



Reluctant Press presents:

Releasing Desire

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTA HAIGHT

AN 'ADULT TV' NOVEL

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Re-Leasing Desire

by Philippa Peters

I. GINNY KNOWS ABOUT ME

I wasn't expecting to meet anyone I knew at the Ulysses that night. I was sweating after dancing half an hour with Cathy. At first, when someone touched me, I thought it was she behind me, come after me to help with the drinks from the bar.

It wasn't. It was Ginny Walker, looking gorgeous in a flirty, gold, dance dress, smiling at me. Her blonde hair was shorter than I remembered, cut into a short shag. She had on big button red earrings, red shoes and Revlon Red lipstick. She even had a red evening bag over her arm.

"I didn't expect to see you here," she laughed at me, seeing my unease at meeting her again. "Not here. Do you recognize my outfit? Isn't this a darling little dress?"

I knew what she meant by 'Not here', of course. Ginny had been my girl, well, a girl I dated, it would be fairer to say. She knew a lot about me and, of course, I recognized her outfit. I had bought it and trashed it as I did periodically with my women's clothes.

Yes, I like women's clothes, to dress in them, and Ginny knew that, too. She knew far too much about me for me to be comfortable meeting her here in the Ulysses. She also did much more for that outfit than I ever could have. I must ad-

mit to at least one envious glance at her female shape so well shown off by the dress.

"Who are you with?" she asked then and smiled mischievously at me. She lowered her voice. "Boy or girl?"

That was a low blow, dressed the way I was in purple shirt and grey pants. When she had got from me the admission that I was a transvestite, a cross-dresser, I'd tried to explain to her that it didn't mean that I was gay.

Someone gay, I'd tried to explain, would be attracted to someone of the same sex, dressed as they were. But if I was dressed as a man, I would be with a woman. She ought to have known that.

"I came with a bunch of friends," I said, offering to buy her a drink, too, with a wave of my hand.

She shook her neatly cut hair. "A girl friend?" she asked, again with that annoying, knowing raise of one eyebrow.

Greg Cuthbert, one of the guys I roomed with, knew these girls on the floor below us. We'd just joined them and some of their friends and had come over to the Ulysses, in walking distance of our high-rise. I'd danced mostly with Cathy Hunter because she was a very good dancer. We had gotten to the ground floor and stayed there, which was good. You had to be very good to be invited 'Down' at the Ulysses where all the patrons at the first and second floor tables and viewing areas could look down and see what you were doing.

Cathy, I think, really had her eyes on Tom O'Donnell, an ex-college football player, who'd come with another football player type to pick up the girls to go dancing. Naturally, the big guys didn't dance, not well anyway. It was hard to explain all of that to Ginny and so I just gave her a shrug and a little wave of my hand to mean, 'sort of.'

"I came with Bart," she said, leaning over to me. I got a whiff of Chanel Number Five, always one of Ginny's favorites.

I remembered Bart. When Ginny had laughed and said she couldn't go to a grad party with anyone who wasn't a real man, me that is, she'd also said she'd be going with Bart Hoover. That hadn't been so bad but she'd also told Bart and her girl friends about me. The girls gave me such funny looks when I asked them out. They always refused and then I found out the horrible thing Ginny had done.

Little Angie Clymer was the one who let me in on it. "Are you gay?" she'd asked me bluntly. "Ginny says you like to dress up in her clothes."

That wasn't true. I'd never dressed in her clothes. In women's clothes, yes, but in Ginny's, no, never. So I quite rightly denied both of Ginny's assertions and Angie did go out with me for a little while until she worked out the right question to ask me. Then, she was really disgusted with me and that was that.

I was glad to get out of the city then and to take an entry-level job as a stock-broker in New England. How was I to know that that would dry up and I would be transferred right back to town before the year was over?

Those I'd been with in university were scattered to the four corners of the globe. I hadn't met anyone from State, or my class, in my work at Connelly in over two months. Until now. Until Ginny.

I'd even begun to relax and think again about the possibility of contacting Joanne or Lucy. They were transvestite friends that I corresponded with only. They understood when I went on one of my purges. They seemed to know that I would always come back to cross-dressing. So far, they had always been right.

I'd resisted it up to now because I didn't want to louse up my status at Connelly nor did I want to get Greg into trouble. Greg was an old high school friend who had gone to California to college. I didn't think he knew any of the things Ginny would say about me. He was a genuinely nice guy who included me in his plans for the weekend. I was enjoying just going out with the different groups of girls and guys that he organized.

I'd met my share of really nice girls, and some, like Cathy, I was thinking I could ask out on dates. Now, Ginny was here and I had a feeling that things were going to worsen for me.

"Bart could learn a lot from you in how to treat a girl," she said, leaning towards me again to be heard over the loud music.

I'm sure I looked as surprised as I felt. Ginny complimenting me on something! Yet, I could only think of her 'real man' remark and feel resentful.

"I've got to get these drinks over to the group I came with," I said, giving her the best smile I could, intending, hoping, to brush her off.

"I'll help you," she said, taking one of the trays for me.

"Won't Bart miss you?" I began, squinting across the dark, crowded, spectator area, to see if I could see Bart's tall, dark-haired figure.

"He's already gone," she shouted to me, waiting for me to leave. "When we saw you dancing, he said something about you wearing my dress, and I told him it was the other way round. I was wearing yours."

Why, oh why, did she choose that moment to say that? Right as Tom O'Donnell and his friend reached us to help with the drinks, too. The looks they gave me as I introduced Ginny to them would have scorched paint off the walls. I was glad to dump the drinks in their hands and take Ginny out onto the dance floor, my face the color of her purse, I'm sure.

"Oh dear," laughed Ginny as we slipped easily into a classic rock dance. "Did I say something at the wrong time to the wrong people?"

I could feel a cold chill running through my body even as the sweat ran down my chest. I swung Ginny into an old routine I'd only ever done with her. I could imagine the conversation at the table with Tom, Cathy, Greg and the others. I thought of what I could say. Ginny meant that I had bought it for her, I could say. But Ginny was irrepressible. She would have contradicted me for sure. I had to dump her before I rejoined Greg and the others.

But how to dump Ginny? She seemed to want to hang on to me, as I don't recall her ever doing when we were just going out. When we had danced through five numbers, her giggle and infectious smile attracting attention all around us, she allowed me to buy her a drink.

"Hey," she said, turning with a daiquiri in hand. "There's Kelly, my roommate. Come and meet her."

Kelly was a dark-haired girl with a pouty-looking mouth that softened when she smiled, as she did often to a lanky, blonde-haired guy who was leaning over her and regaling her with some kind of story. He seemed put out by Ginny's interruption of his career outline but Kelly was only amused. Her brown eyes took in my appearance and she gave me a casual nod as Ginny squeezed herself in between the tall blowhard and her roommate and started enthusiastically praising my dancing.

Kelly gave me a lazy glance and so I had to ask her to dance, which she accepted, stepping past me to take my hand and lead me to the dance floor. I scarcely had time to pass off my daiquiri to Ginny before I was swept into a South American dance. The Latinos had taken over the dance floor, hips wiggling in ways staid North Americans can seldom match, though Kelly was very good. I fitted in with her steps quickly and she raised an eyebrow to me.

"Ginny was right," she said, raising her voice to be heard over the music. "You do dance well."

I was pleased by the compliment. "What about what's-his-name?" I asked, indicating the guy she had come with.

"Clive?" she asked in surprise and began to giggle. She was very pretty when she smiled. "He's got every excuse in the book why he can't dance."

The music switched to a rap beat after three tejano numbers and a lambada and so we retreated back to where we had left Ginny. She was talking to some other girls, Clive nowhere in sight, when we returned.

Ginny jumped off her barstool and took my arm possessively while Kelly took her seat with a smile. "You should talk to Andrea," she said to Kelly. "She might know someone who'll fit in with us."

I was getting very tired but Ginny wanted to dance again and so I had to go with her. I wondered if the guys I had come with were missing me. I hadn't noticed Tom or his friend dancing and the girls I had come with would be getting quite miffed with me, I was sure, if they saw me dancing with other girls, not one of them.

"What was that about?" I asked, making conversation.

Ginny pulled a face. "Kelly and I have this huge apartment on Whittimore. At the Towers." I knew the place. Very upscale. Very pricey. Ginny must be doing very well to be able to afford an apartment there. "We have to have a third to share the costs. We have three bedrooms. I thought it would be easy to find some-

one after Sue moved in with her boyfriend but it's been a month now and the rent's going to kill us.”

“You're going to have to move out?” I asked sympathetically, hands resting lightly about her as the music slowed down and we did the modern version of the waltz, where we just leaned on each other and hugged. Hugging Ginny was rather nice, her scent in my nostrils.

“Can't,” she said, screwing up her nose in her pretty, little frown. “We've still got six months on the lease I signed. So we've just got to have a third. Say, David,” she moved her head back and grinned at me. “How would you like to move in with two other girls?”

That sounded strange. I felt suddenly nervous. “Other girls?” I asked huskily.

“Of course,” she laughed, hugging me while my body shivered and broke out again in that old, familiar, cold chill. “We could be three girls together, couldn't we? Most of the time, anyway. Don't tell me you wouldn't like that!”

I tried to pass it off with a laugh. I hated the way Ginny now treated me, as if I was somehow a different person now that she knew something I had kept secret from the world till then. I guess I had thought at one time that she might be ‘The One’ and, as Joanne and Lucy were always telling me, you couldn't, shouldn't, keep our ‘hobby’ a secret from someone you love. It had blown up on me, though, and I couldn't for the moment see any way out of the quagmire I was getting into with Ginny.

It took me a while to finally dump Ginny with Kelly, who was in earnest conversation with some other girls about apartments and the like. I told Ginny I had to see the people I came with. She had to rest after dancing really hard to the little disco numbers the deejay had put in the middle of the midnight set.

“Come back and find me,” she urged before I left. “We've still got a lot to catch up on.”

I got back to the table where Greg and the others had been and, of course, they were gone. I could have bet that they had gone back to someone's place for a quieter party where some pairing up would have taken place. I would have been able to make time with one of the girls, perhaps even Cathy, I thought, but it was too late.

Our apartment was dark and silent when I arrived home. I had slipped out of the Ulysses, avoiding Ginny as I left, and almost run back to the Fairlane Apartments, but no luck on the floor below or above. The party had not gone back to our building.

II. NOW EVERYONE KNOWS

Greg wouldn't look at me as he repeated what he had said to my astounded ears. "I'd like you to leave at the end of the month," he repeated. "We're not really cut out to be roommates, you and I. We're too different. I roomed with Tom O'Donnell's brother in college and Tom and I said we'd get together and he's looking for a place and so..."

"We're too different?" I asked. I was pale, I'm sure, because I could feel the blood draining from my face. "But...But last week..."

Last week, we had gone to the Ulysses together. Greg had told me of the really great party I had missed at Naomi's, all because I had gone off with some other girls at the club.

I'd explained how I'd met girls from university, one of whom was wearing a dress I'd bought for her when I was going out with her.

"Oh, was that how it was?" Greg laughed, his open face creased with mirth. "You should have heard what Tom and Rory were saying about you at Naomi's party. I thought they misheard what that girl had said to us about wearing your dress."

I feigned surprise at what Tom and his friend had related hearing Ginny say. I laughed along with Greg then and felt nothing but relief at the end, or so I thought, of one embarrassing incident.

I had to work late at Connelly, Corcoran and O'Brien, all the following week, and so I missed going out with Greg, even though I was invited. I had a portfolio of entertainment stocks and projects to research, however, and I didn't like to skimp on that. Some of the work was downright interesting, actually.

Now there was this. On Sunday morning, with the football game going, Greg was telling me I had to leave, that he no longer wanted me as a roommate.

"It's not fair," I spluttered.

"No, it isn't," he said, looking up from the game. "You lied to me. Dave. Tom and Rory had it right, didn't they? You *are* a fairy, aren't you? A little light in the loafers? I met this girl named Ginny Walker at Tom's last night. Her boy friend, Bart Hoover, knew all about you as well and told Tom it was true. I looked like a complete fool defending you when she said how you used to get all dressed up in her clothes."

"That's not true!" I said indignantly.

"Then the other girl, Angie Clymer, said she asked you directly and you said..."

"I know what I said to her," I exclaimed angrily, but my stomach was churning. "She was Ginny's friend and kept on repeating the lies Ginny told about me."

"Stop," Greg said wearily. He sat up in his armchair and brought out the letters he had been sitting on, the two that had been in the inside pocket of my jacket when he got home at whatever time it was last night.

"You've no right to read my mail!" I yelled, seizing Joanne's and Lucy's letters from him. Lucy's still had the photos in it, I could feel, the ones she'd felt obliged to send me that her wife had taken of her.

"I won't be doing it any more," snapped Greg, looking at me in disgust. "I thought I knew you, Dave, or is it Diane now?"

I couldn't bear the looks he was giving me. I stood up and headed for my room. I had to pack, to get out of there. I could feel the animosity being directed after me.

Greg came after me. "Why, Dave, why?" he asked. "You like dressing up in women's clothes? I don't understand it. Why do you do it?"

"I don't," I said bitterly, which left him perplexed. I could have added 'any more', which would have been accurate. Not since New England had I dared.

"But the letters..." he persisted, his face set in a stony mask.

"Believe what you like," I said, throwing my cases on the bed and beginning to pack.

"You're paid to the end of the month," he said slowly. "You've got a right to stay until then. I won't bother you."

Greg was a nice guy. I didn't see it right away then because of his kicking me out and going through my pockets. Another roomie would have thrown all my stuff out into the roadway and me after it. I had, after all, lied to Greg and been found out. I hated Ginny Walker with a passion. I hated Joanne and Lucy and their stupid advice with a passion. I hated transvestites with an even greater passion.

I didn't have anywhere to go. After Greg left, I felt like sitting down and having a good cry, the lump in my throat was so large. But only women cry, right? Right.

I stayed in my room, away from Greg, that day. I went to work on Monday, spending most of my time trying to find an apartment for rent. The only thing available would cost me a thousand a week.

I went for dinner alone at Ronald's Place and thought gloomily about the chance I had missed for a somewhat normal life with Greg for a friend. I was feeling really sorry for myself. All around me the kids and families enjoying their Big Macs and McNuggets only made me feel more alone. I wondered if I would ever have a family like those I saw around me.

My own family was wary of me. My mother knew of my 'hobby' and urged me constantly to go to counselling. I already knew the answer to that one. She was the one who needed the counselling, to learn to accept me the way that I was. But

when I tried to explain that to her, she wouldn't listen. Dad was much older than her. I'd rarely seen him at home when I was growing up. He was always on the road, doing 'business'. Now retired, he was never home. He was always on the golf course. I don't think he realized he had a son.

My sisters had put up with my raiding their clothing closets when I was younger. I only used stuff they had grown out of for years. But Aline had had this so-cute, red-sequinned, mini-skirted dress and I *had* to try it on with a pair of her black, silky panties, and her dark, opera hose, and her red lipstick, and her auburn wig. I thought I put everything back exactly as it should have been after a dizzy, wonderful afternoon, but I guess I didn't do it as well as I thought.

"David," my mother said. "Don't touch Aline's stuff again, you hear me? And not Nora's either. They are getting very tired of you using their dresses and wrinkling them."

I hotly denied her charges even while I was quaking inside.

"I know it was you," my mother said. "Stop it now or...or you're going to grow into one of *those* kinds of people. You know."

I didn't know. I still denied I had been in their clothes and my mom just looked at me until I stalked off, faking a huff. It did stop me for a while but it was a factor in my crossing the country to go to university. I was safely away from all those prying eyes and pointed expressions. I had never been that close to my sisters, they were five and six years older than me, and I was wary around them after that, though they were always nice to me.

I got letters from Nora every couple of months or so. Now, I realized as I sat there chomping on my burger and fries, that the relief on my mother's face and the look Aline had given her when I went out with Annie, a pretty girl in my Grade Ten class, to the movies, was because they must have been convinced that I was going to turn out to be gay. Going out with a girl must have made them think that everything could be normal with me. Normal. I was disgusted with myself. I would never be normal, I thought.

I trudged out of the fast-food restaurant and headed back to the Fairlane, thinking only of my family and the little clues that told me they knew more than they had ever let on. I was warm but shivering with embarrassment at my own naïveté when a familiar voice broke into my reverie.

"Hey, David," came Ginny's voice from a car parked in a loading zone. Her blonde head was leaning out of the passenger window. She was smiling at me. "Whatcha doing?"

I forgot that I was going to bite her head off the next time I saw her.

"Nothing," I said, even smiling at her.

She opened the back door of the blue Neon. I could see that Kelly was driving. "Get in," she said. "We've just been food shopping and we could use some help getting it all in. We'll even make supper for you if you help."

Kelly looked back and frowned at me. I shifted some of the bags over, put my briefcase on top of one and slid into the back seat. It was better, I thought miserably, than getting back to the Fairlane apartment and having to face Greg Cuthbert again.

"Wow," said Kelly, looking in the mirror as she edged back into the traffic. "What a face!"

Ginny turned all the way around and looked at me, still smiling. Did she take drugs, uppers, I wondered? She was always smiling and so happy, even when she was hurting or insulting her friends. Then it came to me how she was the architect of my current misfortunes.

"You were talking to Greg," I said flatly to Ginny.

"Greg?" she asked, her fair eyebrows knitting as she frowned and looked to Kelly who shrugged.

"At Naomi's party, you talked about me," I said. "Angie Clymer was there."

"Oh, yes!" Ginny's face brightened and she sparkled as she remembered. "That was a real blast! You shouldn't have missed it, David. Angie was asking after you."

"That wasn't what Greg said you discussed about me," I said sourly. "After you talked to him, Greg asked me to move out."

"After I talked to him?" Ginny frowned again and looked to Kelly.

"You know," Kelly said, looking at me in the back mirror. "About David in your dress, to the guy on the couch. You and Angie."

I felt as if I had been punched to hear Kelly speak out what I had been trying to keep from her.

"Oh, that guy!" said Ginny, smacking her head. "That was David's roomie?"

Kelly nodded and moved the car into the lane for the underground parking of the Whittimore Towers.

"Oops!" exclaimed Ginny, her hand covering her mouth, her eyes glinting with suppressed amusement as she looked at me.

I didn't know why I had allowed myself to get into the car with the two of them. I expected Kelly to be cool to me but she just asked me to carry up several cases of canned stuff, a pile that rivalled her own.

Their apartment was every bit as fantastic as I expected. It had a huge living area, the walls a dark pink edged with white woodwork at the ceiling and along the shining hardwood floor. The rugs were thick-piled Persian, I was sure, or an excellent imitation and most of the furniture, French provincial in style, fitted the decor in color and elegance. I could scarcely believe the richness of the apartment.

"You don't have to gape so baldly," said Kelly wryly. "The furniture is my mother's, all of it. She remarried and dumped it all off on me. I'd rather have had new stuff than all this old junk..." Her wave took in cabinets that I knew were ex-

traordinarily expensive. "...but I'm stuck with it now until I marry some rich stockbroker."

