite close to the office.

With Jane still on the phone, I read two letters she’d pinned to the page, leaving spaces for her comments.

Henry Karlsen had written a letter asking why the police were still in dresses. And the Valley Council employees. And the school kids. The editor’s note was filled in. It said: “Good questions. Michelle will report on this in our next issue.”

I thought: Oh, I will, will I?

Tania came in with the back page set out. "You should do this, Michelle," she smirked at me. "Since you're Assistant Editor."

I frowned at her. Tania laughed at me. "Do that again, Michelle. Gosh, I think you're prettier when you're angry than when you're smiling!" she said.

"What do you mean, Assistant Editor?" I asked her.

"Dave's Lead Reporter, I'm Entertainment Department Head, Bonnie is Lifestyle Head, and you are the second-in-command," said Tania. "Congratulations, Michelle! I don't think the new titles mean increased pay. Not with two more mouths to feed."

I was a little mollified when Jane called us in for our editorial conference. Tania had written a whole column about Holly Irving, 'movie actress', being home for Christmas, bringing her director with her, and dancing every night in different clubs with her friends, Debbie Allen, Karen Holcomb, and Helen Collins.

"You know, this is too far out for our readers," said Jane, the first time I've ever heard her criticize Tania. "It's Hollywood gossip, not local happening. Until Holly Irving comes down here and drops her panties on the Garth stage, let's just give her a line at the end of a paragraph in future, okay, Tania?"

It wasn't okay with Tania. For the first time in two years, she went off in a huff.

"I wanted her to write about this," said Jane with a frown, staring after Tania. '*Victoria's Palace*' was a new nightclub opening at Princess River the year round. Debbie Allen and 'The Dancing Princesses Revue' was there.

"I think the place is named for Victoria Perrone," said Jane. "Tania shouldn't have needed me to tell her to write about this. Talk to her, Michelle. You're my assistant editor now. We'll let this Holly Irving thing run for now, but I want a real connection to the Valley and its night life if she mentions Holly again."

"No more girl reporter," Dave murmured to me as he went out. He goosed me on my backside. "Hmm," he said. "You should be thinking of a little T and A." He began singing the song from *A Chorus Line*.

"Excellent idea, Dave," said Jane, coming back from the publisher's office. "Great minds never differ. Here you are, Michelle, your Christmas present. No more corsets and paddings, strappings and such for you. Dr. Long has room on her schedule for Miss Little. When we see you in the New Year, Michelle, you're going to have real breasts and a bouncy tush."

I think all the blood drained from my face. "No, I can't," I squeaked as Bonnie came rushing in with Tania. They asked me what I thought of their Christmas present to me. Even Dave had chipped in. "I'd like her left nipple to be mine," he said seriously and the girls went into giggles of laughter.

The whole office had pooled their money for me to get breast implants. What could I say to that? Such unexpected generosity was making me all weepy and sentimental. And frightened stiff, wondering why I wasn't telling them all, No, thank you! I did say, "Thank you!"—but it was 'thank you' for nothing, because I wasn't going to go to Dr. Long.

Volume 25 Issue No. 5 18 January

Janice Long couldn't have been nicer when I finally got up the courage to see her in the Linton Clinic to tell her it was all a mistake and not to call me again.

“It’s such a wonderful procedure, Michelle,” she said to me enthusiastically. “You are such a pretty girl. With breasts, you are going to feel so much more womanly. And yes, a little work around your tush and tops of your thighs, and your miniskirts are going to fit you so much better. You won’t need those pads any more.”

Janice had laid out all the pads and strappings I wore on a table beside her. I felt so silly as I lay on the examining table in my panties, garter belt and stockings. I knew Janice wasn’t a woman, either, but I felt so embarrassed for her to see me as I was, a slender boy in women’s underwear, despite my makeup face and blonde hair, styled like a woman’s.

But I was a boy, I kept telling her. Janice kept agreeing with me, saying dryly she’d noticed that. She didn’t understand that I wasn’t there to be her patient!

Janice finally let me dress again in my bra, slip, top and skirt. I slipped my feet into my high heels and listened to her explain what she’d do to me. Never, I thought wildly. I was never coming to the Linton Clinic ever again. The ‘Christmas Present’ Jane, Tania, Bonnie and Dave had pooled together to give me was a T and A procedure. In two weeks or so, I’d have breasts like a woman, Janice assured me. I’d have rounder hips and thighs.

Janice also examined my face. “Excellent,” she murmured as she studied the computer images she’d taken of me. “I wouldn’t recommend a full facial feminization as I just did to the patient ahead of you, Michelle. I could do a little with your nose, maybe shave the chin line a little, but I wouldn’t touch the larynx (your Adam’s apple is so well hidden), or your brows. You’re as flat there as a girl should be.”

Janice showed me with a pointer the little things she’d do to make me prettier as a woman.



“But those things,” I gasped with cold shivers running through me, “would be *permanent*, wouldn't they? I'd always look like that, with my nose thinned and tilted up a little.”

Janice smiled at me. “Yes,” she said. “Oh, you're not quite ready for permanent changes? Not on hormones yet? A year's course of those would really reduce the size of the implants we have to give you to make you bounce like a natural woman. It's slower, but not as costly. You don't want to try that route to womanhood?”

“No!” I gasped in alarm. “I'm not on any route to anything!”

Janice smiled at me. “We'll see,” she said simply. “What you're going to have is just a day procedure. How about the twentieth? You should be well recovered for Valentine's Day, which I hear is going to be another big celebration here in the Valley, like Halloween last year.”

I had to shiver at that. On Halloween, I'd danced in the streets with so many men. It had been a fantastic night. I couldn't imagine anything rivaling that celebration, when the whole town had seemed to be in on the role-reversal game.

I sashayed anxiously out of the Linton Clinic in my tight tan skirt, light stockings and flirty top, my hair loose and feminine. I vowed I'd never return again. I headed in relief to an interview with the new Council Clerk, the head of the Valley's bureaucracy, who'd replaced Ellen James Beman.

“You're in charge of Women's Issues,” Jane had said to me, confirming a new role for me on *The Queen of the Valley*. “You remember the last letter we published about why all the men forced to dress as women are still in dresses, four months past the date that order was repealed? You have interviews to

make and an article to write about it, Michelle. I promised, didn't I, that you would."

I fumed about that. I wanted to be lead reporter on the paper. I wanted to be down at the Courthouse covering the Davies case of husband Earl and wife Renee, fighting over control of the Princess River resort, provider of such economic impetus to the whole Valley in the past year.

Women's Issues? I had no clear answer to what those were exactly. I had a sort of idea I was going to be covering diets, fashion shows, hairstyles and childrearing. I dreaded the thought of the latter, as Tania and Jane had been talking about breastfeeding in the last 'meeting' we 'women' had in the bar.

The other girls had been looking at our waitress, who we all knew was a boy, and the large, bouncing breasts 'she' was delighting in showing off. That's when Tania said that, with the right drugs, those breasts would be just great for breastfeeding.

Tania talked about how nutritious milk from a male might be, compared to that from a female. Jane had turned to me and said, "There, Michelle, a woman's issue to follow up on and write about after you see Dr. Long. Find out what it would take to allow you to feed your soulmate's baby."

I lived with and slept with Jane. Once she'd said to me, "I'm not getting any younger, Michelle. I should think of children. But when I do, I think of them attached to me like limpets. Ugh, that's why I'm not having children. If I did, you'd have to be the one to grow your breasts and suckle them for me. I'm not joking, Michelle!"

I'd laughed and giggled at that. Jane finally joined me.

This time, however, Jane was looking at me as if it was a question I should seriously take up with Janice Long. I was far too hot and bothered by the whole

thing, feeling maneuvered into arguing with her over something so silly.

I was being maneuvered into getting breasts like our waitress's, I knew that. I was still telling myself I wouldn't do that, ever.

Everyone knew me at the Council House. "Good morning, Miss Little," said a deputy, Francesca New, who was on duty, opening the door for me.

Her voice was feminine. Her hair was pinned back but gleamed with blonde highlights as she smiled at me. There was a sway in Francesca's walk that was suggestively female.

"Why, Francesca," I asked her as she stood in her short skirt with v-shaped slits up her thighs. "We had a letter asking why you're still dressed like that!" I knew she was Frank New, not Francesca, for her first years of being a deputy.

Francesca leaned forward. I caught the fragrance of *Opium* she was wearing. "I love it," she whispered to me. "And so does my boyfriend."

That stunned me. I clicked across the marble floor in my girlish high heels and asked the young, blushing girl in front of the office to announce me to the City Clerk. Later, Francesca posed and smiled prettily for a picture for me, which I used with the article, as well as the posed one of the cool, blonde, elegant Jane Dillon.

"Y-Yes, M-Miss Little," the new girl said in a squeaky voice. I looked at her more closely. She was definitely in a wig and was blushing under my scrutiny. She hurriedly pulled in her arms as she sat at her desk, trying to look anywhere but at me. Definitely a boy, I thought, even though her name tag said she was 'Danielle Morton'.

“Thank you, Danielle,” said Jane Dillon as she came to greet me, leading me into the office I’d always thought of as Ellen James’s.

It was so odd to chat like women when neither of us was. I asked Jane why there’d been no rush back to male attire among Valley employees.

“In fact,” Jane Dillon said, “it’s not only no rush back, but all our new hires, like Danielle outside, are willingly taking on female dress like their older counterparts.”

“Why?” I asked her. “Will Jane ever become James again?”

Jane Dillon grimaced at that. “My wife says, No,” Jane said with a laugh to me. “You’ve got Jane Edwards organizing you, haven’t you? Why haven’t *you* changed back, Michelle? It’s the women, I think, who want us girls in our right place, don’t you think, besides the fact I like dressing and being taken for a woman. The women think they have us under their thumbs, I suppose.

“I mean, have you seen Mayor Slayton’s little girl lately? She’s 24-7 now. This fad is going to last longer than people think, Michelle. My sons are at Tyson. They wouldn’t think of going out *without* dresses and makeup. They’re always stealing from me and wanting to wear my newest cocktail and evening dresses. So, I’ll be Jane for a very long time, I think. Most of my workers think just as I do. It’s our wives who don’t want us to change!”

Sheriff Joanne Conan said much the same of the Sheriff’s Department. She wouldn’t hire a male-dressed cop, she confessed to me. “Crime is way down,” said Joanne, who used to be John. “We find it so much easier to work with drunks, our most common crime in the Valley, dressed as we are. Fights are way down and our showing up in our little skirts seems to stop, not ignite, battles as in the past.

So, we'll keep our skirts and makeup and hair, I believe, for a long time yet."

Hair on her head she meant, of course, as I saw how lovely Joanne's legs were as she sat in her small skirt. Her blouse was open as well, and she seemed to be augmented as I was supposed to be. We had a little chat about that. As she said, what were the men in the Valley who had augmentations to do? They could reverse and go back to being men, but Rachel, Lois and Francesca had had nose bobs, as I must have seen. They'd look ridiculous as men.

So I had my article, which I finished quickly and Jane liked. She gave me my usual task, as assistant editor, to assemble the rest of the stories that would make up the first newspaper of the New Year.

Dave had written the lead story in a factual way. I suppose it really needed that, but I shook when I saw the picture that accompanied it. It showed John Quinlan, son of the richest family in the Valley, with his arm about a smiling Kelly Davies. She was on the cheerleader squad and was the cause of the fight between her mother and father. Earl, the father, had objected to his son, Kelly, dressing as a girl and kissing her boyfriend, John Quinlan, so passionately on the front steps of his home where all the neighbors could see.

It wasn't Kelly in the picture that shook me, though. There was Kelly's twin, the boy I'd interviewed at Tyson and written a long piece about, on his transition to a new high school. How tough it had been, he'd said, when girls he'd gone out with turned out not to be girls. Now, a year later, Tom Davies, clutching his mother Renee's hand, was definitely Kelly's twin.

Dave had matter-of-factly described the darker-haired twin—in a dress just like her sister, her hair as long and curly as her sister's, in makeup

and jewelry—as ‘Tom’. That’s all. No comment or explanation necessary, Dave seemed to be saying.