Ginny came struggling in with more than Kelly or I had carried. "David's a stockbroker," she said.

"More than that," murmured Kelly under her breath as she moved into the kitchen.

"I've already eaten," I said, looking at my watch to conceal my nervousness at Karen's first pointed remark. "And I do have to go and do some phoning about a new apartment. So I have to go."

Ginny wasn't fazed at all. Her outer clothing went onto a loveseat and her parcels were dumped on the table. She threw herself into a chair and reached for the television remote.

"There's a phone here," she said, "and wine in the fridge. Be a darling and bring one for me as well, David dear."

I picked up some of her bags from the table and took them into the kitchen where Kelly was putting everything away, in the fridge, the freezer or the pantry.

She looked surprised when I emptied the bags and put away the frozen stuff in her freezer. "Oh, we should keep you," she said, her characteristic pout becoming a smile. "Ginny would have everything unfreeze before she stirred from that chair."

"Not true!" Ginny squealed, coming in behind me with the last of the groceries.

Kelly smiled. "You're only doing that to impress David," she said pointedly. "When was the last time you ever put groceries away? Or made supper?" She indicated the water heating on the stove and the microwave that was defrosting something else.

Ginny giggled her little-girl giggle. "Why would I want to impress David?" she asked.

Yes, why, I thought miserably. David didn't need to be impressed by Ginny. I needed her to keep her mouth shut and not ruin my chances with every girl I met. Girls like Kelly whom I was sure did not have a good opinion of me now.

"You need to impress David," said Kelly carefully, eyeing me seriously, "before you ask him to move in with us since he is looking for a place to stay and we need someone to share the rent on this place for the next six months at least."

I was stunned. I could feel my hair standing up on end with the strange, shocked way Kelly's words impacted on me. She couldn't be asking me to share an apartment with her, not after what Ginny had been telling her about me.

"Oh, right!" exclaimed Ginny, her face mirroring my shock. "We're going to have a guy move in with us?"

I agreed exactly with her sentiments. It was an outrageous suggestion.

"Oh, come on," said Kelly, disgust in her tone. "It happens all the time these days, you two. Besides, David isn't just any guy, or so you tell me, Ginny."

The last statement stunned Ginny just as much as it stunned me. I looked at her, my insides churning. To share an apartment with two women, not my sisters, two women who knew that I was a cross-dresser. I was shaking all over.

"You're right," said Ginny slowly and seriously. "It could work out."

"Just one condition," said Kelly, a grin seeming to hover on her pouting lips as she looked at me.

Here it comes, I thought grimly. "What?" I asked, my face rigid.

"When we've got friends over," said Kelly, and I think she winked at Ginny, "we don't want you prancing around here in women's lingerie and high heels."

I flushed. How I got it out in my extreme nervousness I don't know. "I," I said it emphatically. "I never prance."

They both looked at me then. Kelly grinned first and then Ginny started to giggle. They both ended up laughing their heads off while I stood there feeling remarkably foolish, shudders passing through me and not knowing whether they were just having a joke with me or not.

Kelly recovered first and led me out of the back of the kitchen into the little hallway I'd noticed when I entered. "That's the bathroom," she indicated. It was a dark grey and pink with frilly curtains and obviously feminine. "And this is your room," she said.

It was a cream and white room with a canopy bed and frilled white and yellow pillows, quilt and counterpane. Kelly looked at me as I blushed again. "You won't mind all this femininity, will you?" she asked, indicating the dressing table, its makeup mirror, and padded commode. "The bed and furniture is mine and Sue did the rest so that it all matches. You could switch with me and have the pink room."

"No," I said hoarsely, suddenly wondering when it was that I had agreed to this mad arrangement.

"You wouldn't want Ginny's room," said Kelly, disregarding my state of nerves, if she even noticed how uptight and anxious I was. "It's a total mess. I won't go in there and neither will any man after she gets them in there once." She suddenly turned and looked at me speculatively. "I'm not sure you should have a guy in here. You know, we don't want to be that notorious."

"I'm not gay," I said, trying to show her my indignation at such an assumption, but my voice squeaked with my nervousness and she laughed at me.

"Okay," she said and I could tell that she didn't believe me at all.

Back in the living room, I was glad to have the glass of wine that Ginny offered. "We put in five hundred a month," she said directly, "and that covers the rent, sundries and some of the groceries. We usually have to split groceries at least twice more a month and liquor we try to share. We're always borrowing from each other and we try to pay back if we can remember." She gave me her cute smile and glanced at Kelly who rolled her eyes and disappeared into the kitchen.

Ginny came over and cuddled up to me on the sofa. "I never did see you dressed, did I?" she asked with a smile, her arm about mine. "Now I will, won't I?"

I swallowed hard. "Ginny..." I said carefully. How could I explain it to her? Cross-dressing was something I did in private. I didn't look at all like a real woman. I wasn't going to put on any kind of show for her, not at all.

"Oh, I know," she sighed. "You do it to resolve your tensions. I understand that. You don't have to be worried about Kelly and me, though. Everybody has gay, transsexual and transvestite friends these days. You're not so different, you know. I know lots of guys who are living full time as women."

I felt the blood drain from my face. I can't go through with this, I thought. I can't. Not with someone like Ginny. She was going to have me in a dress before all of my friends and my bosses. I just knew it. Maybe I *did* want to dress, live out some of my fantasies for a change, but how could I? I had a living to earn. No, this was not going to work out. I had to get out of that apartment before I made a colossal mistake.

Kelly came back then and scowled at Ginny. "Don't do that," she ordered in a tone of voice I'd never heard before. "You're going to scare David off. Can't you hear it in his voice? We just want a roommate. I don't care if he dresses up every day of the week or never. Let him live his own life, Ginny. And stop with the snide putdowns or I'll let David know a few stories about your love life that would entertain everyone in town."

Ginny stared open-mouthed at her roommate. There was silence for a while Kelly glared at her.

"All right," said Ginny finally, grumpily. "I won't mention David dressing up again, not till Halloween at least."

III. THE BIRTH OF HEATHER

I didn't prance about the apartment. I moved in with fear and trepidation and kept looking for an apartment that might suit me better. But the girls were so good to me that, after a couple of weeks, I stopped looking or even thinking about a move. By 'good,' I mean that they were casual about our relationship. I was just a roommate. I did my share of the chores, put my money in the kitty and bought liquor and extras just as they did. The other tenants at the Towers, when they found out I was in 240, asked a little about the girls who lived there and I had to explain that we shared.

We all got raised eyebrows at that and some knowing looks. "David's a friend," I heard Kelly say emphatically once when I was about to enter the laundry room.

“He was looking for a place and we just couldn't find anybody else who wanted to move in here. He's doing us a big favor living with us till our lease runs out. So, if you'll just keep your insinuations to yourself, we'll all get along fine.”

I tiptoed away and so I never did see who she was lecturing. Certainly, the tenants soon didn't even bother to give me any special looks when I left in a rush in the mornings for Connelly, Corcoran and O'Brien.

The only fly in the ointment was Ginny and her boyfriends. Actually, it was one boyfriend in particular. Bart Hoover. I got used to Ginny bringing in boys from the parties she seemed to attend on almost every night of the week. Some I talked to while Ginny was prowling about the kitchen to make 'munchies' for them. It didn't bother me that they invariably ended up in her bedroom.

The only one who bothered me was Bart Hoover. I answered the door for him and he knew me and about me right away. He looked me up and down. I was wearing a black and grey shirt and black pants but that didn't stop the way Bart saw me. Kelly happened to have a guy there, too. They were going to the movies. I had decided to stay in my room and get the entertainment investment report ready for my section leader for the following week.

Bart wanted to know why I wasn't dressed up. Didn't I relax at home? he smirked at me. Was I going to have my boyfriend over? Perhaps we could make a foursome or something at the Ulysses. He filled in the other guy on my transvestite proclivities, embellishing every word, while I stood there, hot, embarrassed, and close to tears.

I hastily retreated from the living room to my cream and white bedroom in which I hadn't changed a thing. I felt stupid and ashamed. But still, it was so unfair, I thought, sitting on Sue's commode, looking at myself in the makeup mirror. I had done nothing to bring that on. I had done nothing to embarrass my roommates at all. Nothing. Sure, I loved looking at them in their sexy dresses and nighties. I had imagined myself like them. I couldn't stop my thoughts. It wasn't possible. I should never have moved in with them. I would have to find another place, I thought miserably, even though I liked them both and we all got along great.

As I sat there quivering, there was a gentle tap on the door. It opened and Kelly and Ginny came in.

“We sent the men home,” said Ginny. “They didn't have to behave that way towards you.”

“It's okay,” I said, surprised and grateful for the thought behind her words. “Really. I know it's hard to understand.”

“It's harder for us to understand,” said Kelly suddenly, sitting on my bed. She smiled at me.

“Harder for you?” I asked in astonishment.

"Well, here it is," said Kelly. "You're supposed to be a transvestite and in all the time you've been here, we've never yet seen you dress up. I'm beginning to think you've been conning us."

"No," I began defensively.

"Do you have any women's clothes at all now?" asked Ginny, her eyes showing concern. "I mean, we didn't mean that you could never dress."

"There's that locked suitcase at the bottom of his closet," said Kelly, a twinkle in her eye.

"No," I said rapidly. But she was right. I had my girl stuff in that suitcase. I had debated hanging up the two dresses I owned or the skirts and blouses. But I didn't want the girls coming in, with the vacuum, say, and going, "Hey, come see what David has in his closet!"

"After what that moron, Bart, said to you," said Ginny emphatically, "we thought we should all have an evening in and do something. Why don't we all get dressed up together?"

"No," I said weakly. My body was tingling with emotion. I knew that I really longed for exactly the opposite of what I was saying. To dress up as a woman, with two girls to help me, would be like dying and going to heaven! It was what I had moved into the apartment for, if I was honest with myself, hoping that it would happen some day even while I was denying it to everyone, including myself.

"Well," said Kelly, stretching out across the foot of my bed. "It will be Halloween at the end of next month. That should be your day of the year, right, David?"

"N-No," I stammered, thinking of all the Halloweens that I had spent dressed up in my sister's clothing, wanting nothing more than that the old ladies in our neighborhood would mistake me for Aline or Nora. I loved it when they called me Nora and gave me extra candies. I never told them that it was Nora's brother in the witch's, the princess's, and once, the ballet dancer's costume. It was after that one that Mom stopped me dressing up or going out at Halloween. I was twelve then and I had been too scared ever since to dress up and go out in public.

"What were you last year?" Ginny asked.

That was easy. "A turncoat," I said.

"A what?" asked Kelly.

Ginny looked distinctly annoyed. "That's what the boys do who don't have costumes at Halloween dances," she said. "They turn their jackets around and go as turncoats."

"Haven't you ever dressed up as a woman and gone out on Halloween?" asked Kelly, rolling over to look at me.

I shook my head, not daring to speak from the constricted throat I now possessed. Ginny was at my closet door. She opened it and took out my precious case. She put it up on my bed, while I could make only weak objections.

"We should go as a threesome," said Ginny earnestly.

"The Stratus has the best prizes," said Kelly.

"But they don't let drag queens win," said Ginny with a grin. We both looked at her. "The Pink Parrot and the Mocadero always have special prizes for queens."

Her voice faded as we both looked at her in astonishment, taken aback by her expert knowledge. "What?" she said with a giggle. "A girl should know these things."

"Not our type of girl," said Kelly abruptly and she looked at me.

My nerves were jangling enough at the conversation we were having. I gulped as Kelly studied me. "What about the Ulysses?" she asked.

"It's just a regular crowd," said Ginny, puzzled. "But you have to have a talent and get up and perform in character there to win anything. What are you thinking?"

"I bet David could be a size four with a little dieting," she said. "We could go as an all-girl group like the Supremes."

The Supremes! Motown was so far out of it these days but the costumes they wore! They were always revealing and sexy.

"What do you think, David?" asked Ginny with giggle. "Doesn't that sound like fun?"

"I-I c-can't do it," I gasped. "I-I don't make that good-looking a g-girl."

Kelly snorted. "You haven't met the firm of Goody and Walker," she said, using her and Ginny's last names. "When we've finished dressing you up, neither your mother nor Bart Hoover is going to know it's you."

"What do you do first when you're going to dress up?" asked Ginny, serious and interested.

I thought I was going to be sick. Hot flashes went through me. These girls were actually expecting me to dress up like a girl with them. Of course, I wanted to. I wanted to very badly. The ache in my groin was back. The void in the pit of my stomach grew. I should just say, 'No', but I couldn't. I couldn't.

"Shave, I guess," I squeaked.

Kelly stood up and came over to me. Her soft hand ran around my face. "Don't shave your face," she said, looking over at Ginny. "He's very fair and with a little wax we could take care of his upper lip. I used to work the electrolysis machine at a beauty salon. I'm sure I could get the use of it again for the rest of his skin."

I protested but it was to no avail. Before I knew it, Ginny had gone into the bathroom and was fiddling about in the large medicine cabinet they shared. I had reluctantly opened my suitcase of feminine treasures, so paltry in comparison to what each of the girls had.

Kelly put the panties I owned in an empty drawer in the dressing table and the pantyhose and stockings below. She recognized some of my exotic underwear as coming from Frederick's and asked if it didn't hurt to wear such tight clothing. Of

course, the black merry widow corset hurt as did the gaff between my legs, but “an artist has to suffer for her art,” as Lucy had written to me once.

Ginny returned with enough hot wax to smother my face. I was reeling from the heat of it on my upper lip when she applied it liberally all over my face and neck.

“Hey!” I objected.

“Oh, don't be a baby, David,” said Ginny as Kelly hung up my blue dress next to the long white lace dress in my closet, so strange looking next to my male clothes. “You should take much better care of your wigs,” she added as Kelly opened the plastic pouch that contained my four hairpieces.

I wanted to object even more at the familiarity with which they handled my most private stuff. Then, I almost died as Kelly picked up one of my drag magazines and began to look it over, smiling at times, otherwise looking aghast at the pictures and articles.

“Just stay there and don't move,” said Ginny as she went to join Kelly and the two pored over my most intimate treasures. I was hot with embarrassment as they chortled over some of the ads in the personals section.

“You don't do this, do you?” giggled Ginny, reading one particularly salacious ad, requesting French and Greek for a sweet, attractive, pre-op transsexual.

“N-No, of c-course not!” I stammered. “It's j-just that all s-sorts get to use magazines.”

I was blushing furiously. It was a wonder the wax did not flow right off my face.

“Leave him be, Ginny,” said Kelly, finding the special bra and panties I had bought from the Frederick's catalogue, but rarely worn. “Get that wax off before he burns.”

My face was on fire after Ginny pulled the wax off my skin. I felt as if I had been scorched, my skin peeled back from my face. “He's a little red,” said Ginny, peering at me closely.

Kelly came over. Her hands felt so cool as she ran them over what used to be my 'beard.' She smiled at me and seemed to see the anxiety and emotion in my eyes. “Don't worry,” she said. “We can cover the redness with makeup and you're going to be very smooth for weeks until I can get to you with electrolysis.”

I frowned, quaking inside. “I-I'm a man...” I began.

Kelly looked at Ginny and the two of them burst out laughing while I sat there, hot with embarrassment and cold with anger by turns.

“Sorry, David,” said Kelly, recovering first. “Yes, you are indeed a man. But you are a transvestite, too, aren't you? Now, when this is over, you won't have to shave like other guys and you won't have to use pancake makeup like some of the queens in your magazines. You'll be smooth to the touch, and to the kiss, whether it's men or women you really go for.”

I squirmed at her words. "I really go for women," I said hotly. "I always have. I once thought that Ginny was the one for me, which is why I told her. I didn't want to have secrets from one whom I might ...you know."

They both stared at me, open-mouthed. "You're in love with Ginny?" asked Kelly, shocked. Ginny eyed me in disbelief.

"I never..." Ginny began.

"I was in love, for a short time," I said hastily. "I've wanted to be open and honest about myself because I know that deep down I can never change. I'll always be a transvestite."

I was trembling as I faced my two female roommates. I never had felt so bad. Confession was supposed to relieve the soul. Admitting to an addiction was supposed to be a step towards a happier life. Looking at Ginny and Kelly eyeing me as if I was something that had just crawled out from under a rock was upsetting, to say the least. I just wanted to die at being so publicly (to two people!) shamed.

Kelly took some bottles from Ginny. "It's best for our clothes, if we are going to share, that you get all your body hair off. Use these chemical hair removers all over, and I mean *all over*." She smiled then in a most friendly fashion, as if what I had said did not affect her ideas about me at all. It was as if the sun suddenly came out on a snowy day. I wanted to throw my arms about her. "Even your bikini line," Kelly added. "Do you want Ginny or me to come with you?"

"N-No!" I said, panicked at the thought of them seeing me naked in the shower.

"Use the back scrubber, the sponge one, to get every vestige of hair off," Kelly said. "Then, put on this," she handed me the new gaff I'd not used yet, "and these." She reached down and gave me a pair of black, silk panties. "Nothing else," she warned. "Leave your male stuff off, girl. We'll be choosing the right clothes for you while you're cleaning off."

I stood in the shower and put the pink cream on my arms and across my chest and began to think suddenly of my job and how I was going to look and feel tomorrow in the assistants' meeting. But I had already done the back of one of my hands. I thought of the delicious feelings I always had whenever I dressed up and felt a surge of excitement at the thought of being a girl with Ginny and Kelly. I was going to be dressed as a woman by other women! I found my mouth quivering, watering, and my manhood growing as I contemplated that agonizing, wonderful thought.

It took some scrubbing but the hair on my body and on my legs balled up and came off in layers as I scrubbed myself in the shower. I felt so strange as I stepped out of the shower. I had no body hair. When I put on the gaff, it hurt as I pulled the cords tight, pushing everything into my body cavity. I slid the panties over my bare, smooth legs, and spasms of strange feelings swept over me. I had worn women's panties before but it was so different to touch such smooth skin and know that it was me. Maybe this time, I might actually look passable as a woman. I suddenly despaired. I knew how I would look as a woman. I would look like a man dressed as a woman. Nothing would change that.

That was how Kelly found me fifteen minutes later. I was just standing there, looking at myself in the mirror, in my high-cut black panties, my body so white. My brown hair was still plastered to my head, but I looked like me, a man in women's panties. I was so depressed after the early euphoria I had felt.

"What's the matter?" asked Kelly, looking at the pretty panties and the lace about my leg.

"See," I said, indicating the long mirror on the side of the tub-shower. "I'm just a stupid guy. I shouldn't have done this."

Kelly reached out and took my hand and then, to my utter surprise, she gave me a hug. Her white, soft bathrobe was against me; her soft cheek and perfumed hair were on my face.

"What's this for?" I asked, hugging her back.

"You looked like you needed it," said Kelly. She pulled me after her into her bedroom, the pink, frilly room where everything was so organized.

Ginny was wearing one of my auburn wigs as I went in, holding Kelly's hand. She grinned at me as she sorted through clothes. She had changed into a short, red silk tank top and a micro-mini black skirt and she was busy arranging the hair of my wig over her shoulders.

"You have to get a wig block," she said to me as she brushed and teased the hair about her face. "And you have to take much better care of your wigs. These are expensive."

I knew that. I somehow had the idea that the more realistic the hair, the more realistic I would look. It hadn't worked but I did feel girlish in long hair, I must admit, even if I didn't dare to look in the mirror.

Kelly gave me the black pair of padded panties I had bought from Frederick's and the bra to hold the inserts. I pulled on the panties over my others without talking and then put the bra about my chest. I reached for the box with the breast forms in them and took them out.

"Aren't they hard?" asked Kelly, touching them. I blushed as she inspected my female attributes. She watched, fascinated as I inserted them into the lace-edged bra.

"They do look real," said Ginny in wonderment as I adjusted the bra straps. I glanced at Karen's mirror and I had to admit, that in the light, transparent pockets of the Frederick's bra, they did look all right. It was the removal of any hair on my body, I realized, as excitement rose up in me as I looked at my body. It was a little girlish, wasn't it?

"Too hard," said Kelly. "They need to jiggle as we dance. But we'll fix that later."

Later? Was she suggesting that there would be more wonderful dressing up sessions as girls after this one? My heart leaped with joy.

"You will have to wear this, though," said Kelly with a frown, picking up my waist cinch from her bed. She had to learn from me how to pull the strings tight and then she cinched me harder than I had ever done me.

"See," she said to Ginny. "An instant figure."

Ginny laughed. "Don't turn blue, David," she chuckled.

I could barely breathe at the setting. My waist hurt. I couldn't bend. My groin hurt. Kelly mercifully let the waist cinch out a little.

"See, David," she said seriously. "If you diet and exercise over the next month, you'll be able to have the same figure as Ginny and me. We'll be wearing control briefs and bustiers, at least, don't you think?"

The last was directed to Ginny who frowned and nodded. "Depends on who we're going to be," she said.

I put on the dark pantyhose Kelly gave me. The feeling of soft nylon on my hairless legs was so sensual, so exquisite that I barely heard them as they discussed girls we could dress like instead of, or as well as, the Supremes. I gasped as I pulled the top over my panties and fitted the panties into place at my groin. The gaff concealed my maleness but it was very uncomfortable.

Kelly slipped out of her robe and stood in a bright red slip that barely concealed the panty line of her dark hose. She filled out the hips of the pantyhose in a way that I never could. She handed me a similar slip, one that was dark green. It covered my bra and panties and if you didn't look at my face, I supposed my body was taking on female proportions. I shivered as the light silk touched my body. Ginny smiled broadly at my reaction and I tried to smile back. It was, after all, what I dressed for. If I were alone, I would be playing with myself now to heighten the intensity of the feelings I was experiencing.

"Come over here and sit down," said Kelly, indicating a chair to one side of her dressing table.

I moved and sat on the edge of the chair, the constricted feeling of my chest and waist enervating me. The hose caressed me as it moved my legs. It felt so delightful, what women experienced all the time and thought nothing about. The green slip was like a little dress, covering my painful frontage.

"How much?" began Ginny.

"We're all going to have makeup for the stage if we do the Ulysses," said Kelly. "But just do regular for now. No point in David being the odd one out."

Ginny started on me first. I wanted to point out that I had beard cover and stuff in my bag but she shushed me and went to work with her cosmetics. Kelly was changing in the background into a red, silk blouse, square-shouldered and long-sleeved as Ginny worked on my face.

"He's got very fair skin," she told Kelly as if I wasn't there. "But these eyebrows are much too bushy." She began to tweezer me and I began to panic.

"Hey, hey," said Kelly as I pulled away and complained as I was hurt by Ginny who was glowering at me. "He has to earn a living as a man. You can only take a few from below. We'll get some eyebrow cover as it says in David's magazine's ads and do that for the show."

"Hold still," grumbled Ginny to me. "I won't hurt you at all."

My alarm rose as she worked on me for what seemed an age before stopping. "I could do a lot better if you were a real girl," she said.

"I-I'm not," I spoke softly.

"His voice," said Ginny, as she began to apply makeup to my face and eyes. Then, wonder of wonders, she used a false eyelash holder and gave me false eyelashes, so wonderfully dark and thick in front of my eyes. She worked again on my eyes while all the time Kelly spoke to me and kept at me to raise my voice and repeat phrases after her.

She stressed intonation. "Women say it like this," she said, slightly exaggerating what she had just said. I tried to repeat it exactly as she said it. But it was hard to say, "I love you, Brad darling," without breaking up. She and Ginny kept saying, "Higher," as I spoke as lightly and femininely as I could.

Ginny worked on my face and eyes for half an hour before she finally powdered me lightly, then used a pencil to outline my lips in pink, I think. Then she applied lipstick and I tensed in enjoyment at the familiar feel of stickiness on my lips. But Ginny blotted my lips several times and the stickiness diminished.

"I don't want lipstick over my clothes," she said, winking at me, which made my temperature shoot up, I'm sure. "There," she turned to Kelly, who had put on a black, leather mini-skirt like Ginny's. "What do you think?"

Kelly was brushing out her dark hair as she looked at me. "Looks okay to me," she said. Then, she smiled at me.

I wanted to smile back. I really did but I was reacting in my groin to all the female clothing around me, to the touch and constriction of female clothing. I was hurting as Ginny suddenly took off my wig and put it on to my head. Familiar strands of hair swept about my face as she applied comb and brush diligently for a few minutes. Then, she leaned back.

"Wow," said Ginny.

Kelly was staring at me, too. "Wow," she said with a grin. "You are a genius, Ginny." She indicated that I could look at myself in the mirror.

The image I saw made me ecstatic. I did! I *did* look like a girl! There was a lot of me in her but it was definitely a girl looking back at me from the mirror, a girl in a pretty green, silk slip and dark pantyhose.

"I love it," I said, seeing rounded, pink-blushed cheeks, thick-fringed eyes so huge and prominent, my lips a plummier shade than I had ever worn before. It was a girl's makeup and one I could not have done. "Thank you so much, Ginny," I began, meaning it with every fiber of my ecstatic, femininely clothed body.

“Higher!” they both said together and we laughed.

“Now for the mini-skirt,” said Kelly, handing me my best pair of earrings, clip-ons with large, dangling, golden circles, and going into her closet.

I couldn't take my eyes off the feminine image in the mirror that was me. I did want to prance about the apartment now in my lingerie! I slipped my hair back, dark and red, long and so different from the girls, I realized, but so much the crowning touch in disappearing David McCann. My earrings clung tightly to me. They always hurt in time after one of my sessions of wearing my female clothes. On the occasions I found to do that, I called it letting out the tension.

Ginny had a dark-blue, silk blouse for me, long-sleeved, buttons at the front, which she opened like Kelly's. I then had to slide a tiny, black skirt over my hips and close it about my shaped waist. I looked again at myself. I fitted in with Kelly and Ginny. I did look like a girl with red hair while they were blonde and brunette. We did look like a threesome, three girls. I was ecstatic that one of the girls was me!

“Shoes,” said Ginny, producing black, high heels from her closet. I was taller than Kelly by an inch but I had to have the same heels as they.

“You have to go in the middle,” said Kelly as I fitted Ginny's shoes, as I knew I would. I had once tried her shoes on in an unguarded moment when we went out together. They were tight but I could get them on.

I balanced, barely, in front of the others. “Welcome to womanhood, David,” said Kelly as I tried to mince a little out of the way.



I felt so wonderful as I followed her down the hallway into the living room and could see in the window's reflection just three leggy girls together, sauntering about our living room.

"We can't call her David when she's dressed like us," said Ginny, showing me how to walk and swing my hips. It was so fantastic to be treated as one of the girls. All my short life I had wanted this. Could there be any bliss to compare? I ignored every pain and tried to enjoy the moment.

"You're right," said Kelly, putting something on the CD player. "Davida? No, I don't think that's right."

I had used Diane or Di or Dee in letters to other transvestites. I remembered the thrill of first signing a female name to what I had written. I suggested 'Dee' and they both shouted at me to use my higher register.

"It's too close," said Ginny. "Bart's here and you come waltzing in and I say this is Davida or Dee and he'll clue in right away."

"He'd clue in anyway right now," said Kelly. "No matter what David calls himself, those who know him well aren't going to be fooled. They'll know it's David in a dress."

What were they talking about, I thought in a panic. I wasn't going to be seen by others. This was just between us, wasn't it?

"She should have a name that has nothing to do with David," Ginny went on obstinately. "She is going to meet someone sometime and she's going to fool them after we've worked on her enough. I mean, we are going to try and win this Ulysses contest, aren't we? So she'll have to be good enough to pass..."

Kelly cut off her partner while I felt more than panic rising inside me.

"Okay," said Kelly. "She..." She stressed the word, raising her eyebrows at me, while I flipped at the designation. "She has to have a feminine name. If I ever have a little girl, I'm going to call her Alison. So don't choose that." She smiled at me again and I felt warmed again.

"I propose Heather," said Ginny. "It's nothing like David at all and it's a pretty sexy name for a girl."

"That's okay with me," said Kelly. "How do you feel about it, Heather?"

If they wanted to call me Heather, of course it was all right with me. Ginny came to me and hugged me. "I used to have a girl friend named Heather," she said. "She was a real doll, like you are going to be."

"Oh, I would like that," I said. "I always wanted to be a real doll."

"Higher," they said in unison and I had to repeat it twice over while they laughed at me and I trembled on my high heels.

Kelly had Supremes' music on the player and she set it going as soon as I was able to squeak that I wanted to be a doll and they said, "That's it! Just like that!"

Kelly took charge then, filling in Diana Ross's part and making us mime to the other girls' parts. Then, she had us try to move as girl entertainers. They giggled

over some of my moves. They laughed uproariously when I fell over, exposing myself and my panties, to anyone who might have been watching from our couch. Luckily, it was only the three of us girls.

That's the way I felt as the evening wore on, as they called me 'Heather' all the time and taught me how to move and sway like a girl in high heels. We choreographed 'Baby Love' and actually did it all the way through without a mistake before letting the album run on to other Supremes hits.

"Heather," said Kelly, as we sat on the sofa, our nyloned legs crossed in female fashion, as Ginny went for refreshments. "You are the end. Such a good sport. You won't let us down and pull out on us, will you? We can win the contest at the Ulysses."

"Just one thing," said Ginny, bringing back Diet Cokes for us. "They don't have miming at the Ulysses. We can have taped music in the background like karaoke but we have to do the singing."

I hurt everywhere and I wanted to do nothing more than get rid of my female clothes. "Well," I squeaked. "That's that, then." I had caught on that they were planning to enter a Halloween contest and that it involved me dressing and dancing like a girl. I was thrilled that they thought I could do it. I wondered what it would be like to be among many people, dressed as a woman. I wanted to do it. I wanted to be taken as a woman by others. I thought it would be sheer heaven.

Kelly reached over and caressed my stockinged leg and my groin hurt even more. "We heard you singing along," she said. "I bet you could do it falsetto. It isn't hard to do the background for the Supremes."

I was sure that I couldn't do it. But the girls were persistent and they didn't laugh when I tried it as they suggested.

"So it wasn't perfect," said Kelly. "Rome wasn't built in a day."

"Same time tomorrow night?" asked Ginny with a smile at me.

"Let's try for earlier," said Kelly. "If Heather can be ready to go by seven, we can have a whole night of dressing up. We should try evening dresses, too."

My spirits soared as we all got up together and went back to Karen's room, tied up and began to change. I didn't really want to stop being Heather and start being David again, but my waist and groin demanded it. I was getting quite numb.

I took off my earrings and wig fairly sadly and both girls looked at me.

"What is it?" I asked, using the register they wanted me to use for Heather.

"I liked Heather," Kelly said with a smile. "It's a surprise to see you back. I guess I thought, hmmm."

"But look," said Ginny, pushing me down on the chair before Kelly's mirror. She was brushing my hair furiously around my neck and down over my face. "See. It's a short shag. With eye makeup and lipstick, David could go out if he had the right girlish attitude."

I stared at my own hair and the way she had brushed it. My makeup was still in place and I thought I looked bizarre. My eyes were dark and heavily fringed.

"I think so," said Kelly behind me. "But that's for another day." She handed me cream to use on my face and cotton makeup-removing balls. Then she had me cream my face again and again and ran me a bath when she saw the raw marks the waist cinch and bra had left on me.

I luxuriated in that soft bath and had to rub lotions all over myself, from head to toe, on Kelly's orders, before going to bed, exhausted, every item of the evening playing again and again in my head.

IV. A PRACTICE PARTY

I had to explain to Buddy Lysak in the john at Connelly that the rosy smell came from the secretary's cologne she had sprayed all over my clothes. To John Cameron, I was visiting a dermatologist about warts and he'd used the hair remover on my hands and lower arm. And no, I reassured him, it wasn't anything life threatening.

Ah, the travails of being a working man who'd rather have been a working girl, I thought, as I finally managed to get out of the office without having to explain to Louise, one of the women in the secretarial pool, what there was that was different about me that day.

I knew what was different. It was my eyebrows. They were narrower, not bushy or straggly. Herb Kennedy had asked me humorously if I'd stood too close to the razor that morning. I hadn't understood at first and had looked for nicks on my chin or behind my jaw before remembering that I hadn't had to shave after Ginny's wax treatment. I rubbed my eyebrows to bring about a little disorder in them and managed to survive the day with just a few funny looks, mostly from puzzled secretaries, whom I avoided talking to, not wanting to have to lie more than was necessary.

I almost ran home, eager to escape into femininity again that night. There was supper on in the kitchen, which meant Kelly was around. Ginny never started the cooking.

I hadn't eaten anything but the light salad Kelly had made me make for myself that morning and so I was starving. Kelly was already dishing me a plate of spaghetti and meat sauce but there was less than half of what I normally ate on the plate.

"No bread either," she said removing the rolls from the basket and putting out an oil and vinegar dressed salad. "You're on a diet, girl."

I could only smile at that and the flutter it caused in my stomach. I had to drink lots of water before and after the meal, such as it was, and so I didn't feel hungry when Kelly ushered me from the table and told me to dress in one of the outfits she'd put on her bed.

I practically flew into her room. There were long gowns on the bed, sequined, glittery and very low-cut. I felt excitement all over at knowing I was going to be dressed in one of them in just a few minutes.

I heard Ginny arrive and then Kelly's angry voice. Ginny answered her back and then came bouncing into the room, Kelly, grim-faced, behind her.

"You know we were going to rehearse tonight," Kelly was saying as Ginny picked up the white, glittering dress that I had liked right away.

"But it's Ronnie Pickering, the boss's son," said Ginny in an exasperated voice. "I had to say yes."

"Don't bring him back here tonight," warned Kelly while I froze at the thought of another guy in our apartment with me dressed as a woman.

"It depends," said Ginny, her chin set in determination, "on how the night goes. He might come back with me. I might bring him in. Or not. It just depends."

She tossed the dress back on the bed and hurried out. Kelly sighed and looked at me. "At least, get out of those male clothes and into something more comfortable," she said. Comfortable? I thought. Little did she know!

"Put on the same undergarments as last night," she said, turning to go back to the kitchen. "They really hid your male parts well, you know, and the breast forms did give you shape."

I got the same tingle as before as I put on my panties and slid the pantyhose over my smooth legs. The waist cinch wasn't as uncomfortable as the night before but it was still tight. It really did pull my waist in and I tightened it another notch, which hurt like the day before but if I had been able to stand it then, I should be able to stand it again, or so I reasoned. I put on the bra and looked at my figure in the mirror. I shivered at the figure I was presenting and felt the tightness at my groin again. The short slip covered the nipples of the breast forms but I could see them beneath the green silk of the slip.

"Oh," said Kelly, returning and taking off her sweater, stripping down to her bra easily in front of me. "Put on the long slip today," she said. "We have to practice in long gowns, too."

I had been covered by the short slip. Taking it off exposed me to her in my bra and pantyhose, which made me break out in goose bumps.

"We do have to do something about your breast forms," Kelly said, eyeing me as she stripped off her pants and her knee-highs and stood before me in her light green underwear. "The nipples stand out too much, as if you are aroused all the time. A man could see that and think you ready for a roll in bed, you know."

I blushed. I was very nervous still to be in her bedroom and I became even more so when she took off her bra and let her breasts jiggle free, talking easily to

me as I slipped the long, white slip over my body. It felt wonderfully light and airy against my hose.

“Can you do your makeup?” Kelly asked as she took off her panties and changed them to black, high-cut ones. She looked at me to see how embarrassed I was by the sight of a naked female, I'm sure.

I was having trouble breathing and I wanted to scratch the violent itch beneath my panties and the awfully tight, hurting gaff. I was red-faced for sure at seeing her. What red-blooded man wouldn't feel as I did, no matter how he was dressed? But what could she be thinking of me to treat me this way? Almost, I thought, as if I was another woman?

“I can't do what Ginny did,” I said hoarsely.

“Higher,” she said automatically, putting on a matching black bra to her panties.

I had to repeat it three times before she was satisfied with my voice.

She didn't put makeup on me at all, unlike Ginny. She instructed me though. She dressed while she made me do and redo my eyes. It was especially hard to do my eyelashes, to get them to stick and to stay on while I tried to put eye shadow on my lids. I pushed the white, spongy, little stick up into my eyebrows as Ginny had and tried to shape my eyebrows as she had done so expertly. I thought it was passable but Kelly only grimaced and had me do and redo until it seemed like several hours had gone by.

I was getting really frustrated when she finally had me gently smudge the dark lines under my eyes and said, “There. That should do it. You can put on your lipstick now and please blot it. We don't want lipstick smears on our clothes.” Our? I felt so good at that. Our. Us. To be referred to as one of 'us' by another woman.

I thought of the times that I had dressed in my sister's clothes as I blotted my red lipstick. Had it been the lipstick smears I hadn't noticed that had given me away? My mother had mentioned once about the girls not leaving makeup in their clothes which I hadn't understood because I didn't, either. It must have been my beautiful, shiny lipstick that I loved to put on so thickly.

The white dress was a very tight fit, hugging my rear and legs. I was shivering with the delight of it as I put on my wig. I combed it as best I could about my ears. Kelly came over to help me.

“You don't have any cleavage in that dress,” she complained. “Can't you bandage what you've got and pull it into the middle?”

I'd heard and read of that but had never tried it. Kelly had me take down the dress and she got tape and bandages and began to work to give me cleavage. It wasn't much when she had finished, but when she refastened my bra, repositioned the halter top of the sequinned dress, I looked in the mirror and the girl who looked back at me had something there. She looked so real. It was hard to think of her as me. I wanted to dance around the room, hug Kelly, do something outrageous.