The next story was about Renee Davies petitioning the court to name her trustee of Davies-Valley Resort Company, the economic engine of the little boom our Valley had experienced for a year. Earl, of course, was on probation for the assaults on John Quinlan and Kelly. The automobile accident that put his successor as CEO of Davies-Valley, Eloise Waters, in the hospital, where it had been inadvertently revealed she was a man, had brought Earl to proclaim he was taking over and was going to ‘clean up the rot’ at the Princess River Resort.

Everyone knew that would mean ending the transvestite conventions that had been the backbone of work at the Princess River Resort. Earl Davies would fire all the crossdressing staff, many of whom were doing it just for the money—or so they told me, there being no jobs anywhere else. I said that myself in the morning as I put on my makeup, did my hair, and worked my bra into a comfortable position before I put on my skirt and top. It was for the job.

But it was a year later for me, and look what I was getting into now. Was I actually thinking I’d take advantage of the crazy Christmas present the staff at *The Queen* gave me. Dr Janice had called it ‘a step into womanhood’ and it was. A huge step. My heart was pounding as I thought about it. I didn’t know if I was ready for such a declaration that, yes, I was more than a man now.

The wolf was pushed from the door by Judge Emily Cortwright’s ruling. Renee Davies was President of Davies-Valley. Eloise Waters, out of the hospital, was ‘delighted’ to work with Renee. Renee was so complimentary about Eloise and Martina King, exposed as they were. Martina ran Trans-it Adventures, the main booker of transgendered holidays into the Valley. Renee had some idea of bringing an airline into the Valley, criticizing her husband’s ‘old-fashioned

ideas' that would have impeded Princess River's growth and destroyed Kelly's and Tammy's (?) heritage.

I wished Dave had given some background about Earl and why he'd stormed off. But, if I'd seen both of my sons dressed as if going to a Prom dance as girls, I guessed I'd probably have been as mad as Earl Davies.

I wished Bonnie was back from taking our new interns on their orientation tour on the work they'd have to do. The interns were subjects of letters I chose for the Letters page. "There, right opposite your item on new interns, Alan Terrell and Breanne Newman," Mike Cross had written, "we see an 'Ellen Terrell', Miss Del Monte, the leader in charm and beauty in her class. Ellen? Allen? Can they be the same?"

'Yes, Mike,' I penned in an Editor's Note. I had seen the same thing myself. The arrival of Ellen on her first day made me think that *The Queen* was now Dave and the harem, rather than the balanced staff of male and female writers. Publisher Brian Carpenter said he preferred when he'd hired me, Mike Little.

The second letter surprised me. "I went to school with Brian Newman at Tyson," wrote Denise Miller. "Why don't you print a photo of Breanne? I'll bet she's Brian. We would love to see her down at Franco's where she'd be one of us!"

Breanne blushed like crazy when I showed her the letter. She opened her purse with fingernails as long and red as my own, and brought out her driver's license photo for me. It wasn't pretty enough, not with the way she was wearing her hair in a wave now, styled about her neck and chin. I took another photo of 'her' and we printed that.

'We were remiss,' I wrote in another editor's note. 'Breanne's picture is to the right. She begs us not to

show Brian's. And oh yes, Denise, Breanne is one of you!

"Poetic licence," I told 'Breanne' with a smile when she nervously asked me what I was doing. She gasped but then smiled femininely at me. She knew what I was. She'd treated me, and Bonnie, as if we were her 'sisters' from the moment she'd come in.

Ronald Emney wrote in about the column on Dr Diane Lee. "How is having an SRS surgeon going to help the Valley?" he wanted to know. "I don't intend to change my sex anytime soon and, once it's done to the loonies, who'll want it again? It's done, isn't it? Or are we going to be flooded by 'Ugly Women' from outside? I don't think we need this!"

'Economically, we're better off if the Valley gets into the business of transforming Ugly Sisters into Cinderellas,' I wrote in defence of my article. 'Medically, Dr Lee will not likely be doing one SRS a week. What could she be doing with the rest of her time and all those surgical nurses who're coming here with her?'

I thought that Jane would cut this letter and reply out, but she didn't. I was wrong, though, about the number of SRS procedures Diane Lee did in a week. She hardly had time for anything else, she told me, when we met at a cocktail party at John Stephens's later in the year.

I didn't tell Jane or Tania or Bonnie about the lead announcement of the Classifieds. I couldn't believe it myself. Well, I could, but it still seemed sort of perverse. Kelly Rogers and Joe Gibson formally announced their engagement. Kelly was to be a June bride. All friends of the 'ecstatic couple', half the men of the Valley, men who'd slavered over her nude body, I thought, were invited to an open reception at the Roxy. It showed how much we read our own paper, as Bonnie was the first to spot it with a loud shriek, rushing in to me to ask, "Did you see this?"

"I'm editing the paper, aren't I?" I said to her as she went off, shaking her head.

Tania had partly taken Jane's criticisms to heart. Her lead story matched the ad we were running for the Amadeus night club, where Jane Julian's picture showed what a beauty she was. Mandy, the leader of the house band, the Amadeus Appreciation Society, looked very sweet, blonde and feminine as well, beside Jane.

"Lots of people," Tania wrote, "have been telling me how great the show is at the Amadeus. I had to go and see Jane Julian doing a guest spot there.

"Jane appears with pianist, Karen O'Day, as well as the string quartet of the house band. Comparisons to Jackie Ray are inevitable. Jane is a contralto, like Jackie, though she might have a greater range.

"Certainly, Jane sings more operatic fare than Jackie would ever attempt, but she doesn't neglect the lower tastes of her audience as well. I loved *Summertime* and the Gershwin Jane has mastered. I loved her excursions into Beyoncé and Britney, while *Climb Every Mountain* from *The Sound of Music* is a fitting climax to a first-rate, classy show.

"Jane, of course, is from the Valley, a product of Tyson High. 'I was right there,' she says, 'in the forefront of the fight for Helen Collins' rights.'

"We met in her dressing room and she gave me the picture of 'her' at Tyson which is with this article. She's certainly changed a lot. But the inevitable question, she ducked.

"You figure it out,' she laughed. 'They don't even ask me if I'm a girl or a boy in the capital when I perform there.'

"Jane says she enrolled in special voice classes 'as a lark' at Tyson and found the classes of Miss Shanks and Miss Charles 'invaluable'. 'I discovered my voice

and haven't stopped working since. I love working with girls as talented as Karen and the girls at the Amadeus.'

"Jane has a short concert tour of three states planned before fronting the new string orchestra of Victoria Perrone at *Princesses on Parade* over the summer."

The Mitzi Theater had a new farce, *Doing It in the End*, which Tania hadn't reviewed. So, someone had written a quick précis of the play: "What if you had to stand in for a friend on her wedding day? Instead of being best man, Ed has to be a bride!" The picture of the blonde-haired bride didn't look like Ed Reece to me but, with the makeup and clothing the 'bride' wore, she really could have been anybody.

The Baines Theater hadn't advertised with us for a while. It showed drive-in movies on the Valley Highway between Raybold and Slayton. 'Come out and see Holly Irving in *Girls Love Doing It!* Cheer on our local girl as she proves she can outlast the others in this Mean Girls romp.'

I wanted to point out to Jane Edwards that Tania's column on Holly, which Jane had hated, had brought us some business, but Jane didn't want to talk about anything but my impending 'operation'.

I told her I'd changed my mind. I told her I wanted more time to think about it. I was totally distraught with myself for even contemplating what I was going to have done as soon as the paper came out.

"Don't be a wuss, Michelle," Jane said to me as I trembled in the doorway of her house holding my makeup bag and dress bag that she'd given me for my visit to the Linton clinic. "You know you really want this, and I want you to have it done."

"No!" I said with a dry mouth as the cab pulled up. The cabbie, Vince, hustled up to take my little bags and to open the door for me, a woman.

“Good morning, Michelle,” he said to me, a copy of our paper on the front seat of his cab. “Where can I take you this morning?”

“Miss Little and I are going to the Linton Clinic,” Jane said, as I couldn’t get the words out. I was so frightened as I thought about what would happen. “Michelle has an operation today.”

The look on Vince’s face terrified me. He actually seemed pleased. He thought I was going to have to be there for weeks and convalescing for months.

“No, not *that* operation,” Jane told him. She actually cupped her breasts. “Michelle is going to be just like me, tomorrow.”

Vincent actually looked disappointed. “I thought Michelle already was,” he said as we drew in to the Linton Clinic. I could feel his eyes on me as I minced with Jane through the main doors. Nurse Peggy Simpson, blonde, busty, beautiful, who could have been a showgirl herself, whisked me into a ward even as I was saying, ‘think about it’, part of ‘I want to think about this again’. I was pricked with a needle, and speech became impossible as I drifted off to sleep.

Jane was partly right. When I awoke, I was much more like her than I’d ever been—or ever wanted to be.

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The Valentine’s Day issue of our newspaper had two extra pages as promised. Only one of the two pages was about Valentine’s Day parties, however; the other was all about me.

Jane Edwards had Bonnie Helman talk to me and write it up in the form of a conversation between us. Jane said rumors about me were flying around the Valley. ‘We’ had a responsibility to our reporters, and my ‘fans’, to tell the truth to everyone, Jane wrote. I think she just wanted to humiliate me again—a big factor in our relationship since she’d switched from casual friendship to intimacy. It only came at the cost of me being transformed as one of *Transformers*’ first customers. Now I looked nothing like the before, middle, or after pictures of those sessions.

“It’s actually a year since you were transformed!” said Bonnie. “What are you and Jane going to do to celebrate?”

I should have told Bonnie the truth—yes, the truth that was never going to be published in the newspaper. The truth, I knew, was that Jane Edwards was going to fuck me.

I’d wobbled out of the clinic with my whole body on fire. Every step I took seemed to ricochet through me. I should never have worn such high heels. As my feet struck down so the ripples spread through me, I could feel the mounds on my chest bouncing, my bra hardly containing me at all. I was used to tight strapping or corsets about me, and now I had none.

I wore the softest of women’s underclothing. The only thing that constrained me anywhere was the gaff I wore about my male parts. Of course I wore frilly white panties over that. My mind still held the image of how I looked when I staggered from the bed.

I had stitches and taping where the inserts had been put into me. I looked so enormous to myself, but Janice said I was swelling a little, which would subside. I would only be a C cup at most, as that was what I’d insisted upon. I wasn’t going to have huge breasts. I was ‘only’ going to have marked, definite, female breasts that would bounce every time I moved. I wouldn’t have to wear extra padding in my

panties, as my hips were also larger, 'rounded', so much more female. I could wear thong-type panties and my buttocks would be as shapely as any young woman's.

I stared at myself, my eye makeup so vivid, my blonde hair so long and curled about my neck, my earrings gleaming at my earlobes, like my feminine necklace and bracelets. I looked like a girl in just my panties. Janice thought I looked marvellous. She enthused that this was some of the best work she'd ever done. She'd enlarged my nipples, which is why they looked so female on me.

Her nurses had praised me—even Peggy Simpson, who'd confided that I was just like her now. I knew, in Valley-speak, just what she meant. Peggy Simpson was confiding in me that she, a blonde, well-endowed nurse, had once been a man like I still was. I didn't believe she was still just like me.

Peggy helped me into my garter belt and stockings, and the new, soft bra Jane had bought for me. Jane was there to greet and hug me; the nurses and Janice smiled as I swished girlishly in my swirling blue dress. Jane made a point of pressing my breasts with hers as we hugged. Femmy feelings surged through me as my dress caressed me, telling me I was a girl. I didn't know how I was going to stand the emotions that ran through me as we touched.

Every girl I met was going to want to touch me now, as Jane did when we hugged. I was going to be aroused and infused with sexual heat every minute of the day, I thought in panic, as all the nurses and Dr Janice had to hug me as well. They wished me a wonderful time and told me that, in a couple of weeks, I'd be ready to fully resume all the activities I normally engaged in.

Jane didn't want our 'normal' activities, though. She wanted to introduce me to making love with my breasts as a woman. At least, I thought that was what

she wanted to do. The moment she caressed me, I was aroused. By doing it, Jane showed me how to gently kiss a woman's breasts, how to use my tongue. Then, I realized how coarse and unrefined I had been with her.