Kelly laughed at my excitement and had me don high heels again. These were not as high as the ones from the day before and when I shimmied forward, the dress rippled gorgeously about me. It was so easy to move. I twirled around again, loving the airy feel of the dress about my stockinged legs.

I was still twirling and dancing, giggling, yes, higher, on a high I don't think I could explain to anyone when Kelly and I waltzed into our living room and right into the arms of a grinning guy who must have been a basketball player or something.

Sheer terror gripped me as his hand steadied me. Kelly looked surprised and was the first to recover. "Who are you?" she asked, swishing forward as I had and removing the man's hand from my bare arm.

"Brad Samuels," he said, grinning at me and then at Kelly. "Which one of you is the guy?"

I was petrified in shock but Kelly was only angry. "Ginny!" she yelled. "Where are you?"

Ginny came round the corner with two more basketball players in tow. She was grinning her head off. "Oh, hi, Kelly!" she said sweetly. "Hi, Heather! Guess what? The club was going to close early and so I invited Ronnie and his friends back here to party."

"This one's the guy," said Brad, taking me by the arm again. My face must have recorded my terror because Ginny didn't grin like the other two who were holding onto the beers that I had put in our fridge just the other day.

"I see three girls and three guys," said the shorter, fairer-haired one of the two coming in. He put an arm possessively about Ginny's waist. "So why don't one of you girls put on some music and we can have a little party here?"

"No," said Kelly sharply. "Ginny!"

"Yeah, let's party!" sang Ginny and I realized that she was high on something. "Three guys and three girls!" She looked at me and began to giggle uncontrollably.

"What is she on?" Kelly asked angrily. The third guy was putting on some dance mix music and Ginny started gyrating as soon as the music started.

The shorter one must have been Ronnie Pickering. I was trembling in fear, unable to look at anyone, trying to break out of the firm grip on my arm.

"Do you want some, too?" asked Ronnie with a smirk at Kelly. "You got something for the girls in your pocket over there, Brad?"

"I got plenty for the girls," laughed the guy, holding my arm with one hand as he reached into his pocket with the other. He tossed a baggie with white powder over to Ronnie.

Kelly argued furiously with Ronnie, while Ginny danced and sang, and Brad twisted my arm.

"Come on and dance with me," Brad said putting his arm about my waist and trying to get me close to him.

"No," I squeaked, terrified. I looked up into his smirking face.

"Aw, come on," he said, using his strength to pull me tight against him. "You must have danced with a man before, a trannie as pretty as you, Heather."

I was terrified by his words, by his nearness to me, by the whole situation of a man holding me as if I was a woman. Yes, I had fantasized about it, read stories in which transvestites were treated like women, but that's what they were, fantasies. I had never had a man see me before in women's clothing and now this guy expected me to behave like a woman with him even though he knew I was a man like him. I couldn't help but shiver with embarrassment and fear. Stark, raving fear. I was terrified. I wished the floor would just open up and I could fall through and get this over with.

"Leave her alone!" Kelly snapped, leaving Ronnie, grinning and twisting with a dancing Ginny. But the third guy intercepted her.

"Hey," he said, beer bottle in hand. "Dance with me. I don't care if you're the transvestite or not."

Kelly swung at him then, but he grabbed her arm. She swore at him.

"Kelly!" I squeaked, trying to go to her aid but Ronnie left Ginny and restrained his friend.

Brad swung me round and I had to look up at his face. He was grinning and looking down my cleavage. I struggled with his hands, my heels and skirts restricting how I could move.

"Slow down," I heard Ronnie saying placatingly to Kelly. "We really only want to party. And Ginny was talking so weird, we had to bring her home. If you really want us to go, we will. Even though we find you and your friend, really intriguing. Wouldn't a smoke help us all relax?"

I looked back at her. Kelly was taking the toké he was offering her, slowly and doubtfully. She looked at me.

"Let me talk to Heather," she said.

"I can't go back," I whispered, my stockinged knees knocking, my skirts thrilling me, and the long hair swirling at my neck as I shivered. She held me at arm's length, smiling at me in her bedroom

"Of course you can, Heather," she said, emphasizing the name. She took off the little earrings I had been wearing and brought back my long pendants that were so tight on my earlobes. They reminded me that I hurt just about everywhere. I was cold, too, drained with the strain of having to look back through false eyelashes at other men.

"It's easy," she said persuasively, showing me her toké. "We let them get zonked and they'll be putty in our hands. Men are like that." She smiled and stroked my arms. "You can be womanly to them. Let that Brad dance with you. Hold him like this." She put her arms up about my neck.

I shuddered in fright and with something else. Did I really want to do it? Deep down, did I really want to be treated like a woman by a man? I quivered in Kelly's arms.

"But first," she said, removing her cheek and hair from my face and neck. "Let's put on some perfume." She liberally sprayed me with cologne on my neck and on my cleavage as well as at my wrists.

"I can't," I said fearfully after she had put the bottle down.

Kelly took my hand and pulled me after her into the living room. The guys were gathered about Ginny who looked completely out of it. We sat on the big armchair as Kelly told them to light up first. I hadn't realized how quickly a drug could take hold but they quickly became glassy-eyed.

Kelly took Mitch, the third boy, into her arms and began to sway with him in a clinch. She waved me towards Brad who was now smiling in a very silly way. He tottered towards me and I got up, fear almost stopping me, and sashayed to him, my emotions in a tangle. My dress was so tight. I could feel my stockings on my legs and I was swaying on high heels. I shouldn't feel like this! My mind shrieked at me as I felt skirts ripple over my ankles.

Brad reached for me. I put my arms up about his neck and let him put his hands about me. I leaned my head and hair against his chest and we swayed together, he pressing against me, hugging me tighter. My dress was thin, my arms bare. I felt him everywhere against me, pressing on female clothing. That I was wearing.

"Gosh, you smell good," he said, leaning his face into my hair. I was shaking, scared that at any moment he would realize that I was a man, too, and attack me.

I wasn't prepared to be passed around our little group, either, but that's what Kelly insisted on and soon I was dancing with Mitch, the furthest gone of them all, and then Ronnie, who I didn't think had imbibed at all. He swirled and twirled me to a rock and roll tune and I actually loved the feel of my dress about my legs, the way I was constricted, the bounce of my earrings about my face, so much so that I actually smiled at Ronnie.

"Gee," he said in surprise, putting his arm about me as we finished the dance. "You look like a real girl when you smile."

I didn't know whether to be flattered or insulted. I was so nervous and so thrilled by my dress as it moved that I could think of nothing else to say to him. All I could do was smile as he hugged my waist. And then he kissed me.

I was stunned as he bent his head and suddenly kissed my lips. He laughed as I pulled away, petrified from the warm pressure on my lips. "How does that make you feel?" he asked with a laugh. "You deserved a kiss, Heather. You're the only one not going out of her mind tonight."

I looked over at Kelly and she was glassy-eyed, too. Ginny had closed her eyes and was hanging on to Mitch.

Brad was trying to control it. "I saw that," he said with a snort. "Wait till it's my turn, Heather."

My skin turned into a mass of goose bumps. Ronnie pulled me tighter as a rock ballad meant a clinch of a dance. "I'd like to kiss you again," he whispered in my ear. "I rather liked the last one."

I felt weird all over and my chest tightened and my gaff felt even tighter as Ronnie leaned over me again and found my mouth with his. Oh, this is awful, I thought, as his mouth worked over mine and then I felt his tongue and he was pushing my lips apart. I felt his hands slip down my back and waist and press me tight into him. I felt his hardness pushing back at me and I shivered, trying to break free of him, but he followed me and kissed my cheek and neck.

"You make a really nice girl," he said, hugging me. "It would be better if you put your arms about me and co-operated a little. Or a lot."

I couldn't. I was shaking with shameful emotions too much. I had let a man kiss me! Kiss me as if I was truly a woman! I broke free, feeling my skirts swirl about me.

"Time to change," chortled Brad. But I was too ashamed to let him grab me. I knew what he wanted. I headed to the bedroom and Kelly came after me.

"What is it?" she asked, trying to shake her head clear.

"Ronnie kissed me," I said, my voice as trembly as I felt. "So?" she said. "Didn't you like it? What's the problem?"

"Now Brad wants to," I said angrily, not thinking of the guilt any man should feel at being hugged and kissed by another man.

"Higher," said Kelly with a grin. She frowned. "Let me get this straight. You are dressed like a woman and the boys are treating you like a woman, right?"

"It's gone too far," I said in my girly voice. "They know I'm not a girl but..."

"But they think you want to be treated like a girl," giggled Kelly. "Oh, what other transvestites would give to have your problems!"

She took my hand. "Come on back," she said. "We all have to work tomorrow anyway and so they have to leave in an hour. You can kiss the boys for an hour, can't you? That will really make you think like a woman, you know. And it does need all three of us to be girls with three guys to entertain."

Three of us girls. That's what it was that made me reluctantly go back. I would dance, I thought, smelling the sweet perfume I was wearing, but no kissing.

Of course, it didn't work that way. Brad seemed more composed than he had been when I swished out. He had to try out what it was like to kiss a man and he was enthusiastic about it, almost bruising my lips with the pressure of his kisses. I felt so funny having a man kiss me as I had kissed so many girls before. Their arms about me, pressing me to them, made me feel so weak, so stupid to be so submissive. I didn't feel like me. I felt different. I couldn't get out of goodbye kisses at the door and so I did put my arms about Ronnie's neck and let him bury his

tongue in my mouth. I actually began to feel like a girl being kissed by her man as he expertly kissed me. Mitch was just a long slobber as all of us girls kissing each boy in turn could attest. I was shuddering in relief and regretting it at the same time when they left.

Ginny, I didn't think, would remember it at all. Kelly and I put her to bed and she was asleep in seconds.

"I'm going to have such a hangover in the morning," said Kelly. "You didn't take anything, did you, Heather?" She smiled at me. "You were high enough as it was, weren't you?"

The shame and embarrassment were beginning to surface. I blushed recalling Ronnie's kiss. If a guy could kiss me like that... I shuddered.

"Same time, same idea, tomorrow night," said Kelly and I retreated to my own room to sleep in the long slip, panties and bra and to dream of dancing and being kissed by Ronnie Pickering, as I played myself to sleep.



V. SHOPPING

“Did I see you kissing Ronnie last night, clinging to him, his arms about you?” asked Ginny as we did our eyes together in her messy room the next night. “Or was it my imagination?”

“Must have been your imagination,” I said in my high voice and she looked at me sharply. I was all tensed up at her question but luckily my hand didn't quiver as I did what she did and added a layer of pink eye shadow to the greys and whites she'd had me use from the start.

“Oh,” she said and sighed as she turned back to the exotic pattern she was making for herself, Kelly and me. “I was pretty well wiped at work today but he said something about my red-haired roommate being quite a tasty dish.”

I made an error then with the eyebrow pencil and had to start again. I felt tight again and uncomfortable in my gaff and white padded panties.

Kelly entered in her underwear. She sank on the bed, on top of the dresses, blouses and sweaters that Ginny had not put away yet. “Gee,” she said wearily. “What was in that stuff the guys had last night? I thought I was blind today.”

Ginny shrugged and reached over to me to show me again how to push the eyebrow pencil into my eyebrows to get the feminine arc she wanted on my face.

“Did Ronnie come on to you last night?” she asked and Kelly laughed while I trembled inside.

“No,” she said, getting up on one elbow. “He came on to Heather. You were in quite a clinch at the end of the evening, weren't you?” She directed the last at me.

My fingers were shaking as I powdered my face lightly to keep my foundation and blusher in place.

Ginny looked hard at me. “So it *was* you,” she accused. “Well, Ronnie has invited us all to a party at his parents over the weekend. And Heather,” she stressed the name, “is specifically invited.” She frowned at me. “He does know that you're a man, doesn't he?”

I nodded, not daring to look her in the eye. I outlined my lips while there was a little silence behind me.

“Well, we're not going to that,” said Kelly. “I know how it'll be if Daddy is away. Those are real druggies, Ginny, not just weekenders. They slipped you something extra, you know. If Heather hadn't refused everything, we'd be in big trouble today.”

I was stunned. I thought about how three guys could have taken advantage of Ginny, taken advantage of us all, if we had been unable to resist. They had tried

so hard to get me to take something, even a drink, but I hadn't wanted to have any liquid in my system, knowing how difficult it would be for me to visit the bathroom. I hadn't thought about what could have happened or that I was being manipulated by Ronnie and his friends.

I put on my lipstick while Ginny reacted crossly. "They're not like that," she snapped. "He's my boss's son, for goodness's sake."

Kelly got up and looked critically at my face. "Wear your shorter, auburn wig," she said. "And the biggest dangling earrings you have."

The short wig had curls that pointed to my mouth while being smooth and straight in a really nice layered bob at the back. I thought of it as my most normal hair. It was a mess on my head at first but Karen combed and brushed and soon my definite, exotically made-up face was framed by the feminine line of a fringe and straight, slightly waved hair.

My earrings were large and ceramic, an irresistible buy for my 'sister' when I was eighteen. The salesgirl had tried to talk me out of buying them for she was sure my sister would have pierced ears. She did. I had had to talk fast and assure the salesgirl that my sister had admired them when we came through the week before. She would like them. The girl had frowned and said that they had only just arrived the day before and looked at me very curiously. I'm sure now that she knew exactly who was going to be wearing the earrings. I blushed fiercely as I paid for them and she hoped that they would suit my sister well, she said, as she smiled knowingly and handed me the package.

I studied my made-up face, my wig and the long earrings, so cold, metallic, and thrilling on my neck. I smiled as I thought of the salesgirl. If she could only see me now, I thought, admiring the female image Ginny had conjured up for me.

Kelly had tape and a different bra for me and showed a fascinated Ginny how to give me cleavage by taping under my arms and pulling my pecs into the middle of my chest. She had a white bra for me with very thin straps. My breast forms were held in place and as, I looked in the mirror, I couldn't help but be delighted by my image as a female. In such a short time, Ginny and Kelly had done wonders for me.

Kelly had stockings, slip, a soft, blue blouse with a cowl neck, and a straight grey skirt, knee-length. She had gotten my comfortable heels, only two and a half inches high, from my room and I was really happy to put them on.

"You'll need a purse," she said. "And you are going to have to start buying your own female things. Ginny and I can't keep on giving you everything."

I was so happy with what they had done for me that I was eager to replace everything I had used of theirs. "Good," said Kelly shortly. "Let's find you a coat then and a purse."

I had put on the dark blue coat, the length of my skirt, and tried on a dark pair of Kelly's gloves, having a lesson in how to carry a purse and what to do with it when Ginny joined us.

"Where are you girls going?" she asked.

Then I realized that Karen was also dressed up in coat and hat. "Out," she said with a grim smile.

"Out?" I squeaked.

"The shops are open," said Kelly, "and you, Heather, need a lot of things."

"Oh, I'm coming too," cried Ginny, clapping her hands with delight. "I wouldn't have put on so much makeup."

"It's okay," said Kelly. "We do have to go to Masks anyway and look for our costumes for our Halloween performance. Heather can be our model there."

"Yeah!" said Ginny in delight.

"No!" I said in agonized fright. I mean, to go out in public as a woman! I wanted to do that. I had always wanted to do that. I would love to do that. I would hate to be pointed at, however. I could not stand the embarrassment of someone seeing me in a dress and saying, "Why is that man wearing women's clothing?" or words to that effect. It would destroy me.

"It'll put you on your mettle," Kelly said as Ginny rushed around enthusiastically getting ready. "And you'll have Ginny and me there to head off any nasty encounters. But I want you with us when we get to Masks. There's no use us trying on slinky, little dresses for our threesome if you couldn't even get close to them. Just be as girlish as you were last night with Ronnie and you'll be fine."

Just the walk down our hallway, however, past the old couple that lived in 264, who looked at me and smiled so nicely, while I looked down and blushed, was exhilarating and nerve-wracking. And that was just a start, a minute out of the apartment. I just couldn't go farther!

"Girls don't look away," hissed Kelly as we waited for the elevator to the basement. "We are meant to be looked at."

"Just smile back," giggled Ginny while I quivered and thought again about running back to our apartment. But the elevator door opened and it was crowded.

I was pushed up against a guy from the top floor, Mike I think it was. "I like your perfume," he said as we exited on the lower parking level. He smiled at me and I must admit that I blushed and looked down again. I almost ran to join Kelly who had gone off to her car.

"Another conquest," laughed Ginny, waving to Mike and his friend merrily as she opened the car door for me. I remembered what they had said about getting into a car with a skirt on, and sat down first, thrilling at the sight of my legs, my legs (!!), in stockings and heels swinging into the car. This was me, David McCann, going out as a woman, to shop for...for women's things, I supposed, with my girl friends. And I was a girl, like them!

We stopped at the drug store at first and the girls filled a basket with things they said I needed, from false nails, false eyelashes, and pantyhose to moisturizing creams, makeup and perfume. They must have tried a dozen fragrances out

on me and got the help of an older woman sales clerk to check out the prices and packaging of everything. She was very helpful, particularly when she saw the size of the order.

Of course, I had to pay with my credit card. She turned it over to see the signature and I saw that I had used my name in full and not just my initial as I did on some cards.

“Oh, I have to have the name in full,” she said, pausing as she was putting in my credit card number.

Ginny saw what was happening as Kelly was looking at different eyeliners. Ginny laughed at the look on my face and my anxiety at being confronted. “Just sign your right name, David,” she said. “They don't care what you are so long as they make a sale.”

I thought the woman's eyebrows were going to shoot right off her head as I shakily signed 'David McCann'. She hesitated and looked at me, so heavily made-up, my hair so stylish, my earrings and my feminine shape and dress. I thought she wasn't going to take it. My heart was hammering in distress at such an embarrassing confrontation right at the start.

Kelly came over. “Oh,” she said sweetly to the older woman. “It's her name again, isn't it? We've told you a hundred times, Dee, that you don't have to use the name your parents gave you as your signature.” She laughed at the clerk. “We go through this every time we go out shopping with Dee.”

The woman smiled thinly at Kelly. I don't think she believed a word of it but she rang the order through. “I really should check...” she began, but Kelly had purchases to make and advice to ask and she didn't give the woman time to do anything but pack my purchases and hand them over to my shaking fingers, giving me a very searching look as she did so.

I got in the car, numb after that encounter. Through the window of the store, I could see the woman talking excitedly to another woman clerk and showing her a sales record.

“We can't go on,” I said hoarsely.

“Higher!” giggled Ginny, taking my bag of purchases and going through it to load my purse with items I would need in it, like lipstick and cologne.

“We can't go on,” I squeaked.

Karen turned as she eased the car from the strip mall lot. “Nonsense,” she said. “Just because we forgot about your credit card signature. Have a look at your others. Are they all the same? Can you write another name beside any of them? Or use your initials?”

I did have one that had my initials on the front and in my signature, a MasterCard, one I rarely used. I had a mass of cards. When I had graduated, I had filled in a dozen applications, which had only led to more. I usually just used the Visa from my regular bank. The others gave me enough credit that I knew I could get home if I had to in a family emergency. I was careful about using them, but they

did mean I didn't have to carry a lot of cash. I would have to start doing that if I was going to go shopping often.