Jane reduced me to a pained, quivering wreck in no time. I came so quickly that I didn't pleasure her very much—not in the way she was pleasuring me with her kisses and touches, that was for sure.

I'd heard of sex toys before. Who hasn't? I just never thought of Jane using them on me. I'd thought a strap-on dildo would have no effect on me when Jane laughed and put it on, telling me I was now really going to learn what it was to be a woman.

It wasn't like making love to Alan or to Murray, the men I'd made love to before. Jane really got off bonking me with her thing inside my tush. She expected me to like it as well. She strutted about her house, where I lived with her, and seemed inordinately proud of herself, fucking me whenever she thought I deserved it. I knew, instinctively I suppose, that if I didn't at least pretend I liked to be treated as a woman by Jane, she'd find something more awful to do to me.

So, what was I going to do to celebrate being a woman for a year? I'd be a natural woman, I supposed, and fake my orgasm with my lover. I'd enjoy her kissing and cuddling my breasts. I'd enjoy being aroused and sticking my thing into her; and then it would all be pretence and artifice on my part. I would have to squeal at all the right moments, clutch Jane in a panic, and caress her breasts with mine. That was at least some pleasure, but I'd have to moan, thrash, and fake an orgasm. Yes, that's how I was going to celebrate being a woman. I was going to fake sexual passion for my lover that I didn't truly feel.

The whole of Page Four in *The Queen of the Valley* was devoted to me—Jane's idea. There was a large

picture of me at the Council Employees' dance that Jane Dillon insisted I attend. In the picture of me, I was in a tight blouse, puffed at the shoulders with three-quarter length sleeves, a black velvet choker at my neck to accentuate the whiteness of the blouse and the low vee-neck that showed off the warm flesh on my chest. My hair was my own, pageboy-styled, about my made-up face. My skirt, lined with two petticoats, rustling seductively each time I moved, could just be seen in the picture, but not my skin-toned stockings nor my burgundy-red high heels that matched my skirt and earrings.

The caption with my picture said that I was at the Valley Council's Valentine's Day party with a friend, Jeff Morton. That's not true. He had his arm about me as he was walking me back to our table, but that's all it was with him.

Danielle Morton, Jane Dillon's secretary, had been at the dance, flirting with a young man she'd brought with her. It was a strange sort of dance. The women from the Valley Council offices were in dance dresses, in heavy makeup like me, but so many of them were dancing with other women. Even Jane Dillon was, though her wife (as I guessed her to be) was in an elegant pantsuit. It was kind of strange to watch Jane being directed around the floor by her wife, Jane having to receive all the female accolades such as being presented with a rose, and curtsying to her wife as did the other 'women.'

I heard and saw Danielle in a heated argument with someone. I saw her being dragged away from the boy she was with. Instinctively, I stood up from Jane's table. Jeff Morton bumped right into me as he was trying to hustle his crying 'sister' Danielle, out of the ballroom.

"What's going on, Danielle?" I asked her.



“His name is Peter,” said the tall man, pulling on Danielle’s arm as she was hissing at him to let go of her.

I brought up my Press camera and took his picture, which made a number of people turn around and smile at me. I’d taken several pictures of other people at the dance. They wouldn’t mind at all being seen in *The Queen* in their party dresses. In fact, many were asking me if I’d take them again when I said that we’d only print those that came out well.

“Give me that camera!” said Jeff Morton, enraged. He lunged at me and Danielle slipped out of his grasp. She dashed into the ladies’ room. The girls, coming after her, followed her in with a swish of skirts and the clatter of high heels.

“Now look what you’ve done!” Jeff Morton stormed at me.

“You look,” I said to him, pointing to Francesca New, in a low-cut, red dress, her bare arms about a tall man’s neck. She was staring at me and raising her eyebrows as her boyfriend twirled her in her very high heels. Josie Lyon, in a little black dress, had stopped dancing and was picking up her purse, while her male friend was frowning across the floor at me.

“Those are deputies,” I said to Jeff, who was taken aback. “If I signal them, they’ll be over here in a minute to arrest you. I’ll have to testify against you for disturbing the peace. So will your sister.”

“He’s not my ...!” said Jeff heatedly, staring at the door through which Danielle had disappeared.

“Tonight, in this gathering, the girl whom you dragged away from her date,” I told Jeff Morton, “is Danielle Morton. She’s here to enjoy herself as a girl. Try to stop her and you’ll be arrested, I’ll see to that.”

“You!” sneered Jeff Morton. “A girl like you? Who do you think you are?”

“I’m Michelle Little,” I told him. “Women’s Issues editor with *The Queen of the Valley*. Ooo, I’d love to write you up in the paper this month!”

I could tell by his face that Jeff had heard of me. I thought he was going to push me out of his way but Josie came round the tables. Rachel Smith, stunningly pretty in a skirt and blouse like mine, joined her, the handle of her gun showing as she gripped it in her purse.

“This guy giving you trouble, Michelle?” Josie asked. Jeff gaped as he looked at the two of them and the heads turning our way.

“It’s all right,” I said brightly. “This guy just wanted to ask me for a dance. He wanted his sister to introduce him to me. That’s all it is. Brothers and sisters.”

The deputies didn’t believe a word, I could tell. So, I took Jeff’s hand in mine and led him out onto the dance floor. I smiled up at him, faking it of course. He gave a little smile at me as we joined together. He was a very good dancer, completely in control of me right away, which I liked.

“I’m Jeff Morton,” he said. “Am I supposed to *thank* you now, or something?”

“I did rescue you from a bad situation,” I told him. I saw Danielle come out of the bathroom. He didn’t see her slip out of the Ellis with her boyfriend, as I kept him facing me. “Rachel, the very pretty one, is Deputy Sheriff Rachel Smith. She’d have arrested you on the spot if you hadn’t danced with me.”

“You dance very well,” said Jeff.

“So do you,” I said, cuddling into his arms for the waltz, my breasts touching him and making me feel really weird and tingly.

"I meant you dance very well as a woman," said Jeff grimly, glancing at all the women about us, so many dancing with other women.

"Thank you for the compliment," I said with a smile which jerked his attention back to me.

"You're that newspaper reporter who—" Jeff Morton began, unable to say the rest.

"Dresses like a woman," I said.

Jeff was looking down the front of my dress. "More than that," he said, making a little space between us.

"I just got them," I said to him sweetly. "Do you like them?"

Jeff's face was a picture with the struggle going on in him. Francesca New was in front of us, doing a clinch with her boy friend. She lifted her head from his chest enough to murmur, "You need help, Michelle?"

"No," I said with a smile. "That was Deputy Francesca New," I said to a staring Jeff Morton, as he twirled me away, my skirt rustling and rustling most pleasurably about me.

"She's nearly as pretty as you," said Jeff Morton. "I mean," he went on, coloring intensely.

"Don't say anything else," I told him. "I love compliments. Can't you see how I'm blushing? Just finish this dance and then you've done your duty."

Jeff spun me around, holding me tightly. I loved being spun like that as the band went up tempo. I saw Bobbi and the Sweethearts on stage. I twirled with him, my skirt flaring out. I'd had a most enjoyable dance with Jeff, my breasts moving but not bothering me as much. I was getting used to them.

Jeff held me awkwardly as the dance finished. We wandered with the crowd off the floor, many just changing partners where they were.

“My brother wants to be a girl like you,” he said. I shushed him, getting him to lower his voice. “He has pictures of you in his room and articles about you.”

“There have only been two,” I told him.

“And Peter’s gone now, hasn’t he?” said Jeff. “You covered for him. You kept me out on the floor, dancing, while he left. I won’t find him again tonight, will I?”

“It would be better if you didn’t,” I said to him. “You should just let your sister be, I think.”

“If he was like you, smelled as nicely as you do, danced as well as you do, and looked and dressed as prettily as you do,” Jeff said, “I could understand it. But my brother is a boy. He’s nothing like you. It’s embarrassing for our whole family that he goes to work in a wig and a dress!”

“We girls all have to start somewhere,” I said to Jeff, looking for Jane or Bonnie.

Bobbi burst out into a really live version of *It Was Just One of Those Things*, with the band really jumping. “Oh, I really like this,” I said, turning to smile and look at the band. Jeff propelled me to the floor, completely surprising me. He even smiled at me and some of the moves we improvised together.

The band was so hot that he kept me on the floor for quite a while—so long, in fact, that Bonnie took a picture of Jeff with his arm about me, which had been very nice.

That’s the story behind one picture. Beneath it were four more of me. One was on Hula Night at the Garth when we were all in grass skirts and bras, my breasts on display, my scars hidden. Jane had me

have hair weaves. It seemed as if I had hair all down my back to my bra at least. It had felt so erotic and arousing. I'd loved it, loved dancing in the hula lines with all the girls, putting leis about, first, the men, and then other girls, we wanted to dance with. Of course, I chose Jane as my girl partner. She loved it when I wiggled my new hips the way hula dancers are supposed to.

Next picture to the hula girls was me in a feminine business suit, my hair pinned up, at City Hall 'gathering news reports'. There I was, too, as a blonde, months before, in a backless evening dress, dancing with Dave Gordon, our State Rep, who wouldn't give Jane or me any news about roads and stuff. Of course, the moment we got back, Mayor Lois Slayton told us everything we wanted to know.

I was smiling in the fourth picture, though I could only blush to look at it. It was me in a bikini at Princess River two days before. I was a blonde, with big sunglasses and lying out in a long chair, all bare legs and trying to be so sexy as a woman.

I read Bonnie's heated prose with embarrassment.

"When Jane asked me to do this assignment, I never thought I'd be here dressed as I am," says the petite blonde girl reporter Michelle Little, formerly known as Mike. "I can't believe it's one year later." That's what Bonnie had written, as if I was joyful about being a girl. As I recall the session, I was grimacing and making all kinds of faces, as I hated the whole idea of another article about me.

"Michelle wore an eye-popping, low-cut blouse," Bonnie had written, "and a figure-hugging black skirt for our interview. Her legs were smooth and bare in her stockings and crossed femininely, while her own hair rested naturally above her shoulders. Her face was exquisitely made up (she'd just come from an afternoon of feminization at Quinlans, she confides). All in all, Michelle is as pretty a picture of a

successful career woman as can be seen on the streets of Raybold.

“Is she for real?”

“Michelle blushed as she answered that question. ‘Yes,’ she agrees. ‘I’ve been to Janice’s,’ meaning Dr. Janice Long at the Linton Clinic. ‘These’—Michelle indicated her breasts and then her tush—‘are really mine, with a lot of assistance and augmenting from Janice.’

“You would consider yourself to be a woman, would you?”

“Michelle laughed. ‘Actually, I don’t, not yet, but I love it the way everyone else considers me to be a woman.

“It’s been like that from the start. Everyone assumed I’d do all the things girls do, from voice lessons, charm school, to makeup sessions and the like. So, I’ve just gone along, getting the experience of the feminine side for the book Jane wants me to write. (*Untrue!* Jane had threatened me that, if I ever wrote a book and she was in it, she’d make sure that I could never love a woman naturally again!)

“It’s been wonderful and very scary to be dressed as a woman. It was frightening as I knew I was doing a stupid thing being augmented. It really does feel so different. I put on my panties and an unpadded bra and they fit me! I have breasts, real ones. It’s so different! But it’s been such a wonderful experience becoming Michelle. I’ve no plans to going back to being Mike in the foreseeable future, even though Jane would like me to go back—and to write about it’.”

Jane had added that last line, which made Bonnie annoyed with both of us.

“Really,” Bonnie said to me. “You didn’t need my name on this article. The two of you just change it as

you want, anyway. I should've let you write it without me!"

We gave Breanne Newman her first by-line, with Bonnie Helman and me, for the Valentine's Day Special. There really wasn't much text. It was mostly pictures of pretty girls being kissed by taller men.

At Tyson, on Valentine's, the football team men sold kisses to raise money for the hospital/clinic fund. We found Bart Roberts and John Quinlan on duty in front of enormous hearts proclaiming kisses for sale. The Davies twins each lifted a shapely leg to show off their high heels as they got their money's worth, kissing John and Bart. There were more girls, in short skirts as well, lined up to get their kisses and pictures taken.

We also got a picture of Sally Karlsen selling kisses to the dwindling male population of Tyson. She was charging a higher price than the guys, however, and was far ahead of them in funds raised.

Allan Terrell, our new intern, tried hard to be masculine at work with us for a few days—but the picture we got of him at Del Monte's blew his cover completely. There he was presented as Ellen, model of the year, at the Del Monte Valentine Dance. Ron Cooper kissed Ellen from one end of the runway to the other. Ellen, her hair so wild and free, in a tiara and strapless evening gown, just couldn't get enough of her handsome boyfriend's lips locked on hers.

"The mild weather brought hundreds of people onto the streets for an impromptu party," we wrote. "Queens and princesses from all the local night clubs met along Raybold Avenue, closed off for the occasion, and the party continued well into the night."

The last picture I put in was out of pure devilment. I caught a familiar couple in Garth's long after the Ellis was closed, and so I clicked them. Jane Dillon looked so beautiful and alive, smiling as Councillor

Al Bass swirled her about on the dance floor. I wasn't able to get them kissing. I saw them kissing a lot, but I just wasn't quick enough with my camera to get their picture. Still, just the way they were holding each other and looking into each other's eyes told a story I'd have loved to explain.

The biggest news of the month, of course, wasn't Valentine's Day, much less my breasts. No, the biggest story was the plan to build an airport in the Valley at Riverbend. John Stephens headed up a consortium, similar to that which built the roads into the Valley.

Stephens was planning the airport and a 'Valley Airlines' company to bring air travel to the Valley. There were few details save that Stephens said no one would be discriminated against when it came to hiring.

Stephens was right out there in Council, arm around Laura Beman, whom he described as his 'companion'. His children—Nicholas, a long-haired kid just starting Tyson, and Lynne, a daughter in middle school—were front and center as well, both hanging onto Laura when they got tired with all the explanations and non-explanations their father made.

I just couldn't believe the glitzy plans on display. Jane was whole-heartedly for it. As she wrote, 'it won't be jumbo jets in your backyard, Aunt Martha, but it will be regular flights of twenty persons and more, with charters of forty and fifty passengers in summer'.

As I said, Jane bought all the sales talk of Martina King, of Trans-It Adventures. Jane is crediting Laura Beman for the ideas again, and bad-mouthing the reasonable objections of Councillor Ellen Beman, Tom/Laura's legal wife.

That divorce was getting messier by the moment. I think most people in the Valley probably turned to Dave's report on that before they read anything else in our paper this month. Ellen James—she dropped the 'Beman' part of her name—had a private investigator on her husband for a while.

Ellen was petitioning for an expedited divorce. In her deposition, Ellen claimed her husband was 'intimate' with John Stephens long before the fateful blow-up between the two.

"Ellen claims her husband, Tom," Dave wrote, "was functioning as John Stephens' wife, in every way, two months before the break-up. In that summer, Ellen says, Tom Beman adopted the name Laura, and was living at the Upper Raybold ranch with Stephens, whose children were calling Laura 'Mummy', as they do today.

"Ellen James claims Laura's influence is very unhealthy as Nicholas, just beginning Tyson, has joined the Protest Movement and taken up female dress entirely. 'Nikki' is becoming more and more feminine under Laura's direct influence, the divorce petition says.

"Josephine Wyatt, lawyer for Laura Beman, reserved her right to counter-petition the court, noting only that 'Nikki' was in girls' clothes long before Laura arrived in the Stephens' household."

I looked back at 'Nikki' in the picture with Laura. He did look more than a little femmy, but mostly because of his long, curled hair. Dave got a picture of Laura and John Stephens holding hands, with her leaning against him. They really did seem to be a married couple already.

Besides being the subject of one article, my being in charge of 'Women's Issues' seemed to mean editing the paper. I don't know whether I should have chosen

Jessica New's letter, but she did write it for publication.

"My husband is a deputy," Jessica New wrote. "He could be back in his pants again, but he won't. The other deputies want their skirts and so my husband goes along with them. You missed that in your article, Michelle. Then, you put a picture of him in his deputy drag in your paper. How wrong! Frank doesn't like to look like that."

I had to write back: "Jessica, Francesca did agree to pose for the article with us, choosing the snap we used. You girls should talk!"

A new shopping mall at Slayton was opening, close to where a new complex of apartments and condos was being built. The manager, Florence Payne, spoke to me easily as 'Michelle' though she'd known me as 'Mike'. She took a half page ad featuring Helen Collins, a Princess on Parade, opening the Romeo and Juliet Center. It was supposed to have twenty-two stores with everything 'for the Romeo and Juliet in your life'.

Tania had got around to reviewing *Doing It in the End* at the Mitzi Theater. "First thought," she wrote, "what an awful title! Plus, this is going to be one of those tiresome 'comedies' of men getting into dresses at a drop of the proverbial hat and skitting at real women.

"Second thought, I was entirely wrong! *Doing It in the End* is less a comedy than the rite of passage of a young transvestite, very insecure in his sexuality. Morgan is beautifully portrayed by Ed Reece, a boy on the brink of succumbing to femininity which he fights against all the way, as well as the natural assumptions of the other characters that he is gay.

"Joe Beldon plays a strong role as Joe, the bridegroom, who's determined to be married 'on the day'. His arguments on the phone with the invisible Me-

lissa are hilarious. The show picks up every time someone says, 'Joe, it's for you!'

"Now that would have been a better title, in my opinion. Does Joe get married in the end? You'll find out in a well-worth-it visit to the Mitzi. Ignore the awful title!

"The Empire, meanwhile, has followed up its highly successful 'Cinderella' pantomime with a musical. *Bonanza* can best be described as a pastiche, a collection of favored songs with just a few new ones by Victoria Perrone to cover holes in the plot.

"Three daughters of a matriarch are searching for husbands—need I say more? Familiar songs from other musicals, *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair*, *I Feel Pretty*, *I Don't Know Why I Love You*, make this a very enjoyable evening. And yes, I do know all the performers are male, even if no one actually says it anywhere in this Empire Theater production."

I got a chance to talk to John Stephens and Laura Beman at the funeral we all had to attend two days after Valentine's Day. Brian Carpenter, the owner of *The Queen of the Valley*, had died. It made all of us a little uncertain about jobs and such. Jane wrote a nice obituary about him. Jane was actually the publisher of the paper now as well as editor, as Brian used to be, while the paper was up for sale. His son, Merritt, wasn't interested in the business, and asked for bids from prospective owners.

Apart from the obituary for Brian Carpenter, everything in the paper was about us, the girl-boys of the Valley. Even the classified ads asked for boys to become female impersonators. I might be looking for work in a month or so, I thought anxiously, as we all got our funeral dress instructions from Jane. She didn't even bother to ask Ellen whether she wanted to be Allen. Ellen had to go shopping with Breanne, Bonnie and me. All of us had to get hats and veils as

well as black stockings and black dresses to attend the funeral.

“Do we have to wear black undies too?” Ellen asked me in her little-girl voice.

“Definitely,” I told her. She had a more pronounced wiggle in her walk as we all went into *Melanie’s* to be sure that we were women at the funeral.

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I met John Stephens and Laura Beman at the funeral. I was wearing a black hat, a veil and a black dress, stockings and shoes. Laura was dressed just like me. She smiled and slipped her arm through mine as if for a little friendship. A lot of the older women were looking at her in hostility, I thought, as I made small talk with her and John at first.

It did seem so odd to go to a funeral like that, particularly for a man who’d hated me dressing like a woman. It was a strange sort of funeral because of the wake afterwards. I got to listen in on talk about the Valley’s boom among the richest and most powerful men and women in our community, who normally don’t pay any attention at all to people they employ, like me.

All the old families were there. Estelle Edwards and her wife, Donna Gardner, were there. I couldn’t see anything of Don in Donna at all. Donna was now a classic beauty. I’d heard she’d had surgeries at the Linton Clinic, and I could well believe it. Donna looks about 25 now, in face and body. Estelle treats her as if she’s an empty-headed blonde bimbo—a role Donna takes on completely.

Donna seemed impervious to all the veiled insults or slights of other men and women at the funeral.

She flirted with a lot of the young, unattached men, like Jeff Morton, and eventually seemed to find a home with the Bryan brothers, one of whom had his arm around her throughout the latter part of the reception.

The Thomases were there, with their grandchild Sharon, Julia Linton's child. Julia Linton and all the other doctors wore very stylish black dresses. The Valley Council was there in force; Kate Schultz made an obvious fuss over Bonnie Helman, who was arm-in-arm with Kate's son, David. She really seemed to approve of David's girlfriend, as anyone who spent any time with Bonnie would.

An older woman came up to John Stephens while Laura was talking to Lois Slayton for a while—"just girl talk", she'd said to John. I'd asked him about the airport and the airline he was planning.

"Linda Ellerson," John introduced the woman, "Michelle Little, who worked for Brian."

Linda launched into a diatribe that showed she didn't know me at all. "John," she said in a cultured voice. "You have to help Ted Gaynor, Merritt, the Petries, the Thomases, and myself clean up the morass this Valley is sinking into. Lois Slayton's a dead loss. If we could just get that husband of hers out of his dresses. Did you see Doug? He's actually over there with the Curtises and the Mortons, the blonde in that darling, little black hat."

"Um, Linda," John began, winking at me. I must have been staring at Linda, aghast.

"Oh, we've always tolerated the peccadilloes of the rich in the Valley, haven't we?" Linda went on. "The Maya Sorority has been around for donkey's years. That's why we laughed at the antics of the Council. But did you know there are over twenty men here today in women's dresses? And no, I'm not criticizing

your Laura. But she's gone much too far, hasn't she, imagining she's going to be your wife someday?"

"She will be," murmured John Stephens, looking at me, while Linda Ellerson didn't hear him at all.

"We've always run this Valley, we ranchers and agri-businesses, as Brian used to call us," Linda went on. "We need some real men back on Council. You and your bank have the money, John. We've let feminists like Lois Anderson and Amy Collins black-mail us for too long. We control the money, John. We can take over the Clinic and get a real doctor in there. The way things are going, the rot's reaching into the best families. Even sending Peter Morton away to school hasn't helped the Mortons. But they'll put up real money."

"Excuse us, Michelle," said John Stephens. "Here's someone who wants to talk to you as well, I think."

Linda looked quite startled as Jeff Morton stepped up to me and presented me with a cold, pink lemonade. It was delicious. "You know everyone here?" Jeff asked me. "Even the dinosaurs who've been here two hundred years?"

"She doesn't look her age," I said to him with a smile, wishing I could have gone with John Stephens and listened more to Linda.

Linda Ellerson was talking to him animatedly about "us, John. Have you been downtown lately? You can't find a shopgirl who isn't a transformed male. What do they call them, girlie boys or something?"

"My parents are talking about that as well," said Jeff. "Not that my mother would ever shop in Slayton or Raybold. When she and Dad go out for a night, she's over to the capital with her friends. You must have seen the cortege pass through Raybold. It's like a funeral procession when they leave."

"I've seen those often!" I said. "I always thought that was what they were."

"The rich are different," said Jeff with a grin.

"So Mrs Ellerson was saying," I said. "You have acceptable peccadilloes, I hear, while the Valley is a cesspit of moral decay."

Jeff grinned at me. "So ask me what my peccadillo is?" he asked me.

"I don't think I can," I said with a tingle running through me as he touched my arm so that an older couple could go past us to talk to John Stephens. "Just the way the word sounds makes me think, well—"

"Yeah," said Jeff as Jane signaled me that she and the rest of the staff were assembling to leave, only Dave being in masculine clothing. It was so different from when Brian, Dave and I outnumbered Jane and Tania all the time in newspaper decisions.

"It does sound pornographic, doesn't it?" added Jeff. "Anyway, I'd like to take you dancing some time, Michelle. Since you left me at the Ellis the other night, I haven't found anyone who dances as well as you."

"You should see the girls in the cabaret revues," I said, feeling a little hot and flustered. "I have to go, Jeff. My—my girlfriend, Jane Edwards, you know her? She wants me to leave now. We still have work to do on the next issue of the paper."

"Where do you dance?" persisted Jeff. "At the Garth, the Ellis, in Slayton, say on Saturday?"

"Oh, we start at the Garth, after the first cabaret," I said unsteadily, "and work our way down to Franco's Revuebar."