So much for “No! I can't go on!” Kelly and Ginny ignored my anxious protests and headed for Masks, anyway. Masks was a store on a main road but there were no other stores about it and few customers inside when I went in with great trepidation, arm-in-arm with Kelly. My skirt kept my steps short and I could feel the breeze on my lovely stockings. Girls experienced this all the time, I thought, wishing I could always dress like this, always be out like this.

Ginny greeted the salesgirl cheerfully and explained what we were doing. The girl smiled and almost instantly ushered us to a rack of costumes, dominated by long, red, sequinned dresses, red, feathery boas and blonde wigs.

“Mae Wests,” the dark-haired girl laughed. “All the boys are wearing her this year.”

My hand shook in Kelly's but she gave me a comforting squeeze. “We might have to consider that,” she said, leading me up to the rack. “We want to be a threesome.”

“That's the name I used to register as at the Ulysses,” said Ginny suddenly, grinning at us from across the rack. “I did it by e-mail from work.”

“Threesome?” the girl smiled at us. “I usually get to the Ulysses at Halloween. See how many of our costumes are being used. I'll have to look for you girls.”

Ginny laughed and looked at Kelly. The pause was enough for the smart, dark-haired girl. “You're not all girls,” she said. She looked at Kelly and then at me. I felt my stomach churning. I looked down and felt the flush covering my body from shivering earrings to tight panties.

“You're a guy?” she said, her face crinkling in surprise.

“Yes, he is,” said Kelly without hesitation. “Which gives us a little bit of a problem to be all dressed the same.”

I was shuddering in my silky blouse, my chest suddenly feeling far too constricted as the short, dark-haired girl looked me up and down.

“Shouldn't be a problem,” she said with a sudden smile. “You fooled me for a moment until you looked away,” she said to me. “What do I call you anyway?”

“Heather,” said Kelly firmly. She looked at me, so nervous beside her under such female scrutiny. “We told you to keep eye contact.”

“It's so hard,” I murmured in my high voice. That made the salesgirl react again with surprise.

“Wow,” she said. “She sounds great.”

“We're working on it,” said Karen patronizingly as I squirmed and tried to keep eye contact with the staring clerk.

We got fantastic treatment, because of me, Karen said later. We tried on all kinds of dresses and wigs and paraded in front of the long mirrors to the delight, I think, of the customers who came and went to get other kinds of costumes like

dance and skating outfits for athletic daughters. We even tried the Mae Wests, with each of us in red sequins, the split up to our hips showing off our pantyhose.

Josie, the salesgirl, loved us in everything; from short, lame evening wear with Marilyn wigs to the Afros and deep-cut beaded gowns, which the Supremes wore. That was what I thought we were there to get.

I was mentally exhausted by the thrilling sensation of it all as we changed in one room, with Josie bustling about to help us, particularly me, to get the costume just right. The feel of silk about me enthralled me but what was even better was the acceptance and enthusiasm of little Josie. She got me earrings and necklaces to match every costume and even suggested ways I should change my makeup.

"Another conquest," suggested Ginny lightly to Kelly as we changed to white, halter-top dresses with swirling skirts and Marilyn wigs again.

Josie came back with white hoop earrings for me. "It's hard to find the right touches with clip-ons," she said to me with a smile. "You should get your ears pierced."

"Tomorrow," said Ginny with a grin. I shivered and tried to figure out if she was being serious or not.

"We could do something from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*," said Kelly as we all changed to the white sandals.

"The black sequins and diamonds would be best then," said Ginny.

We went back into the store to look at ourselves in the mirror. I sashayed in imitation of the others and tried to smile at our images, even though the light, airy feel of the dress swirling about my stockings was unnerving.

The flash of a light bulb as someone took a picture unnerved me even more. It turned out to be a photographer from the local newspaper, doing photos for an article on Halloween costumes. He wanted all of our names for the caption to his piece.

"Threesome," said Kelly, squeezing my hand as I almost fled from the place. I felt the dress stretch against my false chest, the earrings jiggling on my neck and my dress swinging against me. "We'll be in the Ulysses talent competition and that's all you need to know."

The photographer was persistent. "But your names," he said. "What are your individual names?"

Josie tried to usher him away then and Kelly grabbed me by the hand and we clicked on our high heels back to the waiting room. Ginny was way behind us. I heard her distinctly, though. She said, "Ginny, Kelly and David," to the guy.

VI. PARTY GIRL

I was petrified for several days but there was no revealing picture in the paper over the weekend and so I was able to relax, as the following week went on, on that score. And I was too busy to think about what the consequences might be.

Kelly had been in amateur drama productions before and I had met Ginny in an English Lit course that she and half the Drama Society was taking to improve on their Shakespearean interpretations. I was the least experienced in acting then though I had tried to play the part of a girl in my own private dressing-up.

It wasn't enough for Kelly. She wanted us to be perfect. And so for two whole weekends, I was Heather. That was the best part. The worst part was being tightly bound all the time and having to do everything the other girls did. We exercised together, danced together and sang together.

Kelly recorded us all the time. She had the voice. She could be Diana Ross, Ethel Merman or Marilyn Monroe. She made Ginny and I be her chorus. I couldn't possibly have sung in a falsetto squeak and Kelly didn't want that. But she got from me a sort of contralto that complimented Ginny's alto and if we stuck to 'coloring,' as she called it, we actually did sound like the Supremes' backing. In other words, like not much at all.

We shimmied and sashayed, wiggling unashamedly, to take away any concentration on our singing, as Kelly put it. By Saturday of our second week, we had fleshed out what we were going to do. We would all be Marylins in slinky, black dresses with our legs showing and we would do affected Marilyn voices but to a Supremes number. I loved it, what with my legs uncovered and in silky stockings while my dress tugged on me. I didn't need drugs, as Kelly said, to feel so high, swaying like a model on a catwalk as she sang in front of us.

We rehearsed both *Baby Love* and *Stop in the Name of Love* many times with Kelly getting Marilyn's breathy tones down so perfectly that it was hilarious. Ginny and I didn't contribute much as a chorus but that was all right with Kelly. We just had to look good, she said, and support her. We'd put in a line for each of us later when we got the voices under control.

Kelly wouldn't let us go out again, either. She ordered our costumes from Masks, everything from underwear to wigs and shoes. "Josie will be there at our fitting a week before," she said, smiling at me. "I had to promise her that you would be there and so we got a special rate."

They both teased me about her and about Ronnie and Mike from the top floor, all my 'conquests.' I think I stood up to it pretty well. I was feeling so at home in

my stockings, bra and panties, that I was able to answer back about my girl friend and boy friends and looking nice for them in one of Kelly's mini-skirts.

“Woo-woo!” they both went after one rejoinder that even made me blush.

“What a girl we have created!” crowed Ginny.

“Yes,” said Kelly but she gave me such an odd look that I felt very strange. Luckily, that passed as we exercised again in our little skirts and shiny, pink tights.

I wasn't allowed to eat, save for a little fruit and water, on most days. I also had to wear skirts at home while the girls wore tights and leggings. I had to wear earrings and long hair while they tied theirs back. I had to suffer the indignity of tighter waist cinching and making and remaking up while the girls experimented with every idea that took their fancy on me.

“No, that's not the look,” one would say as I was painted and glittered and made to strut on very high heels about the room. “We don't want to look as slutty as her.”

I wore all my panties and bras and my two dresses many times as well as most of their wardrobes, to my intense delight. I wasn't too pleased when Kelly said I would have to do the wash, though, the following week. At the weekend, I didn't want to change back to David's clothes to go down to the laundry room.

“Go as you are,” Kelly said matter-of-factly. She and Ginny each had a basket plus of clothing and I had my own and a female wardrobe, too. “No one will be there on a Saturday night.”

I was in a black skirt of Ginny's with a wide, black vinyl belt at my waist. I wore dark pantyhose, my padded panties and padded bra and a white blouse that Ginny had insisted had to have the two top buttons open. I was heavily made-up and I had on two necklaces and a pendant around my neck, which matched my earrings.

The girls had insisted on my wearing false nails to fit in with theirs, which they planned on painting bright red. Mine were bright red and acrylic, long enough to get in the way of handling anything. But having them, seeing them, made me conscious of my femininity all the time despite the tightness of them gripping my real nails. They made me think of acting like a woman each time I spied the red tips on my hands.

I was having to wear high heels all the time, too, which made a female wiggle easier to do as I could only take small steps and each foot had to come down in front of the other as Ginny showed me.

So I was feeling quite confident to go to the laundry room with the girls. They were in their sweats, naturally, while I looked and smelled like a fashion model. We were surprised to find three guys in the laundry room. They were the guys from the third floor, whom I'd seen before, and naturally they began to hit on me while the girls were laughing at being ignored.

Then one of the guys asked Kelly if it was true that she and Ginny had a male roommate and her pause gave it away. The looks they gave me were perplexing.

They didn't really know what to say, not with Kelly and Ginny there, laughing at them.

"You do look very real," the tall, dark one said lamely, with a redness on his face that hadn't been there before when he was asking me if I was dressed up to go out that night. He was edging to the door. I noticed that he couldn't quite look me in the eye.

"We were thinking of having a party in our place later," said Ginny wickedly. "Would you and your friends like to come?"

"We were going out," said the dark man quickly and his friend nodded. "To a night club."

"Oh, which one?" Ginny asked, smiling broadly. "We could see you there, couldn't we, girls?" She directed the last at me.

I hadn't thought before of the effect I would have as a man dressed as a woman on other people. The reactions were all different; I guess they depended upon whether I was an expected sight or not. Josie couldn't have been nicer. Ronnie and his friends didn't seem to hold it against me while these young men were embarrassed, for me or by me I couldn't tell. They couldn't wait to get out of there, their eyes on my shapely, stockinged legs and skirt rather than on my face. I wondered what it would be like if I met them again, either together or singly.

I thought of my own reaction. I was not trembling but I was warm all over at being recognized. No, I was not going to run away. I would tough it out, I thought in amazement. Even a month before, I know I would have run away if someone else, anyone, had seen me in women's clothes.

Today, I was so elated at being treated as a girl friend by Kelly and Ginny that I wanted to walk up to everyone and challenge them. I realized then with a quiver that I was getting too addicted to cross-dressing. I would have to draw back soon. I had a living to earn. Reality washed over me as I thought of the young men we'd set to running. What tales would they be telling and where would such tales end up in a building such as ours?

We left the machines running and returned to our apartment. Ginny was restless and wanted to go out, if only to the local pub, but Kelly wouldn't hear of it. She really wanted us to plan out the performance we were going to put on at the Ulysses.

"It's going to be packed," she said, "if they can afford the prizes you say they give out." She looked hard at Ginny. "It's not just one of your stories, is it?"

"No," said Ginny shortly, going to her purse and bringing out a fax. The message was headed, 'Confirmation of Entry.' "See. We're accepted as Threesome. If we want, we can supply instrumental music on tape or sheet music for the trio they'll have that night to play. You're not allowed to lip sync, though."

Kelly took the fax and studied it. "Two thousand dollars first prize," she said, shaking her head. "That's as much as a first-class act would receive for doing a whole cabaret turn."

"It's only a couple of dollars per person," said Ginny. "And they always have an extra charge for Halloween."

I swallowed hard in my loose, silk blouse and tight skirt. "You-you're not expecting to win this thing, are you?" I gasped.

Kelly looked hard at me and frowned. "Of course," she snapped. "We're going to win because of you. Nobody else will have a drag queen in the group."

"Not one as pretty as you," added Ginny. "You saw those guys with our laundry. They didn't know."

"And after we finish, they still won't know which of us is a guy," Kelly said with a smirk while I cringed inside.

"We're not going to tell them, either," giggled Ginny, stroking my soft, madeup face. "Will we, Heather darling?"

I suddenly realized what they had been talking about before while they were getting me to change into women's clothes. It was all a prank for them, an escape they could tell all their friends, about when they had performed at the Ulysses. Correction, after they got me to perform in drag at the Ulysses. I was angry at being manipulated. Would I still have dressed and gone through the wonderful experiences of the last few days if I had suspected their real motivations? I doubted that I would have gone through with it, even having full access to their wonderful wardrobes. They had trapped me into being Marilyn and now I couldn't give it up.

We recovered our laundry and returned to our apartment and I got a lesson on folding women's underthings, ironing and putting lingerie away properly.

Halfway through, the phone rang. It was the guys from 350. They had decided not to go out after all, some friends had dropped by, and would we like to come up and party?

Kelly looked at me, smiling into the phone.

"No," I said while Ginny laughed, sitting beside me on the couch, reaching over to pat my stockinged knee.

"How many guys are there? And how many girls?" Kelly asked provocatively and the boys could probably see her pout over the phone.

"Eight guys and three girls," she said, repeating what someone had said, smiling as she listened to further talk. "But you have to promise to treat each of us equally," she said. "Or none of us will come ... We'll think about it ... I have to persuade her ... I'll try. That's all I can say now."

She hung up and looked at me.

"Let's go party," said Ginny, bouncing up and taking off her sweats, standing there in her panties.

"It was Derek, the blonde one," said Kelly. "He said that he's already told the rest about you but they want you to come up anyway. I said they have to treat you like a girl and he said that they would. It will just be like the other night with Ronnie and his friends."

"There are too many of them," I said, my heart sinking as I looked at Kelly and understood that she wanted to go out, too. I felt myself starting chills again as I thought of our night with Ronnie and his friends and how outrageously I had behaved as a woman. "You can go without me."

"No way," said Kelly. "You were to do whatever we do on weekends, right? You can act like a girl up there for a few hours. Come on. Let's find a party dress for you."

Ginny produced the dress and outfit she had worn to the Ulysses, which I had recognized because I had bought it from a catalogue. "This will look good on you," she said, "with your shorter hair and big earrings."

I was trembling as I changed in front of them again. I scrubbed off my makeup with cream and put my wig away, taking care not to touch the blouse with makeup.

"You should change into a garter belt and stockings," said Kelly, stripped down to just panties. "You know why," she added with a smile. I did know. They would make me feel more feminine and every time I moved I would have to act femininely. I shivered, worrying that I could not keep up a female act for such a length of time as this party might be and there would be no running off to Kelly's room to hide.

I went back to my own room and found the garter belt I had bought with the bra that held the inserts. I was taped up to show cleavage and when I changed panties and put on my garter belt, I came out in goose bumps at the lovely thrill of it all. My stockings were soft and arousing as I gently slid them over my bare legs. I knew I would have had a large erection but for the tight, numbing grip of the gaff between my legs. I worried about what I might be doing to myself being bound up for so long. But the tug of the garter belt on my thighs was too marvellous to let me worry about that. I looked at myself in the mirror. With my waist so pulled in, I could have posed for some of those pictures in the catalogues, I thought. I was admiring myself when Kelly came for me.

I redid my makeup much more lightly than before. I wanted to add much more to my eye makeup but both Kelly and Ginny restrained me. "We'll go for a fresh look," said Kelly, rubbing her hand over my smooth, creamy chin. I had followed to the letter their advice on creaming my skin at night and when we were 'home'.

I had hardly more makeup on than a light foundation, powder, a light blush and some eyeliner and mascara. Ginny put my hair on me and arranged it, along with my earrings and necklace, courtesy of Kelly, and then she attached my hair with bobby pins and some kind of glue to my head.

"It won't move tonight unless you want it to," she said as I asked in trepidation what she was doing.

The gold dress had inlaid petticoats that swirled about my stockings and garter belt. My padded panties and the even tighter waist cinch made them flow away from me, in exciting curves that filled me with delight to look at. I was doing as much for this dress as Ginny had done for it before.

I borrowed Ginny's red shoes and purse and was ready to go before the other girls. I had to go to the door when the bell rang because Ginny and Kelly were still debating underwear.

It was two of the guys we had met before, the blonde-haired one and the tall, dark-haired one whom I had been beside. They both gulped and stared at me.

"We-we thought we would come down and...and..." the one I think was Derek said.

"Come in for a moment," I said in my highest, honeyest voice.

They were checking me out, from my red high heels to the swinging golden orbs at my neck, as they came into the flat.

"The other girls will only be a minute," I said, keeping my voice as high as I could. I realized what I had said as soon as I saw their eyes widen. I could almost sense their excitement at being alone with me. They were staring at me, and I enjoyed it.

"Would you like a drink?" I asked, exaggerating my female walk a little as I went towards the kitchen, stopping, posing prettily as we had practiced for our performance, and looking back at them coyly over one bare shoulder. Their eyes were bugging out of their heads and I felt wonderful and so alive. Being an enticing woman like this was everything I had dreamed of.

"A-a pop," said Derek and the other nodded as if afraid to speak. I got them cold drinks and took only a sip on a piece of ice myself. I had no wish to have to take my panties off in someone else's bathroom.

I served them as they sat fidgeting on our sofa. Kelly walked out of the bedroom, beautiful in a black bodice and red skirt. She smiled as I bent at the knee as she had showed me to put the drinks beside each of them. "No need to show off cleavage you don't have," she had explained.

Derek stood up and she took his place easily, moving his drink to the side of the loveseat, which meant he had to sit next to me. He went red as he sat on the skirt of my dress and I had to wiggle it free of him. I crossed my legs with a feminine rustle of petticoats and he was almost green. I could see his eyes almost pop out of his head as he saw my nails.

"You will have lots of dancing, won't you?" said Kelly, taking the dark-haired guy's hand in hers, while he jerked nervously. "Heather loves to dance, especially the slow ones," she added, winking at me across the nervous Derek.

I'm the one who should be nervous, I thought, amazed at the young men's reaction.

Then Ginny arrived and we were ready to go upstairs. Kelly had claimed Ben, the tall one, and was hanging on to him. Ginny swept over to Derek who had risen and took his arm, gesturing to me to take his other.

"You can escort us both, Derek," she laughed at him. "Two girls. Poor Ben. He has only one."

Derek's hand was hot and clammy as I held it down to the elevator and up the single floor to their apartment. There was another couple at the door as we all arrived, the door opening to loud, rock music, many new faces and several people already dancing in the wide room, the chairs pulled back.

"You dance with Derek first," said Ginny, almost diving into the room and grabbing the third boy we'd met earlier in the laundry room.

Derek gulped again and asked me to dance in a strained voice. "I'd love to," I whispered earnestly to him and did my best girlish imitation of the shake, smiling at him and praising his dancing as Kelly said I should as girls did to make boys relax and like them.

Kelly changed partners at the end of the dance and I had to do the same thing with an equally nervous Ben. When the song ended, there was the usual argument over what to play next and while that was going on, Ben managed to ask me nervously what I would like to drink.

I took a glass of white wine and was introduced, nervously, to two guys standing there, drinking. I caught the knowing look in one guy's eye as he peeked at my breasts, such as they were.



"Do you dance?" I purred at him, in a squeak Ginny would have applauded.