“You must go into the cages over the dance floor a lot,” said Jeff with a smile.

“Never,” I told him, feeling aroused as he picked up my purse and put his arm under mine. Jeff walked me to Jane and the car I’d arrived in. The other girls were really smiling at me as Jeff handed me into the limo.

“Michelle’s got a boyfriend,” sang Tania while Jane frowned at me. So, I told them the story of me rescuing Danielle Morton, his sister. He’d thanked me as he’d had too much to drink, I added to the story. He’d have been arrested but for me.

“That’s how all great romances start,” said Tania with a phony sigh. She’d have kept it up, in fact she did, until Jane snapped at her as we went back to *The Queen* and started work again.

Dave wrote the lead story about how businesses were booming in the Valley and building permits were up tenfold. Valley Council met at Princess River and celebrated the good news with a fancy dress party at Victoria’s Place, the night club there.

Dave got a great photo for the front page, showing Kelly Rogers dancing with Joe Gibson, her husband-to-be. John Stephens was with Laura Beman, her hands around his neck as he hid her from the prying camera trying to catch her. Mary Lou Conan and Sheriff Joanne Conan were smiling and dancing a loose boogie in their similar, frilly dresses, while Giselle McKenzie, her hair so long and held by a bow, was there dancing with Al Bass, I think.

I had to do a little piece on the bank robbers Jenny Orr, once Johnny Ortega, and Marilyn Reynolds, who was Monty Regulo. They pleaded guilty to armed robbery and so were the first prisoners sentenced to our new jail, the Valley Correctional Institute. Judge Cortwright said that if Jenny qualified, and she appeared to, she could get her SRS (the reason for the

bank robberies) from Dr. Diane Lee at the Linton Clinic. It's ironic, as Diane Lee was her choice of doctor to make Jenny into a woman in the first place.

Tyson High was in the news with a controversial decision to allow a Men's Club in the school, with the right to make what I thought were awful, discriminatory rules. Bonnie was the 'education' writer, getting the story.

Bonnie got a quote right away from Nicole Dugan, the Student Council President. As Bonnie reported it, 'It's sexist,' said Nicole. 'The first thing the football players did was kick out guys under 5'8". Luckily, we girls are not exclusive. We've recruited those boys into our Protesters' Club. Now girls control eighty-five per cent of Tyson!'

" 'Just putting on a dress and makeup doesn't make a woman, or a girl,' said Ms. Edwards," according to Bonnie. " 'Our boys need manly examples. I applaud the Men's Club. After all, women around here have been defining what a man is for too long.'

"The Men's Club president, Ron Wicker, claimed his actions were within the bounds of the boys' attempts to re-assert manliness at the school.

"Ron's younger brother, Sam, was one of those kicked out of the Men's Lounge at Tyson. Said Ron, 'We really don't want wimps at our school! Girls shouldn't, either! Real girls support us, real men, all the way!'

" 'Like heck!' said Nicole Dugan." That ended the article really well.

There was a photo as well of Mrs. Donna Edwards, welcoming a 'new girl' to her classes, 'Samantha' Wicker. She was in a plaid miniskirt and padded top, with loads of eye makeup and lipstick, which the girls all favor now at Tyson.

“Estelle Edwards knew that the boys would do what they did,” Bonnie told me. “She knew they’d boot out the wimpy, under-sized boys and that the girls would take them in. It’s what she wanted. She won’t negotiate with the Students’ Council at all. She wants to keep the Protest going, having boys in dresses, and humiliating them in her fashion shows all the time.”

“She’s Jane’s sister,” I warned her when Bonnie got heated on the subject. “Look at the editorial she’s written about it!”

That really got Bonnie angry. “Jane doesn’t say a word about humiliation!” she stormed. She was right—but then we all knew Estelle and Jane were sisters, didn’t we?

‘Reaction Inevitable,’ Jane had used as her title. “It seems that the actions of the Men’s Club at Tyson are a throwback to a former age,” she wrote. “But it shouldn’t surprise anyone. A walk through Tyson these days shows how ‘fem’ the whole place has become.

“On the ice rink, all skaters wear tights, makeup and little skirts. In the pool, all swimmers wear shap-ing costumes, makeup and have tiaras in their long hair, in chignons, on top of their heads.

“There’s not a hairy leg to be seen along the hall-ways, where shrill, girlish voices are the norm. The only place where men are men is in the Men’s Club, a private place in a public institution.

“We like it that some of our boys are determined to act in a manly fashion. So they should. And some girls are applauding them, encouraging them to be manly, according to Men’s Club president, Ron Wicker.

“It’s all very well for a girl to have a boyfriend who shares every girlish interest with her but, sooner or later, a girl needs a guy, doesn’t she?”

“Yes, even you girlie boys, panting to be women like us, want a husky guy’s arms about you. That’s why the Prom was organized like a military operation last year.

“Principal Estelle Edwards has promised the same for this year. Even the ‘new girls’ kicked out of the Men’s Club will have dates for the Prom. That’s promised by Student’s Council and paid for by the Principal.

“That’s what it’s like these days at Tyson, where the Protesters still haven’t settled their differences with the Principal. Expect more reactions from the ‘real men’ of Tyson. We don’t blame them. We applaud them.”

I read the line again about wanting a husky guy’s arms around you. It was as if Jane was writing to me. I wasn’t dating Jeff, I really wasn’t. It was just that we ran into each other on the dance floor—and Jeff was a really great dancer. At Franco’s, we really got into it. I’d done a turn in one of the cages for him, with a sea of ‘girls’ cheering me on as I danced sexily the way Murray had taught me.

Lots of girls mobbed me when I was finished. I had to show them how to do what I was doing. Finally, Jeff took me to the quieter Amadeus. We just waltzed and clinched on the dance floor. It was really nice, even more so when Jeff finally took the plunge and kissed me. I was really ready for it, pressing my yearning breasts into his chest. That turned him on as much as me, I think.

Jane called me as we were in the middle of a second kiss, so much more thrilling than the first. I wanted him to do it many more times with me as well.

“Come home to momma,” Jane said. “I’m at *The Jaundiced Eye*, and is it ever a good show!”

Jeff walked me down to *The Jaundiced Eye*, but I didn't come "home" to Jane quite yet. First Jeff and I had a passionate necking session in an alcove there.

"I'll find you next week," Jeff said. "We could get a room at the Continental North." I almost flipped as I knew what he was really asking me for.

"Not there," I said.

Jeff nodded and would have left. I think he was relieved at me turning him down. So I went after him. We kissed in the middle of the sidewalk. "Jane has a contact who tells her about everyone coupling at the North," I whispered to Jeff. "If you find somewhere else next week, I'll come with you—if you find me."

I half expected him not to. I went into *The Eye*, sat on Jane's knee, and applauded the singing and dancing.

"That was pretty cute," said Jane as we caught a cab home. She was very turned on. At home, we did athletic things in bed that I didn't do often. They seemed entirely different with my breasts moving all the time and my tush so rounded. Jane really loved caressing me in my thong—but I thought of Jeff doing that to me, when Jane and I were done and we went back to finish the last pages of *The Queen*.

At the office, Bonnie didn't say a word to me, but she handed me an envelope. When I opened the envelope and read the announcement that Councillor Kate and husband John Schultz wanted to have put in the paper, I squealed like a little girl. Everyone, even Dave, came running to me as I was jumping up and down in my straight black skirt and heels, not caring how my breasts were bouncing up and down in my excitement.

"What is it?" asked Jane with a frown.

"What is it, Michelle?" asked Tania with a smile.

I just pointed at Bonnie and charged her, hugging her soft, womanly body to mine as I screamed, "Bonnie is engaged to get married!"

Bonnie was embarrassed as I hugged her. Tania asked her about the ring. She shyly took it from the thin gold chain around her neck. Oh, we had to have an office party then.

What I'd read was that 'Mr and Mrs John Schultz wish to announce the engagement of their son, David John Schultz, to marry Bonnie Helman, daughter of Mrs Andrew Helman of Water Street. Nuptials are planned for August after Bonnie has completed SRS at the Linton Clinic. Bridal shower in June.'

"The SRS part," I whispered to Bonnie. I hadn't read that aloud. I'd said 'a medical treatment' when I'd come to that part.

"I'm going to have the snip," said Bonnie earnestly to me. "David wants me to have it, Michelle." She was trembling as she held my hands. "It's going to be a whole new world for me after July and August. I'll be Mrs. Schultz, really I will!"

Bonnie had told me enough times since I had known her that she was going 'all the way', so that it was no surprise to me. It was a surprise to the other girls in the office, but they were delighted anyway. My saying 'a medical treatment' didn't fool them. I saw Breanne and Ellen looking at Bonnie in wonder as if she was suddenly a superstar or had won an Oscar or something.

It took me a while to get back to work, to read the other classifieds, such as Eloise Waters' ad for macho guys or femmy girls, of either sex, to be hosts and hostesses at Princess River over the summer.

Transformers had a picture of Bobby Green in its ad. Bobby was Valentine Princess at the Garth and had, according to the ad, been transformed at the Raybold store. Now, Bobby was working there and

would assist in others transforming themselves, Bobby was stunning in his strapless dress, the Garth sash about him. I'd really thought he was a girl when I saw 'her'. I put 'her' in a picture display, saying to Bonnie we had one girl in the paper, at least. How wrong I was!

I had to apologize to letter-writer Duane Feller, who wrote in on that topic. 'Liked your Valentine's Day coverage,' Duane wrote, 'but did you know that every pretty girl in your coverage was, in fact, a guy? I like looking at pretty girls and you did pick out the loveliest. But a real girl here and there would help.'

Help with what? I wanted to write back. Instead, I put in an editor's note: 'we did think that Bobby Green, Valentine Princess at the Garth, was a girl. We were wrong!'

I had to print a letter from Lois Ray. She was a candidate for the Morality Party in the last election. I couldn't believe she'd been to a play like *Doing It in the End*. "I'm so glad Tania Scott recommended it," Lois wrote. "I learned a lot about transvestism. I was really pulling for Morgan to be the bride at the end. A most moving experience."

That shocked me a lot. Lois Ray? Loving a play in which the heroine is a guy? What was the world coming to?

The last letter was about me. Jane insisted.

"What a brave person Michelle Little is," the writer praised me. "I wouldn't want *my* transformation all over the pages of your paper. Do you know that it's the 'in' thing this year, to get T and A work at the Linton Clinic? I think all of the twelfth grade, not counting the Men's Club, of course, have had themselves done. Isn't it exciting! I love to bounce and jiggle like everyone else. I can't wait for the Prom this year!"

The letter was published with 'Name withheld'. But I knew who'd written it. Angela Petrie, a quiet girl

on Student's Council, was admitting she wasn't the girl I'd thought she was.

I had to tell her it was *not* exciting what boys were doing to themselves at such a young age. They were having the procedures done on their eighteenth birthdays, the earliest they could be done. Janice Long and Diane Lee didn't see anything wrong in what they were doing. They thought transsexuals should have their operations and transformations earlier in life. I wasn't sure they were dealing with 'girls' who knew their own minds, given everything done to them, especially the brainwashing by the 'girls' of Tyson High. Walking into the gym, as Bonnie said, was an eye-opener, as 'girls' played and danced together, dressed and showered together, following a principal's decree. If they started the year as girls, they had to end the year as girls. I tried to write about my concerns about mistakes being made, but Jane chopped my comments, re-editing what I'd done.

"I don't want to be a role model for the boys of Tyson," I said to her in agitation.

"Look at this ad for the Romeo and Juliet Center in Slayton," said Jane. "See. Be the queen of the prom this year ... cosmetics, lingerie, dresses ... all genders welcome. No mention of your name, Michelle. These girls have many role models. You're crazy to think you're being watched so avidly."

But Jane didn't see the girls who flocked after me, trying to get me to teach them how to dance like me, to move their hips and breasts as I did, and how to arouse a man like Jeff Morton. I hoped I'd see him, the following weekend. He'd said he'd be looking for the prettiest girl in town. I daydreamed about being with him before realizing I'd done enough for this issue of the newspaper.