"Not with other men," he said flatly, taking a pull on his bottle of beer. I wanted to punch him for being so rude. Strangely, I didn't feel that I was the one out of place or wrong to be made up as I was, scented, and dressed in pretty panties, garter belt and a shape-hugging, golden dress.

Just then, the third guy, Peter, came from Ginny and asked me if I would like to dance. There was laughter in his eyes as the next track turned out to be a slower number, a rock standard ballad that I had liked to dance to with girls like Ginny and Cathy Hunter in my arms. Now Peter pressed me close to him.

"Did something happen between you and Ace?" he asked and I could see over his shoulder that Ace was involved in a heated discussion with Ben, probably about me.

"He said he didn't dance with men," I said, still squeaking as best I could.

Peter tightened against me for a moment and then said, "He doesn't dance with women, either. Ace doesn't dance, period."

More people arrived at the door and it became impossible to do any dance but some version of the clinch. Peter was claimed by a dark-haired girl with hair past her shoulders. She gave me a contemptuous glance which I tried to ignore, rustling back to find my wine somewhere in the far corner. Of course I found Ace as well.

He looked at me, studying my hair, my makeup, my earrings. I looked at him, at his broad shoulders, the small scars on his face and thought, "Jock".

"I don't care for gay boys," he said belligerently.

"Nor do I," I sighed in agreement, picking up my wine and leaving a lipstick arc on the glass.

He looked at me suspiciously. "Well," I said. "What gay boy would find me attractive dressed like this?"

He smiled in spite of himself, caught himself at it and stopped to scowl at me. "So, you're chasing regular guys," he said, distaste written all over his face.

"Regular girls," I sighed, looking about the place. Some people looked at me and then looked away, both men and women. The music was being cranked up louder to get over the noise of people talking.

"They'd have to be lesbians," Ace scoffed.

"Probably," I said, smiling prettily and as girlishly as I could at Ben who came to me nervously to ask for another dance.

He held me firmly and with the slightest of distance between us, a touch of redness on his features that I am sure came because of his embarrassment at dancing with another man. I did not feel it at all. I was dressed as a woman. My skirts were swirling about me. I was spinning on my high heels and I wanted to dance with a man. I could feel the tug of my garter belt on my thighs. A girl would just have been too odd to dance with, dressed as I was.

Ben left me on the other side of the room and I was invited to dance by one of the later arrivals. He was the opposite of Ben, all over me, trying to use the dance as an excuse to cop a feel, as they say. He kept hold of my hand and launched into the next dance, hand about my tightly held waist, all the time praising my dancing, my dress, and my figure.

I managed to break free from that and was joined right away by Kelly.

She had to lean and shout in my ear, "I think Ginny's gone back to our apartment with Peter."

Trust Ginny, I thought, to corral the one, truly interesting man at the party. Then I realized what I was thinking and shuddered in my golden dance dress.

The crush was intense now. "I thought this was just going to be a small party," I shouted to her.

She leaned back to me and yelled, "It seems someone heard there were going to be she-men here and everyone came to see. I've been asked twice if I'm a man!"

I stared at her, stunned. She was laughing but as I glanced around I could see lots of measuring glances cast at me, and Kelly.

Derek pushed his way through to us. He must have seen the look on my face. "I'm sorry," he said. "I don't know where all these people came from. They all know one of us, though. Please don't leave."

Kelly leaned over and said something in his ear and he promptly asked me to dance again. We tried it but it was too difficult. He escorted me to the side and asked if he could get me a drink. We wended our way back to where Ace was sitting, my wine beside his beer.

A tall guy stopped Derek and asked him which ones were the drag queens. Derek shrugged and did not look at me. "They all left hours ago," he shouted which made Ace look up at me in surprise.

I took another sip of my wine. There was nowhere to sit. Girls were sitting on most of the chairs or on their boy friends' laps on the chairs.

Ace was sitting on a chair all by himself. He grinned up at me. "I'm not giving this up to another guy," he said smugly.

Derek was arguing with someone and I couldn't see anyone else I knew near us. I was suddenly angry with Ace. "You wouldn't treat a lady like that," I hissed at him.

He grinned at me. "You ain't no lady," he said.

"You're right," I said furiously and without thinking I sat down on his lap, my skirt riding up to expose my legs and put my arm about his neck to steady myself.

He was stricken with something like anger for a moment and I thought he would throw me on the floor. But suddenly, his nostrils flared and he looked at me. I guess I was glaring at him.

"You smell very nice," he said and I felt his arm about my waist. "And you feel very soft too." He patted my dress and thigh where it rested on his pant legs. He

felt my garter belt and stockings and a smile came to his face. I thought he would be rude, but he looked up at me and smiled.

That confused me. I went to stand up again but his hand held me down. "Now don't go and spoil it," he laughed. He nodded at the guys opposite, arguing with Derek. "They all think you are a girl."

He was half-drunk and had mellowed with the alcohol he had consumed. "You are one of the most real she-men I've ever met," he said, only a slight slur in his words as he looked intently into my face.

"Thank you, I think," I said, reaching to the table for my drink.

"Gee, you don't weigh much," he said, squeezing my waist slightly, easing his legs so that I could sit more comfortably in his lap. "My last girl friend was pretty shapely but she was an elephant next to you."

I smiled at his compliment, I think it was that, and he began to ramble on about other drag queens he had known. He wanted to know if I frequented the well-known drag clubs and bars in town and I learned names of places I didn't know existed before.

"Sorry," I said at last. "You're much more knowledgeable than I am about such places."

He laughed and pushed me to my feet, getting up and taking me in his arms. To my great surprise, he wanted to dance and with me. The floor was a little less crowded as Derek and Ben were ushering a number of loud people out of the door.

We did rock and roll, jived and slow waltzed, my head on Ace's shoulder as he held me tight. Kelly rolled her eyes at me as she danced with Ben and Derek, their eyes popping out of their heads at the tight clinch Ace and I were in. I must say that, apart from the smell of beer, I liked to be held tightly as if I was a woman. I sat in his lap again and leaned against him as we watched the dancers later on and talked about nothing at all, his hand caressing my arm and occasionally my legs, which jiggled my feelings, and I loved the girlishness I felt at it all.

Ace found my purse for me when it was time to go and walked me, his arm about my waist, to the elevator and down to our apartment. He made me feel so female by the way he touched me so gently as if I might break. At the door, it was one of those awkward moments of will-he-won't-he? Which I had so often had with girls but from the opposite point of view: will-she-let-me?

Ace settled it by pushing me clumsily against the doorpost and kissing me on the lips. I held on to him and was rewarded with a "Nice" when he finally broke free, leaving me panting and filled with feminine emotions at his leaving me. I didn't tell him that he was covered in Revlon Red lipstick. I smugly sashayed into our apartment, content that I had left my brand on one man who never danced with other men. What did it mean that he had danced with me? I thought smugly, proud of my femininity.

VII. WE GIRLS DO SUFFER TO BE PRETTY

We practiced hard again the next day. Kelly had us practicing scales when we weren't doing one of the numbers and she overrode all of Ginny's complaints. I was almost glad, almost, to be out of skirts, and tight, constricting undergarments, almost, to go to bed that night. I had work to look forward to, which seemed like an age away after the high voltage of dressing and being called Heather all weekend.

Kelly said that we had to pick up our costumes from Josie the next weekend but that didn't excuse me from doing my exercises, dieting, voice work, and general feminizing routines through the following week. She was also getting the electrolysis kit during the week and I was going to be professionally treated, she said with a wicked grin. I was already used to shaving my legs as I had once used to shave my face, it always causing me to break out in an attack of femininity when I did it.

The more I was undetectable at anything I did, the more chance we had of winning, Kelly said. So, I had to be a girl from the moment I got into the apartment, until I went to bed. I seriously doubted, however, that we could win any prize. But I would go through with it. What wonderful excuses it gave me to put on a dress with my roommates!

It was hard on Mondays not to swish in front of my colleagues at Connelly. I had poured on the masculine aftershave for days to hide any residual Chanel fragrances that had seemed to cling to me the week before. My clothes felt so different, so rough and itchy. Not having any body hair gave me a whole new feel on the male and female genders. I debated putting on a pair of silk panties but I couldn't have stood for discovery. There was a homophobic set at Connelly that indulged in male horseplay and though I'd never been a target yet, I didn't want to be.

With all my feminine experiences going on at night, working on my voice for talking and singing, experiments in makeup and different styles of skirts and heels, I just had to stay in at lunch each day and catch up on work. That was how I caught on to Tidal's signing of a pact on Thursday with its Japanese counterpart in communications and committed my whole portfolio to the hilt before the big announcement came.

George Corcoran, one of the partners, an old white-haired guy, dropped by my cubicle on leaving just "to check you out", as he said, and congratulate me on the very large profit I had just turned for investors and for the firm. They would be looking to increase my list, he said, when the partners met early in November.

"Wow," said Herb Kennedy, passing by as I sat there in shock. "You'll be on the rise now above us foot soldiers," he said, sort of smiling, sort of leering at me.

Herb had never really cottoned to me. "Noticed by the big brass! Better watch out, though, Davey boy. Corcoran likes 'em really young around his office."

Jenny Garretson, whose cubicle was next to mine, joined in with, "Yeah, and he likes them in slinky black tights to show off their legs. You got legs that look nice in black stockings, Davey?"

I was stunned for a moment and was definitely slow in answering back. "As nice as yours, Jenny!" I said as archly as I dared at last. I saw the raised eyebrows on Herb's face at the quip and that Jenny colored a little. For once, she didn't keep a joke going, as she often did. In fact, she ducked back in her cubicle.

"It was just luck," I said, for it was. I tried to be friendly to Herb and Buddy Lysak behind him who had come over. "I just caught Tidal's announcement of a news conference at two at the Ambassador after reading my e-mail conference updates. I don't know why I connected that the Japanese were there, too. It didn't take much crosschecking to find out that they were both going to use the same room at the same time."

"But you were the one to do it, Dave," smiled Buddy. "You got us all moving and so we all made a little profit. Out of the bonus you're going to get, you should treat us all."

"Yeah," agreed Herb, still snooty to me. "Drinks at the Ulysses. They get some of the greatest looking girls in town over there, don't they, Dave?"

I shivered. The Ulysses. Why did he have to mention that place? "I-I d-don't know," I stammered. "I-I like the P-Pegasus."

Jenny bounced back up into the conversation. "I'd like to see the Ulysses," she said, picking her coat off the back of her chair. "Since David's buying. Did I tell you about my friend, Cathy Hunter, who works for Denby Ross in Accounts? Boy, you should see her dance!"

Jenny was off. She talked all the way downstairs, out onto Great Metropolitan Street, and across two boulevards and up the three blocks to the Ulysses. I was in a cold sweat all the way just waiting to hear what Cathy had told Jenny about me. It is said that a coward dies a thousand times and a brave man but once. Put me in the category of coward, because I tensed and was ready to flee every time Jenny babbled about, "My friend, Cathy."

"You're nervous, David," said Herb casually as we entered the Ulysses. Almost in relief, I saw that the dance floor was empty and that the big TV screens were showing some sporting event, a football game, I think. The tables and booths were filled up with drinkers.

"It-it was Corcoran coming down," I said feebly, ordering a glass of white wine like Jenny before I thought of it. "It was such a surprise."

"Yeah," said Buddy, smiling and looking meaningfully at my glass of wine as he raised his ale to me. "But you follow those entertainment stocks and investment offers really closely, don't you? And you get all the updates and moves on communication stock?"

It was true. I was extending my range a little, but it was interesting, such as the current manipulations in TeleGlobe Systems. I was nervous and so I babbled on about how I thought, with their present chairman, it was bound to take a dive soon and anyone with TGS stock should be bailing.

Herb smiled. "You're crazy," he said smugly. "We just bought in for the Growth Fund for over three millions. Your pal, George, is on the inside with all the upper brass at TGS."

Buddy suddenly shushed us and pointed across the way. Several stockbroker types had been listening to our conversation with obvious relish. One raised his glass to us and rakishly proposed a toast to TGS, "And long may it prosper!"

I could only flush and look away. I was trembling at being in the spotlight. I looked at the stage. Oh gosh, that was where in two weekends' time, I would be sashaying out, in tight dress and dark pantyhose, and everyone in the place would be looking at me.

As if reading my thoughts, the screens suddenly burst forth with an advertisement for the Halloween Extravaganza at Ulysses. The cash prizes for the talent contest were announced as well as the rules for contestants.

Jenny was babbling on again. "Oh, I just have to come here for that. The talent part is really great." She went on and on about the freakish talents displayed and I knew that 'Threesome' could never win and I also knew that I was going to have to insist on the heaviest makeup possible if I didn't want to be regaled as 'Marilyn' on the following Monday morning.

I picked up the tab after they'd each had a couple of drinks. I had barely managed half of mine.

"So that's how you're losing weight," said Buddy admiringly. "No alcohol, right? He then pointed out that my belt had moved in a couple of inches at least and how he wished he could be as strong-willed as me.

"Why would you want to lose weight?" asked Herb with false humour. "I bet you don't weigh as much as Jenny here, anyway."

Luckily, Jenny got into a snit over his insult and I was able to leave on rubbery legs, wondering what Herb Kennedy was saying about me when I wasn't there.

Kelly was all ready for me when I got to the apartment. I had no time to do more than change into our exercise outfit and she was after me with the needles and her machine.

"I did this for Ginny last year," she said, "when we were living on Stephenson. It will be longer for you, of course, but you should find it of much more advantage."

"I don't know," I grumbled and found myself telling her about my day and the sort of snide remarks I had put up with. She was instantly sympathetic. But like Joanne and Lucy, she said the same thing. "We girls do have to suffer to be pretty, you know."

I was stinging all over my face when she finally stopped and began to rub lotions into my skin. Then as I lay back on my bed, a cloth on my face, I felt a stinging at my eyebrows. "Hold still," she commanded as I was set to jump up. "This just takes away some of the stray hairs," she said, switching the wand to the other side of my face.

She tweezered me, too. Too much, I could tell instantly. She had thinned me too much, arching my eyebrows too much.

"Oh, don't be a baby," she snapped after my many complaints. "You can always mess them up. But now, when we do your makeup, it'll be better."

My eyes did look a whole lot more feminine. I looked different. I had softened. I quivered as Kelly painted my eyes all kinds of greens and purples, the eyeliner outlining my eyes thickly. My eyebrows were so thin and arched that I, David, seemed to have disappeared into Heather. Then, we danced to Kelly's videos and sang and I didn't realize I hadn't put on a wig until Ginny came in and praised me for wearing my hair that way.

I was suddenly feeling awful as I looked at myself in the mirror in Kelly's room. I was me with eye makeup in a tight spandex costume, a little skirt at the top of my pink tights. I was breathing hard and then I also saw that I had not put on my waist cinch but my waist went in anyways.

"Diet and exercise," laughed Kelly. "Works every time. You'll still have to wear something for our show but it's going to be much more comfortable for you that it would have been a month ago."

We danced to the aerobic video as we always did and Ginny came to join us. "I really do like your hair like that," she enthused. "Short hair suits you. With lots of eye makeup, you look really sexy!"

I tried to smile but my groin was hurting and I felt weak all over even as I pirouetted and tried to make graceful arms like Kelly. I might look sexy, but to whom? To men or to women? I wondered, suddenly miserable, at the way the girls treated me. I wasn't able to make them think I was a sex object. They treated me just like a girl friend.

"Josie phoned," said Kelly, as she switched videos after we had danced for over half an hour. "Our costumes are ready. We can go in anytime to Masks."

"Tomorrow," said Ginny, breathing hard from her exertions. "I want to soak tonight."

Kelly smiled at me and put on our music. She had our imitation mikes ready and we did our feminine parody of Marilyn doing a Motown song, which we had finally settled on.

We did it five times as Kelly insisted we do it, with each sway the same, each wiggle and pout having to come at just the right time. We each had a line all to ourselves and I felt downright dizzy when I had to vamp the invisible audience over my shoulder, pouting as I did so.

"That was one of your best yet," said Kelly after the fourth attempt went by. "You were better than Ginny or me. I think that you're really getting this acting like a girl down well, don't you, Ginny?"

Ginny smiled at me. "I'd never know you were once my boy friend," she laughed.

I was stricken by that remark. I hated it. I wouldn't have minded being Ginny's boy friend still. Or Kelly's. I was upset at what she thought was a compliment to my 'female side' but which ignored that I was a man, too. I completely blew the last run-through and Kelly looked at me, hard.

With Ginny in the bath, Kelly brought two Cokes over to the couch where I was watching a little television and waiting for Ginny to be done.

"What's wrong?" Kelly asked.

I told her how the remarks had hit me. I told her about the day I had had and how people I worked with could be at our performance, seeing me as a female impersonator.

Kelly sat closer to me, her tights against mine. She looked at my madeup face. Her hand took one of mine, her nails as long and red as mine would be when we performed. She reached over and kissed me on my mouth.

I felt as if I had been stroked with silk. "W-What did you ...?" I asked as she held onto my hand and grinned at me, lipstick now on her mouth.

"I've wondered how it would feel," she said, smiling at me. "I wondered if I could kiss another woman if I had to, in a script, you know, and how it would feel. It would be like kissing you, wouldn't it?"

I seethed beneath my tight spandex top. "I am not a woman," I snapped.

Kelly leaned forward again and put her hand about my head as she kissed me again. I squirmed as she put another arm about my waist. I tried to resist what she seemed to want to do with her mouth, kissing off my lipstick, but I felt it all through me as she kissed me ardently and soon I was kissing her back. She was the one who brought her tongue between my lips and I hardly resisted as she moved on top of me.

I touched her breasts and she jumped as if she had been stung. "I wish yours were real and you could feel what I just felt," she murmured as she began to kiss me again, pushing me back into the cushions.

I tried for some control but she was having none of it. She rubbed her body over mine and I began to explode with repressed feelings as she stroked my femininely clad body, making my bra feel as if it was going to burst.

"What's all this?" Ginny asked, coming in, drying her hair with her portable drier.

Kelly looked up at her and laughed. "Heather feels we don't appreciate her enough as a man," she said, getting off me, leaving me awash with feelings of de-

light and chagrin. "I was showing her that I have noticed her manhood on occasion."

She helped me to my feet. I was quivering, wanting to go on holding a warm, soft curvaceous woman in my arms. I wanted to go on kissing Kelly.

"I'll take the next bath," said Kelly, letting me go. "And you girls can go on from where I left off."

"You want to make out?" Ginny asked, her face showing amazement as Kelly tripped out.

Distressed, I shook my head, feeling the earrings at my ears.

Ginny shrugged. "It would be okay with me," she said, looking at me with interest. "I wonder what it's like to kiss another woman."

VIII. PRE-PERFORMANCE JITTERS

Kelly was wrong. My eyebrows were so feminine I couldn't go out with them the next morning until she went out and bought me glasses from a drug store. They had light brown rims, not enough to call great attention to my eyes, and if I pushed them up, I could sort of get them tangled with my eyebrows.