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Jane insisted I write a short article about Bonnie Helman and so, reluctantly, I did. Bonnie said she didn't mind. She and her fiancé were pictured smiling and holding hands for the article.

I wrote it very straightforwardly. "My mother is the most shook up of all," Bonnie admitted to me. I put that in the article. "She really thought that, some day, I'd be taking up my life as Bruce again. She should have known this would happen. I've wanted to be a girl since I can remember."

Bonnie went on and on about how wonderful David was and how much in love she was. I made her sound as if she was gushing, she told me. She was right. But that was just the way she was. She would have her leave of absence and, when she came back in September, would have gone through colossal changes.

I was going through changes myself! It was all Jeff's fault, I thought. He'd found me in Franco's just when I despaired of seeing him on Saturday night. I'd slipped away from Jane. It happened naturally, a lot of the time, since Jane wasn't a dancer. She'd often go off with her cronies, old, rich, family friends—slumming along Raybold, laughing at the antics of the boy-girls, most not realizing I was one of them.

I was showing a bunch of girls, including Angela Petrie and Nicole Dugan, how to swing their hips as they danced—when I felt a man's hands on my tush, making me move even more sexily in my leather mini-skirt. The girls had seen Jeff coming and laughed at me as I jumped. They sashayed off, 'to blow the minds of a couple of cute guys from the pig-gies' farms,' as Nicole said.

Jeff stared at me, seeming wound up. I felt my own heart beating a lot faster than it normally did. He was dressed in a suit and tie, and looked stylishly masculine. I felt a little like a hooker in the way Jane had encouraged me to dress, in my gold top, my breasts definitely perky. Large golden baubles bounced against my neck as I danced. I smiled and swayed as Jeff seemed to break out of his trance. I 'let' him spin me into the jive contest that Franco was running that night at the Revuebar.

"What's the matter?" I asked, as Jeff was stiff. I thought I knew, as I was shivering inside. I think he was too, and for the same reason: this boy and girl thing, and me being not quite the girl. I expected a compliment on my feminine loveliness at any moment—that or him running away from me.

"Did I just hear those two whatever's say they were going to blow two guys?" Jeff asked me. I realized I was right. He must be having second thoughts about being with me, realizing what I'd agreed to do with him if we met. He probably was feeling trapped.

"Blow their *minds*," I said lightly, "as I'm doing to yours, I hope."

"Oh," said Jeff, slowing me against him. I backed into him and did a little grind against him, my leather skirt sliding over a definite bump at the front of him. It worked. He was trembling a lot as he spun me around and kissed me, not caring about the dance contest we were in. That got us kicked out.

"We could have won," said Jeff as we watched the other pairs. All the male-dressed contestants had been eliminated. This was Franco's, after all. He wanted pretty Valley girls in his ads as winners to draw in more and more people. He had a whole section where drinking was not allowed, for 'girls' too young. He had to fill that up. He did, by manipulating the contests so that girls from that section always won.

"I saw Jane going into *The Eye*," said Jeff as we left Franco's arm-in-arm. I did like his arm about me. It was really nice. I was tingling all over to be mincing along with him as if I was a girl in a man's arms.

We stopped at the Garth, where Jeff bought a bottle of chilled wine. Pete Smith, female impersonator, was gyrating on the stage in the pink spotlight. Jeff grinned, his arm tightening about my waist as we watched 'Pete' stripping off his, her clothes. I don't think that Jeff really realized who he was looking at, or that the girl in pasties and a thong wasn't a real girl at all.

I led him out of there, but not before Pete completed his strip. I gasped as what I saw didn't match with what I knew. There was a nude woman on the stage, playing with her panties as she pulled them off. She flirted naughtily with the audience as she lowered and raised her frilly, lacy panties and finally flicked them off right onto some guy's head.

"Those avas from Benet's are spectacular, aren't they, Michelle?" said Annette with a sigh. She'd stopped me and told me to watch as I was trying to get out of the supercharged atmosphere of the strip club. Annette was a dancer in the original Revue who'd been a waitress at the Garth. "You should do an article on them, Michelle. I heard you're in charge of Women's Issues for *The Queen*. Not enough women know about the ava and how to put one on."

"Ava?" I gasped, wondering at the kind of gossip that circulated around the Strip about me. Why should it be of any concern to her what I was doing at *The Queen of the Valley*?

"You know," said Annette with a pout at me as if I'd been teasing her. "Artificial vagina, ava." She laughed, showing me her perfect teeth and lovely rose-colored lipstick. "Don't tell me the great Michelle Little doesn't know what an ava is!"

“The great Michelle knows *now*,” I giggled at her. Jeff tickled me on the back of my pantyhose as Pete Smith danced across the stage, breasts bouncing slightly, the triangle of dark hair and nothing else between his legs, for all the world a nude woman titillating the crowd with her pink, soft, feminized body.

Jeff took me by the hand as we hastened out of the Garth. We turned north. I thought he wanted me to go to the Continental North with him. I wouldn't have cared. I had Pete Smith's nude body in my mind. Ooo, was I femininely aroused! Womanly passion rose in me. But we didn't go off Glass Street at all.

Jeff led me through the side door of the very private Delaney Apartments, not a block from the Garth. He had a pass key. Thrills ran through me; I giggled as he pulled me in and locked the outer door. My high heels clicked as I ran up the stairs with him, hand-in-hand with a man.

We flew up the stairs. Ooo, I knew what was going to happen. I'd perfumed not just my neck and my breasts, but between my legs as well, anticipating what might happen if I did see Jeff that night. There'd been such a tension inside me as I looked for him and didn't see him. Lots of men approached me, knowing me as Michelle, telling me how good I looked, wanting me to 'party' with them.

Some had read about me in *The Queen*. I saw the way they looked at my breasts. I might have gone into one of the clubs with someone cute if I hadn't been waiting for Jeff. Here I was with him at last, smiling, as he assisted me up the back stairs of the richly carpeted apartment building.

Jeff Morton was very nervous, much more than me, as we went into a spacious apartment on the top floor, overlooking Raybold Avenue and Glass Street. Saturday night celebrations were spread out before us. “This place belongs to a friend of mine,” Jeff said anxiously as he danced me into the sumptuously

decorated main room, away from the curtained windows.

I let him open the wine. Boy, was Jeff ever nervous! Well, I'd been the same at first, with Alan Farrell, hadn't I, so long ago? I was going to be Jeff's first, his first boy-girl that is. I smiled at him in eager anticipation at what was surely going to occur between us. My breasts were tenting the lamé top I wore.

I sipped the drink Jeff nervously poured for me. I think he was swallowing as he was looking at my chest, remembering, I think, what he'd read about me in the interview I'd worked out with Bonnie. I wouldn't have been surprised if it was all too much for him. After all, he'd been about to beat up his sister, Danielle, hadn't he, before I'd stopped him. "Changed your mind a little?" I asked him lightly, smiling. "A lot?"

In answer to the way out I tried to give to him, Jeff took my wineglass and put it on the dining table next to his. He put his arms about me and kissed me fiercely on my glossy lips.

I didn't stop him. He caressed both of my titties. They responded as they should, springing to attention as something else inside my panties so badly wanted to do as well.

"How do you want to do this?" Jeff said hoarsely, between kisses, as he lifted my skirt with his trembling hands. I stretched like a cat against him, easing my body over him as he caressed my tush and my panties, me wanting to throw myself against him.

"You man, me woman," I murmured as I took his hand and led him into the bedroom. He was swallowing hard. He, the man, and I, the woman, slid across the bed in the ceiling mirror that showed everything we did. I undid his belt as we kissed passionately. Jeff caught on that he should undress me as I was undressing him. I kissed his muscled, manly chest

as he slid my skirt from me, then my top, exposing my bra and the straining mounds that were inside them, demanding his attention.

I loved his hand between my thighs, caressing me, probably hoping I was going to appear before him like Pete Smith. I must visit the Benet Boutique soon, I thought, to find out just what an ava was and how to wear it. Jeff took away my pantyhose, kissing my legs all the way down and back up. I squealed girlishly with pleasure and whipped away his last concealing item of male clothing, pulling him on top of me.

I snuggled under Jeff and lifted my legs around him so that my tush had his male hardness pressing my panties against me. Jeff was endearingly clumsy as he got me out of my bra, kissing my chest and the mounds there while I groaned and wiggled against him. His manhood grew and grew, so hard against me.

It was so sweet as Jeff fumbled with my bra strap. But then, my hard nipples were right there for his enjoyment. It wasn't just for his enjoyment, either, as I loved the female feelings Jeff awoke inside me as his mouth and tongue took possession of my breasts. He was careful with the fading scars of the procedure I'd had, which now seemed so worthwhile.

Jeff eased me out of my panties as I'd eased him out of the last of his clothes. I reached over to my purse and lubricated myself. It was amazing how easily we slipped together, Jeff penetrating me so wonderfully. Whatever nervousness he'd had before vanished as he became so masculine, responding to my perfume and how feminine I was trying to be, I'm sure.

I loved the way I felt with a man. I loved it. I felt so womanly as he bounced me a little. Ooo, I caressed his chest with my breasts, urging him on to fill me, fill me, fuck me.

It was too quick that first time as Jeff was so rushed, so aroused, as if he was in a track meet. He was filling me within a minute of me wiggling on the bed for him, my legs high about him as he pressed strongly into me. I tried to enjoy him, but it was just over too quickly.

“You have to slow down,” I murmured as Jeff mauled my face and my breasts with kisses. I stroked him and wouldn't let him go, but when he started urgently to come again, I grabbed his manhood and wouldn't let him come as quickly and frantically as he did at first.

I made him explore my breasts and my body as I explored his. Jeff seemed to realize what I was doing and the wonderful pleasure I was feeling. I think that he felt it as well as we united as man and woman. Oh yes, the second time we made love was so incredible. I spurted on him and then had an orgasm that partly frightened him, until he realized that my giggling and shaking was because he was exciting me so much.

I went home without panties. “A trophy,” Jeff said, as he helped me into the cab, hiding me from Vincent's prying eyes. It was a short trip but, when we got out, Jeff walked me up to the door for a good-morning kiss, while the birds welcomed us with a riot of song.

I took off my high heels and crept through the house to the bedroom I shared with Jane. She didn't even look up when I dropped a shoe. The other girl in the bed did, smiling and waving at me. I retreated to the guest bedroom. Well, what's sauce for the goose, etc., I thought. I had a lover and Jane did as well.

“We'll talk later,” was all Jane said to me as she and the other girl, Mary, went out to lunch. The blonde boy-girl was as perky and sassy as she'd been as a waitress at the Garth. She smirked at me as she left, wearing one of my dresses that Jane had given her.

Luckily, Jeff phoned me. We arranged to go that night to the Mitzi Theater; and so I avoided a confrontation with Jane that day.

Jane had meetings on Monday with Merritt Carpenter about the papers we published. I think Jane wanted to buy Merritt out, but he was making it difficult. He wanted a lot of money and wanted it all at once.

I was left alone to put together the local issue for the month. Tania had only a short column, about Blonde Ambition at *The Jaundiced Eye*.

“It really is an ambitious show!” Tania had stated with her usual enthusiasm.

“Gary Davies is now a platinum blonde as are the so-called Ugly Sisters, Mark and Mike Rennie, who are anything but. The Sisters delightfully reprise their roles from the Empire Theater pantomime last Christmas.

“Janet Terry gives Gary a run for ‘her’ money in the female impersonator department as a very convincing Cristina in ‘*Dirty*’ mode. Just as she did with the Sweethearts, Janet steals the show with her wonderful, contralto voice and exaggerated, feminine mannerisms.

“Queen Mary Elizabeth does a tasteful striptease dance, which shows that what can be purchased commercially at Benet, makes for an astonishing unveiling. ‘Nude’ dancing that really isn’t, is quite a feat. Especially when ‘she’ is revealed to as a true ‘queen’ at the end of ‘her’ act!” Queen Mary Elizabeth, I knew, was Jane’s lover Mary. I wondered if Mary was better than Pete Smith with her *ava*.

There were two main news stories in this issue. Dave had the one about the Davies family. Poor Earl couldn’t stay out of trouble. He hit his wife, Renee, because she was letting Kelly and Tammy, the twins, try out for *Princesses on Parade*. Since Renee was the

principal shareholder now, the 'girls' would almost certainly be Princesses. They looked really pretty in the picture with their mother, while Earl was hanging his head as he was escorted off to the Valley Correctional Institute by Deputy Josie Lyon.

The other story was that a first runway had been laid for the new airport. The first commercial airplane ever had landed at Riverbend with Representative Dave Gordon, John Stephens, and Laura Beman, with Debbie Allen modeling the stewardess uniform that the girls who worked for the new Valley Airlines were going to wear.

Bonnie had that story. I had a piece about yet another doctor setting up at the Linton Clinic. Julia Linton also changed her name to match that of her wife, "for the baby's sake". She was now Julia Thomas, introducing me to Dr. Natalie Meadows. Her specialty is facial reconstructions but she's a skilled surgeon in many procedures, according to Julia.

I asked about the other doctors. Julia, as I wrote in the paper, said that "the three surgeons have a full slate of operations past August." I gathered Natalie would take over some of that work and also expand some of the procedures that the Clinic offers.

I did look her up, Natalie Meadows. She wasn't listed in New England, where she trained, but a Nathan Meadows was.

Julia scolded me about my sexist approach to reporting. "You're still thinking like a man, Michelle," she told me. "You don't have to make everything about gender." Then she had to hurry off home to look after baby Elizabeth as Sharon Thomas, Julia's spouse, had a Council meeting. Yes, I was instructed as well on how to state the relationship of the transvestite male and his wife properly.

A parting shot from Julia Thomas was that it didn't matter that all three surgeons were transgendered. Julia was and it didn't matter to her patients.

I didn't get to ask Julia about the nurses the Clinic was importing. Several were former patients of the surgeons now working and living in the Valley. But no one wanted me to write about that.

"Why don't you just be a good girl, Michelle, and forget all about that?" Peggy Simpson, the nurse in my procedure, said to me with a smile. "You're a woman, I'm a woman, and so are all the doctors and nurses. Be a good girl, Michelle, and don't rock the boat!"

I had ads to position. The Linton Clinic had before and after pictures to illustrate what Natalie Meadows could do. It was startling to see how male features changed after her surgeries. If what was shown was true, any man could really be made to look like a woman.

Benet's Boutique was advertising the incredible ava again. A Robert 'Renee' Franklin was quoted as saying that 'she' 'now looked and felt everywhere like a real woman'. Oh yes, I had to go there soon. It would really blow Jeff's mind if I appeared in front of him as Pete Smith had at the Garth. I got really hot just thinking about it. I hurried to finish the letters.

Nicole Dugan wrote, "Your last editorial was way off base. The Neanderthals in the Men's Club at Tyson are defining masculinity in just one way, the jock's way. You watch, guys, at the Prom this year. You stupid jocks may not find any girls who'll let you take them to the Prom, while your wimpy boys will all have dates!" I had to smile, as Nicole didn't say what kind of dates the wimpy boys would have, but I could guess.

Donna Leslie was complaining about our picture of the Council social on the front page of *The Queen*.

“Apart from the distress this must cause Ellen Beman,” she wrote, “why is Doug Slayton, the mayor’s wife(?), in a dress again? I thought the excuse was that he only did it at Halloween.”

I called Lois Slayton to tell her about the letter, leaving a message. She got back to me in ten minutes. “That party was supposed to be fancy dress,” Lois said indignantly. “Doug wore my dress as a last-minute joke. Why do you at *The Queen* print anything that crackpot woman says?” Then she hung up. I added her words below the letter in an editor’s note.

Ruth Bentley had the most pressing letter of the month. “Did I read that right?” she wrote to us. “We send John Ortega to prison because he robbed banks to pay for a sex change? Now, at taxpayer’s expense, Jenny Orr is going to get what she wants, anyway. And I thought the transgendered were supposed to be more gentle, thoughtful people. This is loony-tunes!”

Jane was annoyed, finally coming out of her meetings. It hadn’t gone well with Merritt Carpenter, her relative, who owned *The Queen* now.

“She’s right,” said Jane of Ruth’s letter. “Prison is meant to punish people for crimes. I’ll write about this and finish off the paper, right? Then we’ll talk about the changes I’ll make here at the paper and at home.”

I gulped at that. Jeff had brought me home in a cab after the theatre. We’d smooched for a while on the doorstep. When I went in, there were Mary and Jane watching a video on the television, cuddled up together. So, I went to the extra room without really talking to Jane, though she was right that we had to talk.

Jeff wanted me to move in with him in the Delaney Apartments. He’d be away in the fall at the state uni-

versity. I knew that was pushing our relationship quite a bit. We'd had only one night together, and that had been wonderful. I hoped he'd still feel the same way if I moved out on Jane, as I thought she was intending me to do.

"Jenny Orr is a bank robber," Jane wrote in her editorial. "So, she wants to be a woman. Her way of doing this was to hold up banks and scare the living daylight out of people like Henry Ribbins.

"Henry, of course, is now a patient of Dr Diane Lee. Henry will be a woman himself after surgery this June.

"How ironic that Henry might be beaten to womanhood by a person who took an illegal route and is also going to have her surgery financed by taxpayers.

"Valley Council has ducked the issue, refusing to ask Valley Correctional Institute to even put a hold on such procedures. Mayor Lois Slayton stated firmly that the Council could not blackmail the Institute on how it is to use its funding.

"Mayor Slayton pointed to the fact that Jenny Orr was on suicide watch in the Valley CI.

"It is, after all, primarily a prison for the transgendered,' said Lois. 'If surgery alleviates a condition that leads to criminality, then let the experts work on that.'

"Nice words, Lois, but where does it end? Taxpayers' money shouldn't be used for what is elective surgery in everyday life. Or shall we have trannies in every bank and store, waving guns and waiting to be carted off to jail for free sex changes? Let's get real about this. That's our opinion."

"A throwback to Brian Carpenter," I said to her when I saw how Jane had ended.

“Yes,” Jane said. “Now about you and me, Michelle. Am I right in thinking that you’re moving in with your boyfriend for a while?”

My mouth must have fallen wide open at that.

“We’re still a very small town, in a very big way,” Jane said. “What the Mortons do, or the Petries, Cranstons, or the Stephenses, I know in minutes. The grapevine works. The Mortons are really angry with Jeff, you know. He was supposed to knock some sense into Peter—but here he is, declaring he’s fallen in love with you. Are you ready for that, Michelle? Are we going to have both Bonnie and you under Dr Lee’s knife this year?”

“No!” I told her.

After that, it was surprisingly amicable. It took me a week to pack up my clothes and move to the Delaney Apartments. On Saturday, Jeff moved in with me. We went to bed early and slept in over Sunday. In such a short while, I was in such bliss that I could actually imagine myself like Bonnie, wearing a long, white dress and a veil, after Dr. Lee worked on me.

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The biggest story of the month appealed to everyone in the Valley. Ellen James Beman testified in her divorce from her husband, Tom ‘Laura’ Beman. Judge Emily Cortwright also adjudicated the other suit that Ellen had brought against John Stephens, possibly the wealthiest man in the Valley, for ‘alienation’ of ‘Laura’s’ (that is, Tom’s) affections.

Dave was the lead reporter on the court case, but we were all there—Jane, Bonnie, Ellen, Breanne, even Tania. Jane had us all meet after each day to

compare notes. She gave exact instructions to Dave on what he was to write. It took all of the front page and the second, as well as some of the Letters column and an editorial, short and sympathetic from Jane, just to cover the first part of the trial. Dave got the by-line, which pleased him no end—but the rest of us got to attend court, which was fascinating for all of us, even the ‘real’ women among us.

Ellen James claimed that John Stephens, under the guise of being a family friend, seduced her husband, enticing Tom into becoming Laura.

Dave encapsulated Ellen’s testimony in court in several paragraphs as if she was speaking. Her words were riveting enough that even Jane agreed it was the best way to report it. It was a good thing we were all there, as we were able to assist in making the account free from error and reasonably coherent.

“In testimony before Judge Emily Cortwright,” Dave wrote, “Ellen James told about her time with Tom after Greg Jara’s motion to the council was so surprisingly adopted.

“That meeting was the start of our troubles,’ said Ellen in court. Tom has always been a liberal. The slanders and arguments against him made him angrier than ever before. We actually thought the Valley would grind to a halt and the Jara Motion would be moot. We didn’t realize so many men would be out of jobs. So, when the first men put on dresses and came to work for the Council, it shocked both of us.

“When Tom was blamed and called a feminist, by people saying ‘well, why doesn’t he wear a dress like those he’s making do it?’—it just made sense to have him try on my clothes.

“He looked so awful I couldn’t let him go out in public until I did his hair and his makeup for him.

“Then, Lois, Mayor Slayton, encouraged him to stay in my clothes. It hurt our opponents when he met their challenge.

“So, I bought him his own clothes, his own panties and stockings, his own cosmetics. He still had to go to Council Socials. John Stephens volunteered to be his escort.

“I mean, I thought it was okay. John had escorted Donna Gardner, another friend of his, to school functions. But then strange things began to happen. Tom started using a different perfume. John began to drive Tom to committee meetings. They stayed out in the car once. I asked Tom what he was doing with John. Tom came in with fresh lipstick, but said he and John were talking over the meeting.

“Then Tom started to buy new lingerie, black. He went to Rayburns for a makeover.” The girls tittered over that and said that we shouldn’t print it as it was advertising. Jane just laughed. Ellen had said it, and so we’d print it. Let Quinlans and Transformers object if they wished.

“He was becoming more feminine than me,” said Ellen. I remembered clearly how aggrieved she’d been when she said that—as if that was Tom’s biggest sin, being more attractive as a woman than she was.

“When we were both elected to Council, I thought Tom would give it up, all the cross-dressing. I expected to get my husband back’.”

Under questioning from Josephine Wyatt, Ellen did sullenly admit John Stephens went to Council meetings in town and to the state capital to protect Tom from insults, but refused to admit she’d encouraged John to do that.

After one meeting, Ellen testified, she found a hotel receipt in Tom’s purse for ‘Mr. and Mrs. Stephens’. But Ellen thought nothing of it at the time, Josephine got her to admit.

“When Laura told her she was not going back to dressing as a male,” Dave wrote, “Ellen was stunned. She screamed at her husband. It was Stephens who stopped her, putting his arm about Tom, adding that, ‘Laura has something else to tell you.’”

“That something was that the two of them were having an affair. Stephens was treating Tom as if he was a woman.

“The screaming and shouting led to John Stephens taking ‘Laura’ from the Bemans house and installing Ellen’s husband in his own home as John Stephens’ wife.

“‘Even his children call my husband ‘Mummy’ all the time,’ Ellen James testified. ‘John insists that Tom is Laura, and you’ve seen them together. They’re like a married couple.’”

“And we go through this all again,” said Tania, “when we have Laura and John Stephens on the stand.”

“You know,” said Bonnie thoughtfully, looking at the picture chosen for the story. It showed John Stephens and ‘Laura’ leaving the court, her hand clutching his, with the cool, fashionable Josephine Wyatt. “They look like a married couple, don’t they?”

Jane wrote in her editorial that it was hard to watch the trial. It was hard to be ‘condemnatory’ of the Bemans. “The dirty linen being washed in public reminds us all that when marriages break up, they do so in all kinds of ways and for their own reasons.”

I shivered, as I could imagine Jane aiming that at me, Michelle—but our relationship had ended quite amicably so far, to everyone’s surprise.

Jane wrote that we should be sympathetic to all the parties as ‘the stresses brought on by transvestism can make some marriages impossible. Let’s just

hope that this soap opera will be over soon, despite the papers it sells!

Nancy Jaeger wrote to us that "I've been at the Beman trial each day. I must say I haven't seen anyone as elegant and dignified as Laura Beman after all the personal attacks on her. I just hope she'll soon get to tell her side of this story. She's just such a lovely woman. No wonder John loves her so!"

"Just wait tell she gets on the stand," said Dave Richardson with a laugh, as he heard what we were going to print, in our editorial conference. "I'll bet Ellen's outbursts are going to be nothing compared to darling Laura's court testimony."

That got him frosty looks from the rest of us, all femininely dressed, which made Dave smirk all the more when his remark produced such stony silence. It did tell me why Dave was the best one to write this story, however. He didn't have the prejudices we 'women' had for this particular story.