A quick remark about losing a contact got me all sorts of stories and sympathy from Jenny and my co-workers and everything seemed to go well there, save for the headache I got from looking through lenses not attuned to my eyes for most of the day.

I dressed in black pantyhose when I got back to the apartment along with my familiar underwear and body shapers. I put on one of the black, nylon slips I had bought for myself in one of my female clothing buying moods before I had moved into the apartment. I did my makeup and put on my short, auburn wig and dangling earrings.

I heard Kelly and Ginny come in. They were having some sort of argument in the kitchen. I slipped on my blue dress, thrilling at how well it fit me since I had begun to diet and exercise. I slipped into my mid-high heels and went to join the 'other' girls.

They broke off the argument when they saw me. Ginny gave me a hard look and strode off to her room, slamming the door.

"W-What's up?" I asked, barely able to speak with Kelly also looking at me so crossly, her mouth all pouty again.

"You," said Kelly.

“M-Me?” I gasped.

“Ginny has told just about everyone she knows about our act next weekend,” said Kelly testily, “and all about David, as she insists on calling you. I told her it wasn't fair to Heather, to you, and she says if I want to be a lesbian, I should get a natural-born woman.”

I was shocked. I couldn't speak, in feminine tones or any other, as I thought about her kisses from last night and Ginny's snide remark.

“Well,” said Kelly, breaking into a smile. “The next time you're feeling mistreated as a male, get Ginny to comfort you, won't you?”

She stirred into action, checking the salad and spaghetti I had started before going to change into my tight-fitting sheath dress. She didn't notice how I was shaking at being dismissed so easily as a man. As if my kisses and her caresses had meant nothing at all between us.

Ginny came out in dark hose, skirt and blouse and helped Kelly silently in the kitchen to complete the meal they would eat. I had a salad and water as I always did.

“What size are you now?” she asked shortly as I sat primly at the table with them.

“I-I was a ten,” I said. “Even a twelve or fourteen.”

“More like a six or eight now,” said Kelly, looking at me critically. “Look at her waist. She's got quite a figure now.”

“I don't see why I shouldn't tell people,” said Ginny abruptly. “It'll give us support in the audience, you'll see. And everyone thinks it's really a scream to have a guy in a girl's group. That's what they want to see, David behaving like a girl.”

I felt a chill coming over me again.

“Don't worry, Heather,” said Kelly, patting my hand, which only made my temperature rise even more. She frowned. “Do your nails when you've finished, will you? We want to be as perfect as we can be at this fitting. Ginny is not going to tell anybody else.”

The gowns and wigs fitted us perfectly. Josie bustled about in the changing rooms at Masks, making sure we were as alike as we could be. She also had a surprise for me that I didn't know about. She had different inserts for my bras, filled with a jelly-like substance that jiggled like the real thing, especially when glued to my taped chest.

When I did my sashay, my feelings all a-flutter at trying to make my dress move as if worn by a woman, I could feel the weight at my chest and the impediment to my arm movement. Josie worked with me as I agonized until I could do a natural, feminine turn.

“Isn't that great?” smiled Josie as I swivelled to see myself in the long mirror, the glittering, sequinned dress clinging to my waist, but opening to show off my

stockinged legs and my tightly-fitted women's underwear. "You have really nice legs, too, David."

I flushed beneath my makeup and the blonde wig fluffed out about my neck. To have compliments on my femininity from another woman who knew I was a man flustered me. I didn't quite know how to behave. Should I be happy to have my legs admired as a woman's legs by another woman? But Josie seemed to like everything about me, even my thinner eyebrows.

"You really ought to pierce your ears," she said to me, as Ginny struggled into her dress behind her. "Then you could all have the same earrings."

Kelly overheard and a conversation developed over earrings.

"Most men have a stud these days," insisted Josie. "Some even have two. We can do it right here, you know, and you can all be identical everywhere when you're on stage."

"Not everywhere," said Ginny, leering at me. I quivered and felt my chest shudder too. Ginny's eyes popped at the movement.

"What about it, Heather?" said Kelly and I saw Josie's eyes widen at the use of a female name for me. "I'll treat you for that, if you'll get them done."

She and Ginny were already wearing huge, golden hoops that seemed to pass right through their ears, the kind I had always longed to wear. I weakened and Kelly could see it in my face.

In just minutes, I was paraded through the store to Evelyn, the girl at the jewellery counter and almost before I knew it, I had holes in my ears, golden keepers and earrings just like the other girls.

I was also red-faced from the reaction of everyone in the store to my Marilyn costume. Josie was glowing beside me as if she was wearing it herself. I heard nothing but nice comments but then they all thought I was female.

One man wanted to give me a kiss and grabbed at me. Luckily, I was able to turn my face but he got my cheek.

I was blushing and fuming by the time I got back to the others who had already changed back into street clothes. Josie was laughing over the sensation I had caused by walking through the store to the jewellery counter.

"You'll all be a sensation at the Ulysses," she enthused, squeezing my arm, when I reappeared with auburn hair and blue dress. She took my credit card with 'David McCann' on it without a problem but we had to look at a rack of dresses and costumes for sale. Kelly persuaded me that a red silk blouse and short, black mini-skirt were ideal for me and so I charged those, too.

We rehearsed each evening from then on while I tried at work to concentrate on just being a part of the furniture. It was Jenny who saw the spread in the paper first on the Friday and showed it to Buddy Lysak.

"Is that where you are going tonight?" Buddy asked.

"Of course," I heard Jenny say as I cowered down in my cubicle. "Look at the three of them. I wouldn't believe one of them was a man, would you?"

"Threesome," I heard Bob's voice reading aloud. "Ginny, Kelly and David." He laughed as I sat there my stomach churning, trying not to be sick. "Which one do you think is David?"

"The blonde one," she said, laughing. "Gentlemen prefer to be blondes, don't you know?"

Buddy laughed and admitted that he hadn't heard that. I smiled grimly to myself and wondered if Ginny would be amused when I told her what I had overheard.

I snuck out in my break and got all the morning rags. It was only in the one of them but there we were, in all our glory. The story was about Halloween and adult costumes and about Masks, the costumes superstore. We were just used as illustrations but one photo took up half a page, the one with us in white, halter-top dresses and white, high-heeled sandals and Marilyn white-blonde wigs.

The caption was, 'Which one is David?' with a brief explanation that we were preparing an act for the Ulysses talent competition followed. I dumped the papers before I got back into Connelly but still I saw Herb and Jenny talking near her cubicle.

"But which one is David?" I heard Herb say as I sat down and brought up my new e-mail. I had to turn but I tried to put as much puzzlement as I could into my expression.

Herb was already walking away and Jenny was already blushing as she looked at me, looked at me hard.

I lowered my eyebrows, cursing myself for the gesture of raising them as I did when I was questioning something. I should have frowned.

Might as well get it over with, I thought. "What is it?" I asked Jenny.

"Oh, nothing," Jenny said, ducking back into her cubicle quickly. I didn't see or hear from her for the rest of the day.

"Isn't it great!" said Ginny when she came romping into the apartment ahead of Kelly. "Did you see our pictures in the paper? I think the whole of Pickering is coming to see us tomorrow night!"

Kelly was struggling with a large box and I went to help her with it. "You're not to look," she said. "It's for tomorrow."

"She wouldn't let me look, either," said Ginny, pouting and then laughing. "Do we have to rehearse tonight? How about those boys in 320? They've been phoning and phoning for another chance to party with us!"

It was the first I had heard about it. I had been as quiet as a mouse about the apartment building of late. I hadn't been out of the apartment itself in female clothing since the party except for the trip to Masks and back. We hadn't seen anyone I knew that time. But I could imagine the rumors floating about the build-

ing about the drag queen in 240. When this appearance at the Ulysses was over, I was going to hibernate again, as I thought of it, from wearing women's clothes.

I trembled with nervousness as Ginny opened the paper and poured over our pictures. Kelly came back from her room and caught my woebegone expression. She came straight up to me and hugged me, all warm and soft and womanly, her perfume alone arousing me.

"We dress up after supper," she said, holding on to me while Ginny frowned at us. "A dress rehearsal. Then, we relax until tomorrow. It will take us nearly all day to get perfectly ready. You wait and see."

I didn't get a chance to explain about the photographs and the people at my place of work coming to see me. Ginny rattled on about the people at her work and I gathered that the three boys who had been in our apartment were going to be there.

"How about you, Kelly?" she asked.

"Of course," said Kelly, turning to smile at me. I couldn't get over how alike we all looked with our hair pulled back and clipped under wig nets. The girls looked just like me as we all had on panties and bras and black opera hose. Of course, their cleavage was real while mine was just pasted on.

It was hard to get false eyelashes on top and bottom eyelids and then to trim them to more reasonable lengths but Ginny always seemed to know how to do such things.

"Who from the agency is coming to see us?" asked Ginny, affixing my newly cut and shaped lashes.

I knew that Kelly worked at some kind of theatrical agency but I thought she had more to do with renting movies and sending them out all over the country to different theaters than actual live performers.

"Dave Matthews," she said, having as much trouble as I did with keeping her eyelashes in place while using eyeliner. "Not the rock singer, the booking agent for cabarets and such. Three of four others from A and R."

I learned that meant Artists and Repertoire, people who worked with the bigger agencies to develop singing acts usually, giving out advice and guiding new groups or singers through their formative years.

"You think they will offer you a gig as a singer?" asked Ginny, getting her dress off the rack, the same size as mine. I wasn't wearing a waist cinch any more, just a black body shaper, like Ginny, so much weight had I lost.

"No," said Kelly. "They all know what I sing like. This is just a night out for them since they saw my picture in the paper. They know me too well to be professionally interested."

I caught the note of regret in her voice and gave her a quick glance. She smiled at me as I massaged my chest into place beneath the white, deep-cut, collared dress. Then, she did the same with her breasts. I felt strange sensations, mostly painful, beneath my panties and pantyhose.

She had insisted I wear my proper nails even though we had to put on elbow-length, white gloves. "We'll have to take them off later," she said. "So, we should keep the illusion going as long as we can."

Our wigs transformed us. Ginny combed and brushed them about our heads and we put on our earrings. I realized that no one at work had said anything to me about the studs I had had in. Kelly had put some makeup on them in the morning as I was moaning about my eyebrows and it seemed to work to cover them up. I shivered with pleasure as I put the large hoops in my ears. I was just like the other girls in looks, blonde hair and inviting red lips. My figure was like theirs and my legs, peeping out of the slit in the dark, sequinned skirts, as shapely as theirs. We put on our high heels and we were as tall as each other.

Then, Kelly showed us what she had in her box. She had borrowed three fake fur stoles from her company. They were white and soft and heavenly to put on, so silky was the lining.

"This is how we walk on," she said, leading the way into our living room. "Then we take them off and drop them behind us and begin with a whoosh!"

That meant coming up together, arms in time, and vamping the audience as a beginning to *Stop in the Name of Love*. We practiced it several times and I had to keep my voice up, particularly after the fifth time when it began to get very sore as usual.

Ginny had some pills that singers use to keep from coughing she said and I used them. They seemed to help and we rehearsed until Kelly could find no fault with our performance.

I was no longer able to judge whether we were good or not. I had heard us at all speeds and octaves. I knew that Kelly was after an impossible standard from us, particularly from me. I just did what I could with every line having a particular emphasis. Kelly had changed every sound from the way I had sung it at first, when I thought I was doing it so well. Now, Ginny and I seemed to have compatible intonation though we were at least an octave apart in our singing in unison.

It was still early as we picked up our stoles and put them away in Kelly's room. The phone rang.

"The boys," said Ginny, smiling in anticipation as she picked it up.

She frowned, put her hand over the speaker and then said, "Just a minute. It's for you, David." She handed me the phone. "Some woman."

Should I answer in Heather's voice or in David's voice? Ginny just shrugged to my whispered, "Who is it?"

"H-Hello," I said into the phone. An hour or more of singing had left me with some difficulty in getting down to my usual tone.

"David?" asked my sister, Nora. "Is that you? Your voice sounds terribly weird."

"It-It's me," I gasped while the other two Marilyn's smiled at me. "I-I have some kind of throat infection."

There was a pause on the other end of the phone. "Wow, do you ever sound bad!" said my sister anxiously. "Your voice is so high-pitched! I hope you didn't go to work with a voice like that."

"Well, I had to..." I whispered, trying desperately to clear my throat but whatever Ginny had given me seemed to have opened me up very well and I couldn't speak normally to my sister.

"I had the hardest time finding your new phone number," Nora said rapidly. "I thought you shared with Greg Cuthbert. Whoever has your old number cut me off when I said I was looking for you. They were really rude. I remembered you saying you worked with a Herb Kennedy, isn't that right? Anyway, I phoned him and he told me that you were sharing an apartment with two girls, one named Ginny or Virginia Walker, and he was really kind and looked up her number for me in the book. Is it true, David? Are you really sharing an apartment with two girls?"

"Yes, but it's not how you think," I squawked. The girls were stripping off their dresses and putting their wigs on wig blocks as I sat on Kelly's bed, my earrings swaying against my neck. I held the phone in my gloved hand, trying not to get lipstick on anything.

Nora laughed on her end of the phone. "Look, you don't sound as if you can talk much and it must be a great story. Anyway, Gerry has been promoted and guess what? In the New Year, he's going to be working right next door to you. We have to come east soon and look for places to live. Mom thinks I should ask you to put us up while we are in town..." I was numb at the thought of my sister walking in on me as I was now dressed. I was distressed just talking to her and looking down at my dress, the white-frilled garter about my stockinged thigh and my open-toed high heels. I had never talked to anyone in my family before while dressed entirely as a woman.

"Of course, you'll have to talk to your roommates," Nora went on quickly. "What sort of girls are they? Well, you can call me next week and tell me. Have you still got my number?"

I muttered that I had it and she had me promise to call her early in the week and I could tell her more about my new apartment and the girls I shared it with.

I was shaking as I hung up the phone. Kelly looked at me sympathetically. "News from home?" she asked.

"My sister wants to come and stay with me," I said, adjusting my false bust as I stood, swaying on my heels, my skirts so soft as they swirled about my smooth legs and ankles.

At first, Kelly began to smile at me, then she began to laugh, Ginny joined in and, I admit, after a time, I had to smile at the idea of Nora walking in on me as I was then, too.

IX. THREESOME

Our arrival at the Ulysses caused a sensation with the crowd waiting outside to get in. Kelly had hired a limousine for us and when we were handed out, one-by-one by the doormen-bouncers, dressed for the occasion as medieval executioners, the crowd began to make noise, and then applaud.

I heard someone shouting out, "Marilyn! Marilyn!" as I sashayed, trembling, after Ginny who was mugging to the crowd of admirers.

"That's Threesome!" I heard some female voice shouting to a friend who must have been very hard of hearing.

"Which one is David?" somebody else asked and there was a lot of laughter followed by lots of cries of the same question.

My heels had never felt so high or wobbly as I followed a wiggling Ginny into the Ulysses. We didn't have to wait for passes or to be invited in. Maguire, the legendary manager, was actually there in his black ponytail, black shirt, suit and vest. He actually smiled at us. I recalled what Kelly had told us as we set out and lifted my head back and smiled in my turn.

"Ooooh!" Maguire moaned and shook himself laughing. "You girls look absolutely fabulous. We must have a couple of hundred from your fan club here at least. So, I hope you can perform, too."

"Perform?" pouted Kelly, coming up behind me and slipping her arm under my stole to steer me after Ginny. "Darling, we intend to melt every bone in your



frigid body tonight, don't we, Marilyn?"

There was a room for those performing in the talent competition but most people were out enjoying the dancing. Kelly immediately got into a conversation with someone called the musical director, as there was apparently a trio ready to accompany each of the acts.

Ginny wanted to go out right away but I was trembling too much after the walk across the floor and the hands grasping at me and yelling for me to dance with them. What was I doing there, dressed and perfumed as I was, pretending to be a woman, when everyone knew that I wasn't? I felt the tightness of my panties and the support of the bra and the heaviness of what was in it. My ears and neck were hot with the heavenly female touches of my dangling earrings and thick hair.

We had spent the day, as Kelly had said, beautifying ourselves and that had been wonderful. I had laid in jasmine-scented bath most of the morning until it had seemed to seep into every pore of my shaved, depilated, soft and now scented skin. I had spent at least two hours over my makeup and if I had complained before over my eyebrows being too thin, now they were almost non-existent after we had all had a go at each others'. I had trembled, scared of my future, when I saw what Kelly, the last to work on them, had done.

"This will be a night Heather will never forget," she had purred as she painted my eyelids and I stared at my so-thin eyebrows. "So we should go for it, shouldn't we? When your sister gets here," she had smiled at me then, "you'll be able to swap clothes, won't you? Or is she bigger than you now? Anyway, tonight, you're going to find out what it is like to be the belle of the ball!"

How could I object then to anything she did to feminize me? But the rapturous welcome of Threesome was just too overwhelming. They all knew one of us was a man. They probably all knew it was me, despite my jiggly breasts and shapely figure. So, why were they all so desperate, or so it seemed, to dance with me and hold me?

My dress was tight about my figure, touching my stockings with tantalizing lightness. I looked at the others who began to enter the room. There were people who had tricks to perform, like the girl who could fire buttons from her navel and there were weird acts like the Hunters from Pluto, that I never got to see, but I heard were really original in dancing with wires and blocks, moving around them and over them to really avant-garde music.

Most of the acts were impersonators like us. There were two Michael Jacksons, one male and one female, Laurel and Hardy were there, the Spice Girls, Elvis inevitably, Disney characters, and odd things like the Singing Toothbrush. We drew number eighteen out of twenty-one, which meant over an hour's wait while we heard raucous cheers from the audience, crowded onto the dance floor and filling the stairs and guard rails of each balcony as each act was hustled onto the stage and off.

Kelly kept hold of my hand and rustled me over to the wing area as Laurel and Hardy went over some of the world's oldest jokes to the applause of the audience anyway. I felt suddenly so stupid to be there, dressed in women's clothing. I knew

they would laugh at me, trying to act so femininely. I would embarrass myself and Kelly and Ginny.

Kelly turned, her white fur stole like mine, her red lips forming a pout, as we were each to do at the start of our routine. Her blonde wig was perfect, like mine. She looked like Marilyn, as I did. "Break a leg, Marilyn darling," she whispered and turned to lead us on.

I followed her, feeling numb everywhere as the heat and brightness of the lights hit us. I vamped as she did and did our stare at the audience, but luckily, the lights were so bright, I couldn't pick up any individual eyes. We unveiled from our stoles and strutted to show off our legs and female forms and began right in together. I could feel my girl friends on either side moving exactly as we had practiced, pouting at the audience exactly as I did and when I twirled, there was a Marilyn on either side, thin-waisted, heavily made-up, smiling, femininely shaped, doing what I was doing to entice the audience to like us.