Bonnie, our education expert, complained to me about having to write about the Prom yet again.

"You want the bigger picture?" I asked her.

"Of course," Bonnie sighed and began to laugh. "But what could be bigger than the Prom in this town?"

"It is a by-line," I told her.

"You've got by-lines on the brain—and Jeff Morton too!" Bonnie said, giving me one of her absolutely lovely smiles. What a bride she was going to make in the fall!

I'd confided in her that it was so funny living with a man. Not just the sex, which was great; Jeff was as enthusiastic as I was to get to bed each night. Sometimes we even did it on the couch before supper. I didn't wear pantyhose any more because Jeff liked

me in garter belts and stockings. It also meant he could slip my panties down and have me, even when I was fully clothed as a woman. He got really turned on doing me like that. I was pretty aroused as well, as he made sure I was.

No, the sex was wonderful, but better yet was that I really felt I was a woman. It was all the little things. Jeff deferred to me as a woman. He thought I'd like to cook all the time. He thought I should do the washing and cleaning, even though he was willing to help. He said his mother had been going to change the curtains in the place, but he'd told her I'd do it. I was the woman living in the Delaney apartment, wasn't I?

Just when I was thinking I should say something about the 'little woman' who'd just tried on his underpants (which were huge on me), what did Jeff do but arrange for a weekend at Princess River, where the room was full of new evening dresses? All of it was for me, with lingerie fit for a princess.

"You are my princess," Jeff told me when we got back to the apartment on Sunday night for a romantic dinner, with Felicity from the Amadeus there to serenade us with her violin. The apartment was cleaned! And I had a new black, lacey nightie waiting for me on the bed.

Felicity wished us to sleep tight—such an absurd wish. I couldn't get enough of Jeff inside me, and he adored me wiggling beneath him. The bed really began to creak with all the bouncing we did. When I got home the next day, we had a new canopy bed with gauzy curtains about it and a new dressing table set up for a princess, just like the one I'd admired in our suite at Princess River.

We worked hard on the bed all that night, but it still wasn't creaking at all in the morning. Jeff kissed me off to work and told me we'd have try even harder when I got home that night. I was really ready for it and was kissing him in the doorway before entering

the street, when Josephine Wyatt and her sister, Jackie, came down the stairs, looking so professional in red and green, female suits and skirts.

“See you in court, Michelle,” Josephine had said to me, smiling. Jeff tightened his arms about me as the girls passed us.

“Hmm,” Jeff murmured. “Such pretty girls live here. I really didn’t have to bring my own, did I?”

I didn’t tell him about Josephine and her ‘sister’. It would be fun to see if Jeff ever got to first base with either. No one, as far as I knew, had yet managed it.

“To the surprise of no one,” Bonnie had written on a different topic, “Kelly Davies, daughter of Earl and Renee, and twin sister of Tammy, was chosen Prom Queen at Tyson High this year.” The article was illustrated with a blonde girl whom I’d never have recognized as Kelly at the pre-prom dance.

“Kelly won’t have the same problem Debbie Allen had last year at Grad,” Bonnie had added. “She won’t have to change her name, as her sister Tammy must when she parades across the stage to graduate.

“Principal Estelle Edwards praised this year’s Prom (report in our next issue) as one that went off smoothly, as 118 senior ‘girls’ present were escorted through the newly renovated City Auditorium past cheering parents.

“We had no problem with escorts for our girls this year,’ beamed Principal Edwards. ‘It was all arranged by Christmas, thanks to Miss LeeAnn Charles and her helpers.’

“Boyfriend John Quinlan, 20, agreed to be King to Kelly’s Queen. ‘I’m really jealous when she dances with another guy and they clinch,’ he said. “But when I get her into my car, she’s all mine!’ ”

“My in-laws asked if I could get a letter published,” said Bonnie to me after giving me her writing. “It’s from the pair of them, about the Prom.”

“I’d be delighted,” I said, knowing that Councillor Kate Schultz and her husband John were welcoming Bonnie into their family as a daughter. I didn’t expect it to be any kind of attack on the transgendered, and it wasn’t. I hadn’t known that David, Bonnie’s fiancé, had a ‘sister’.

“My wife and I,” wrote John Schultz, “attended the Prom this year in great trepidation. Three years ago, I had a son who wanted to play football like his elder brother. But for the last two years, we’ve had a giggly daughter at home. She was even a cheerleader this year. When we saw our son in his Prom dress, his hair bleached platinum and genuine girl mounds on his chest, we knew that the Protest at Tyson had gone too far.

“But when Carolyn came down the stairs, with her hair and makeup done at Rayburns—a blushing, excited, delicate flower, with a boy waiting for her—we couldn’t have been more proud and excited for Carolyn, our beautiful daughter. To us, she was the belle of the ball. Todd Edwards, her beau, was wonderful with her. So we’ve lost a son and gained a daughter. We want everyone to know how proud we are of our little Protester, Carolyn. Carolyn’s Mum and Dad, Kate and John Schultz.”

“It’s too long, isn’t it?” said Bonnie anxiously as I finished reading it.

“Yes,” I said. “But I want to print it, Bonnie. I really do. I think we’ll bump a few things and get this in.”

“It will really please them,” said Bonnie, leaving it with me. And, of course, we printed the letter.

I finally got to the Benet Boutique—and was it ever crowded! They had videos that I was embarrassed to watch, about each of the ‘ava’ products they sell.

There were huge posters about the shop of different models proclaiming 'Now I'm a woman everywhere'. There was a gorgeous selection of sexy women's lingerie in the store as well—but everyone had to select an ava first and be fitted by a pretty girl with a 'Miss Del Monte approved' badge.

Patti asked me if I'd worn an ava before. I had to blush and shake my head.

"I'm wearing one now, as are all the girls in the store," Patti told me with a smile. "So if you want to see any particular skin color, or style, one of us will be able to show you. I'm wearing this one, the sheath model, that allows a girl to be penetrated! I can show you how it works if you'd like to come with me into the show cubicles."

Another 'woman', Bernice, joined us as she wanted to see how a penetration model worked as well. I was shaking all over as we went into a 'cubicle'. Patti closed the door. Almost immediately, she took off her skirt, standing in panties and stockings. She lowered her panties right away and there she was, a woman, right in front of us.

"With this dildo," said Patti, taking one from a rack that was set up for the purpose of demonstration, "I can show you how you can entertain yourself or your lover—but first let me show you different types of artificial vaginas and how we attach them to ourselves."

I was stupefied, but Bernice had all kinds of questions. Soon, after showing us how we could use a dildo on ourselves into the 'sheath' she was wearing, Patti actually took it off. There she was, looking like the kind of girl I saw each day in the mirror of the apartment where I was now living.

Patti set up videos that showed the different kinds of vaginas in use, how one peed while still in one, how one attached them. There was even a type that slipped on like panties and seemed most feminine in

appearance. Patti talked about hair and colors before putting her 'sheath' back on.

Bernice was openly fascinated, and touched the thing as she helped Patti fasten the light, almost invisible strings about her. "You can just move them over when he wants it right in," Patti answered. I was speechless, watching them avidly as they talked about men and how they could make love to 'us'.

"I have to have a penetration one," said Bernice. "Morris will die when he sees me in it. He really will. He'll think I've *gone and had it done* for him. He'll be so romantic." She smiled at me. "What will your boy friend think?"

"I—I don't know," I stammered.

"Oh, you're Michelle Little, aren't you?" Bernice gushed at me. "I love all the articles you write in *The Queen*. Are you doing the Prom this year? It was so beautiful, wasn't it? Don't you just love those twin girls! Kelly might be the Prom Queen, but I love how shy and demure her sister is. Are you going to be writing an article on avas? I hope you are."

"You're writing a newspaper article about us?" asked Patti. "I should introduce you to the store owner, shouldn't I, Miss Little?"

"Call me Michelle," I managed to gasp as Bernice went along a table, touching and caressing each article on display. Patti put on her panties and smiled at me.

"I don't know why I bother," she said as the panties disguised her womanly looks. "I'm in and out of them all day, showing them off to customers. Now that Princess River is open again, the tourists all spend a day here. And they all have to leave here fitted. Would you like me to fit you with an ava, Miss, um, Michelle?"

And that's how I got my first ava. I had my gaff in my purse as I paid for the penetration model that gripped me so tightly. I really did feel like I was a woman everywhere. I had a photo of myself without my panties in my purse. I hoped Jeff would love it, as I was going to send it to him in his birthday card.

As 'Women's Issues' editor, I arranged the Benet Boutique ad prominently, but I didn't quite know where to put the announcement from the Wilson family. Like the Schultzes, they seemed to be happy with their new daughter: "Ed and Joan Wilson wish to announce that they have a new and lovely daughter, Grace Wilson, of whom they are very proud. Thanks to all the doctors, especially Dr Diane Lee, of the SRS unit at the Linton Clinic where Grace has transitioned into womanhood. Grace will be home in July and hopes to see all her friends from Tyson High School then."

I put it at the end of the classifieds. It was amazing how many people commented on it and on the Schultz letter. Nurse Peggy Simpson, whom I met in Garth's, told me that Grace was receiving flowers by the truck load. Couldn't we mention that in our next edition? I said I'd try. I gave her a really femmy smile and swayed over to sit with Jeff, whom I'd come to meet.

Jeff took my hand right away. I was feeling so girly as I was wearing my ava out of the apartment. It was strange, knowing I really looked like a girl, to feel like one as well, as the Benet ads claimed. I looked back. Peggy was giving me a really knowing look as if she expected me to be a customer in the Clinic really soon.

I let Jeff entertain me all night and didn't let on about the surprise waiting for him when we got home. When I guided him into me at the front, the poor sap really did think I'd become a woman completely for him. It was so odd to be taken like that, his manhood against mine and each of us wriggling so

out of control. He came so quickly, I had to tell him what he was doing. He was disappointed, I think, that I wasn't as real as he'd thought I'd become.

Jeff played with me, though, as if I did have a real vagina and pleased me so much. I had to relent and let him have me 'the old-fashioned way', in the end, as he loved entering me so much. Even when I wore an aya later in the week, he was inside me, using his hands and fingers to make me climax, which I found thrilling. Yes, I was Michelle, a woman, enjoying both ways Jeff fucked me.

Princesses on Parade signalled the start of the tourist season, as Patti had already informed me in Benet. Debbie Allen, Marigold and Sabrina Crew were the featured princesses in the first, splashy ad. The Empire Theater had the last month of the 'Bonanza!' musical to advertise. Jeff was going to take me to see it on the weekend. Everyone enthused about how well the three girls there sang, Melissa Nader, Miriam McCoy and Jennifer Grant.

"Uh, oh," I said to Tania when I saw that the subject and pictures for her article were again about Holly Irving. "You know what Jane said about your last article on Holly?"

"You've never met her, have you?" asked Tania. "Neither has Jane. Now, Michelle, you tell her to print that this month or she can have my job!"

"I'm not telling Jane that!" I told Tania.

"Okay, all of you out there with stars in your eyes, this is for you!" Tania had written. "Our own starlet, Holly Irving, has completed her second film for director Anthony Whitehouse. Whitehouse was impressed with the girls Holly was able to find parts for in her new film.

"Karen Holcomb, Helen Collins, Heather Taylor and Amanda Miller formed a rival cheerleader squad

to that of Holly and the leading stars of 'Girls with Attitudes'.

"Whitehouse is here with Holly, scouting the Valley for sets for a costume movie he's planning. Joan Irving, Holly's mother, says that 'Tony' is fascinated with the culture of the Valley—and is thinking of a movie all about us!"

"Who would play you?" I asked Tania playfully.

"It isn't *me* who'd be hard to cast," said Tania directly. I flushed, thinking she was referring to how difficult it would be for any actor or actress to play a boy-girl like me. But Tania wasn't thinking of me.

"Who's nasty enough to play Jane?" Tania asked bitterly. "Or gay enough to be Dave Richardson? No, you'd be easy to cast, Michelle. Any sweet-tempered actress could be you."

She was about to go off but then she turned and whispered: "She'd really be glad of the sex scenes she'd have to play if she was you, wouldn't she?"

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