I joined Ginny as Kelly took over the lead singing and we backed her up save for our individual lines. My voice was the echo of Ginny's, I was certain, and we joined up for the last part, our skirts twirling to show off our legs, so smooth and shapely in our black, opera hose. There had been noise as we did the act but then a huge round of applause and whistling came as we finished with one gloved arm extended to the audience. We daintily bent to pick up our wraps and minced off as we had come, taking very small steps on our high heels.

"You were fantastic," Laurel told us, hugging us all as we came off. He held onto me a little longer and asked, "Which one are you?"

"Marilyn," I squeaked, pulling free, and Kelly behind me laughed.

Of course, we won and we had to go out again and receive the check from Maguire. He asked Kelly the same question we'd been asked in the wings and she gave him my answer.

"I'm Marilyn," she cooed into the microphone.

Maguire held the mike out to Ginny and she said the same and so did I when he held it in front of me.

"So there it is, folks," he said. "If you want to know which one is Kelly, which is Ginny, or which is David, you'll have to dance with these young ladies and I hope you can tell then, because I sure can't from where I'm standing!"

There was a roar from the crowd then and the deejay started up some really fast dance music. I tried to stay with Kelly and Ginny but as we picked our way down the steps, in our high heels and long skirts, from the stage, they were whirled away from me into the crowd.

A pirate, Blackbeard for sure, grabbed my hand and yelled something about dancing. I could see another Marilyn like me and she was on the dance floor in the arms of some kind of monster, laughing and being twirled around.

I tried to say, "No", but I didn't get the chance. I was pulled to the dance floor and I had to sway to the beat while this young, bearded guy looked me over.

"You were quite an act!" he shouted over the din. "You looked so professional in comparison to the others."

"Thank you," I said in my best Marilyn imitation. I was barely getting comfortable dancing with a man I didn't know at all when a Superman cut in, and I knew him. It was Ben.

He was all smiles this time. "You girls were fabulous," he yelled. "So sexy, just like the real thing. Are you going back to the Whittimore after this is all over?"

I didn't know and told him. All I knew was that Kelly had a limousine for us again at one-thirty, and she had said she was going to have fun, win or lose, until then.

I danced a slow waltz with Ben, he leaning into me, wanting me to put my head on his shoulder. I could hear his breathing in my ear. It seemed rather ragged to me. We were interrupted half way through by one of the bouncer-organizers who wanted me to go for photographs.

He took my hand and guided me through the crowded floor to the bar area where others, the costume parade winners and other talent winners, were being photographed. It was an unnerving walk as I felt so many eyes on me. I don't think I've ever had so many people look at my chest before. It was perfectly in place, the duct tape holding everything where it should be, including the neckline of my dress which suggested cleavage, enhanced by the light makeup brushed there by a giggling Ginny earlier that night.

"We thought you'd got lost," said Ginny, hugging me as I arrived in the wake of the muscled executioner who'd paved the way for me.

"Save me a dance, darling," he said to me before going off. "A nice slow one, please."

I flushed beneath my makeup, going tense, which was always a mistake because every binding became so noticeable and I knew exactly how I was dressed before so many strange people.

Kelly turned and reached out her bare arms and pulled me to her, kissing my neck so as not to smear her or my makeup. "How is Marilyn doing?" she asked.

"Another conquest," chipped in Ginny and they both smiled at me.

"Isn't this the greatest?" asked Kelly, excitement shining from her normally cool and appraising eyes. "I feel like the belle of the ball. Don't you?"

"Sort of," I said, looking past her to the men in different costumes, taking photographs of laughing, partying people. I really didn't feel like them. I couldn't let go. I mean, was I supposed to let go as a woman and accept some of the suggestions that men were calling out to me, even as I stood there in the bar with my girl friend Marylins, or should I party as a man and try to make it with every girl like all the drunken bozos I had tried to ignore so far?

Maguire came forward then and deferentially brought us before the cameras. He did a fake presentation again to Kelly as Ginny and I framed them. I was on the side that had to show more leg, which the photographer thought was beauti-

ful, while I cringed inside and smiled as I hiked up my skirt, my fingernails long and red against the sequinned cloth. He declared me to be lovely in that pose.

Then he had us lean forward and pout sexily and that was the one that found its way into the paper on Sunday and onto the wire services by Monday. "Gorgeous," he said, having us move this way and that in different combinations until he'd taken about eight or nine poses and we gave way to the Hunters from Pluto, who had taken second place.

A newspaper reporter, I never got her name but she was dressed as Little Orphan Annie, interrupted us next and wanted to know the question we kept being asked. It was Ginny this time who stated that she was Marilyn and the reporter sighed and went along with it. She did want to know what we all did though.

Kelly answered for all of us, claiming that Kelly was a receptionist, Ginny was a secretary and David was a stockbroker.

I almost saw her ears prick up at the last piece of news. "A stockbroker?" she asked, frowning. Maguire had joined us as she asked laughingly, "What does a stockbroker named Marilyn recommend for us all as a stock tip? Diamond mines?"

I shivered inwardly. I sometimes talked to the girls about my job. In fact, I had been telling Kelly where I had just invested the last of my salary. She remembered and gave it away, just like that, for free.

"Marilyn says Lomax-Lewiston," she smiled, not even looking at me. "There. Make your fortune."

The reporter smiled and left us. People crowded in on all sides. "I have to dance with all the winners," Maguire said, taking my hand first and leading me to the dance floor. I wiggled after him and slipped into his arms as the music immediately quieted down and became a waltz.

I tried to maintain my Marilyn persona, smiling at him, raising an eyebrow, so thin, I knew, at his ironic expression. "Yes, I do have it worked out with Luddy," he said, referring to the deejay, "that when I get onto the floor with a pretty girl that he changes to soft, clingy music." He pressed me to him, but still looked at me critically in the face. "I really can't tell," he said at last, "which of you is the stockbroker. So, was that stock tip really on the level?"

What could I say? If I confirmed it, I'd give myself away and Kelly and Ginny had done so much to prevent that, even taking out my eyebrows, almost, to give me a womanly image.

"I expect so," I squeaked in my best Marilyn voice. He smiled and shook his head.

"Well," he said. "I do play the market and I never heard of Lomax-whatever-it-was."

"Lomax-Lewiston," I said, batting my thick eyelids at him. I knew it was a trap on his part but Kelly knew the proper name and Ginny would, I hope, go along with it. "It's a firm in the entertainment investment industry," I added. "Marilyn

takes an interest in that and has seen that they have investments in several properties, what we in the business call films,” another bat of the eyelashes, like dark forests in front of my eyes, “that will be very big over Christmas.”

“How can anyone tell that?” he asked dubiously.

“No competition,” I said. “Delays by other distributors not to go against them and the cartoon kings have at least a three-month backlog on their new one which was why everyone was avoiding this Christmas for new releases of kids' movies.”

He looked at me closely. “You have to be David,” he said slowly, almost wonderingly.

What could I say? He was holding me tightly to his body, turning me expertly with the packed dance floor. He wasn't looking at me angrily or contemptuously. So I agreed with him.

He shook his head but made no move to let me go. In fact, I think he squeezed me tighter when I whispered, “Yes.”

“This is false,” he asked, nodding down at my bust.

I nodded. “It's all a false front,” I agreed, still keeping my voice high as Kelly and Ginny had wanted.

He grunted. “Hmmm,” he said. “You know, you're the cutest of the three, too.”

I shuddered and my earrings swung through my hair. “I'm not...” I began.

“Yes, you are,” Maguire said firmly, his older, lined face breaking into a smile. “One of your friends there is chasing everything in pants. I had her pegged for a transvestite for sure. And your other one wants something, doesn't she, out of this?”

I knew Kelly was manipulative and that Ginny was man-crazy. It was amazing that he had seen through us all so quickly, though I had helped him by talking about stocks. “You don't know what you want, do you?” he asked and his smile was surprisingly gentle. “Do you use a female name when you're dressed as a woman?”

I felt the swish of my dress as I moved with him. The tightness in my panties and bra matched the tightness in my throat. I was close to panic that he should read me so closely, too.

“My-My friends call me H-Heather,” I whispered to him, my nerve ends jangling.

He looked at me and read my strain. “Relax. Enjoy,” he said, this owner of the Ulysses, one of the leading socializers of the city. “And as you are a stockbroker, I'll give you a tip for free. TGS. It's going to be big. Get in on it.”

My mouth dropped open at that.

He looked at me hard. I brought my red lipsticked lips back together quickly. I couldn't help but frown and then I could hardly see out of my mascara and false eyelashes, they were so thick.

"What is it?" he asked sharply.

"I-I've been trying to tell my own firm and they won't listen," I said. "But I think TGS is overblown now. It's stockbroker speculation that's inflating that stock. I took clients out and the big boys put them back in. I have to fight everyone again on Monday over that."

He looked at me deeply again as if trying to penetrate the powder, rouge, lipstick and other makeup on my face.

"I-I'm not lying to you," I said huskily.

"I can see that," he said. Then he leaned into me and brushed his lips lightly over mine sending a spasm of emotion through me, tensing me everywhere.

"Hmmm," he said, releasing me a little. "I got a spark from that, too. I'd better let you go on to all the other guys drooling to dance with you or we might be having a very interesting evening together."

He put his arm about my bare shoulder to lead me off the floor and I shuddered at the electricity that seemed to pass through me with his calm, possessive, masculine gesture. He wasn't wrong about other men, either. I didn't get off the dance floor before a moustached guy, in Elizabethan costume, just took my hand and led me onto the floor.

I found out he was Robert Cochrane, entrepreneur, and he thought I was so astoundingly pretty I should dye my hair and always wear it as Marilyn. Rob didn't know it but he helped me to relax and to enjoy as Maguire had instructed me to do.

Then I met Josie, who pushed in determinedly when Rob was trying to monopolize me and some other guys were fighting, good-naturedly, over who was to have me next.

Josie smiled and retreated with me to the packed Ladies' Room. Only when some girl started throwing up over her Little Bo-Peep outfit and her friends disrobed her immediately did she look at me with concern.

"You shouldn't be in here," she said suddenly, her eyes widening.

I agreed. All around me were girls in varying stages of undress, doing things to themselves, to their naked breasts, that I wouldn't have thought possible. I was getting an eyeful.

Then she smiled. She was dressed as Peter Pan, though her obvious curves let anyone know that it was the Mary Martin version she favored.

"I thought I would dance with you," she said into my ear, indicating a vacant chair and for me to sit down. She had her purse with her; mine was in the room beside the stage along with my stole. She fussed over my hair and sprayed me with some of the perfume she was wearing, much stronger than the jasmine I had favored after bathing in similarly scented bathwater.

"Who would lead?" I joked as I stood away from the mirror and she redid her own lipstick.

"Me, of course," she said as she slipped her arm through mine and we sidled through the crush back to the hectic dance floor. "That's why I chose this costume. Marilyn needs a man!"

She was laughing as she said it but I was shivering even as a man grabbed my hand and swept me off onto the floor. He said his name was John and dancing and holding Marilyn had been his fantasy since he had been a kid. He wanted to kiss me when the dance was over and so I let him kiss me on my neck so that he wouldn't mess up my makeup.

Then it was Ronnie Pickering's turn to take me. He was high on something but not so obviously that the bouncers could have picked him up and thrown him out. He stroked my back and leaned into me as if I really was his girl friend or something, his face pressed into my hair. He bit my ear gently and made me squirm with fright.

"Ronnie!" I begged him.

"You're very beautiful tonight," he whispered. "Ginny says I can come back to your place later. Don't change at all, will you?"

I struggled to keep him off me and a football player came to my rescue. He replaced Ronnie and we left him standing, slightly bewildered as the footballer took me to another part of the floor. I think it was Martin, or was it Mark, the astronaut? I was passed from man to man so quickly, I don't think I finished a dance with whom I started with and they all had compliments for me.

I was so pretty that they all *knew* I wasn't David. I smelled so sweetly, and if I would go with any one of them after the club session, they would show me a really good time. I had such beautiful eyes, such a pretty, little nose, such beautiful features, such a great figure, and such wonderful legs. I was such a marvellous Marilyn; so sexy, just like her, such a wonderful singer, fantastic actress, a gorgeous girl. I danced so well, I was so light in a man's arms, a man could go to war over a girl like me (that from a man in uniform, probably a stockbroker).

I saw Kelly and Ginny getting the same treatment, it seemed. I saw Josie, often hovering nearby, but always some man came and lifted me onto the floor away from her.

I danced everything, and what I didn't know, I improvised, relying on Roberto to guide me through a tango. I'd never danced it as a woman before and he seemed to love the way I did it. I did a lambada with him, too, but with my long dress he had to pick me up and whirl me around, my legs clutching to his.

"This is even sexier than the other way," he said as we finished and he gave me a long kiss on the lips that tingled me to the tips of my high heels until his girl friend came over and broke us up.

I saw Jenny then with some guy in a monkey suit. She was staring at me in total fascination and only when I looked back and sashayed a step, hand on my hip, did she realize that this Marilyn had seen her looking and she closed her mouth and hurried her dance partner away.

My bouncer-executioner friend claimed his dance then, shooing off a couple of cowboys who'd been arguing over who would step in first. Mark wanted me to put my arms about his neck while he put his about my back and down below my waist, pressing my pneumatic breasts up against his manly chest.

"I've been waiting so long for this," he breathed in my ear as I cuddled up to him, swaying slightly, amused and excited by my power as a woman to drive a man like Mark crazy.

I was feeling wonderful, locked in his arms, feeling his body caressing mine as he swayed sexily to the music. There were so many people about us doing the same, men and women, bodies almost inseparable, that I felt a sense of belonging. I was indeed a belle of the ball and I wanted to jump for joy.

A hand on my back, gloved, made me lift my head. It was a smiling Kelly. "Our limousine is here," she said. She had my fur stole and purse. "It's nearly two and time to go. Say good night to your muscular friend."

Mark cursed that he had to stay on and work. It was so nice to have his strong arm about my waist as he got me through the crowd to the main entrance and I could see our limousine outside. He helped me on with my stole and slipped his arms inside about my waist and then he kissed me, too.

I felt almost helpless in his strong embrace. It was a relief when he let me go. He was smiling at me and wanted to know when he could see me again. He wanted my phone number and I had to give him it. It was what girls should do, would do, in similar circumstances, right? He promised to call me later that day at home and escorted me to the limousine.

It had just been the three of us coming down from the Whittimore, but we had a crowd going back. I think Ginny had invited almost all of the people she worked with and Kelly the same. There was a taxi and several cars behind us as we left. I was sitting backwards, crushed in between a Martian, I think, and a chorus girl.

She was staring at me and then she smiled. "Which one are you?" she asked.

"Marilyn," I said, looking for the others but they were both engaged with guys at the back of the limo.

"No, I mean I know Ginny," she said, smiling around me at the silent, partly zonked Martian. "So are you Kelly or the lovely David?"

I wanted to knock the silly grin off her face. "I'm the lovely Marilyn," I said, drawling the 'lovely' twice as long as she had. One of the guys sitting on the floor snorted. He turned his head and could see right up my legs.

"Nothing but Marilyn as far as the eye can see, Corinne," he quipped, rolling his head.

They're all drunk, I thought, my anxiety rising as the girl beside me huffed and puffed about men. And they are all coming back to our place? Will they all be sleeping over? I wondered in alarm, knowing what had happened at so many of Ginny's parties.

Kelly looked up the car at me, releasing the guy she had been necking with. "Hi, Marilyn," she said, and then she giggled and I knew she had taken something while she had been kissing Ronnie Pickering. "We have to do our act again when we get back to Whittimore. Only this time, we take our clothes off as we go."

Then she began to laugh hysterically, pointing at me.

"See," said the chorus girl beside me to no one in particular. "Now it's easy to pick out which one is the drag queen."

I felt several pairs of eyes turn towards me. I wanted to cry, I wanted to protest, and most of all I wanted to get my long, painted nails on that girl's face and scratch her eyes out.

X. MY BEDROOM

It was chaotic at the Apartments. I felt sorry for anyone, living in a front apartment, who had to endure the noise and traffic in and out of the Whittimore. I went in with the ten or so from the limousine into the clutches of people waiting for the front doors to be opened which Kelly did, I think, and then we poured into the elevator. Some Caveman tried to get his arm around me. I removed it forcibly but he didn't seem to notice. He had his other arm around the chorus girl who was giving me a very haughty look as we rode up.

I managed to avoid having my high heels stepped on as I wiggled out of the limo, keeping male hands, I think they were all male, off my dress (my dress! I felt the swirl about me and went dry-mouthed at the thought of what I was doing, how I was doing it). Up the stairs in high heels, swaying, and there was our apartment, wide open, people already jammed in the doorway.

Mike, in a toga costume, peered into my face as I sidled in. "Which one are you?" he asked drunkenly, leering at me.

The look in his eyes, however, told me he wasn't as drunk as he was making out to be. "Marilyn," I answered, slipping out of his grasp. I saw Brad Samuels reeling with some girl dressed like Princess Jasmine and Ginny cavorting in some sort of dance with Bart Hoover. The music and noise was incredible. I looked round for Kelly and was accosted by several people all wanting to dance with the Threesome.

"I have to get the door closed. The neighbors!" I said.

One guy in some kind of Napoleon uniform moved back with me and gave the people in the doorway no option. He pulled them in and slammed the door. "I don't think it's going to make any difference anyway!" he yelled down at me. I

looked around our living room with seventy or eighty people crammed in and had to agree.

The Napoleon wanted to dance and so I did with him.

“Come and get a drink!” he shouted, his dark eyes sparkling, as we gave up trying to do more than clinch in the dance.

I got the strangest feeling as he held my hand and pulled me through the crush. He was tall and, I suppose good looking for a man. He had short, dark hair and a little of a hooked nose, sort of Italian. He did look like a younger, much taller Napoleon. People I didn't know kept grabbing me and telling me how good we were as Threesome. The kitchen was a total mess but somehow Napoleon procured clean glasses and a wine bottle to pour us each some champagne. “To celebrate your win!” he shouted over the incessant music and high-pitched chatter.

Another guy tried to goose me as I sipped the bubbles and I spilled some of the wine. I let out a squawk and turned around murderously but a grinning lout, a monk no less, was already out of reach behind Ben, Peter and some of their friends.

“Oh, don't spoil the dress,” said Geoff, Napoleon's real name, grabbing a cloth from the rack on the front of the stove and frantically wiping me and then the floor. “It really costs if they have to get these specially cleaned.” It was more the stole I was worried about. “You should change into something more comfortable,” he shouted in my ear. “Let's get you into your bedroom.”

I could change into something that I wouldn't mind getting soiled, I thought. He took my hand, and I felt so wobbly as I followed him through the crowd, down the hallway to my bedroom. “Wow, what a lovely room!” he said as he closed the door and cut off some of the noise. “It's so feminine.”

I stammered and squeaked as I tried to tell him that I had inherited it but he didn't want to hear that. He seemed to be waiting for me to change in front of him. I nervously hung up Kelly's stole and put the purse on the side table beside my bed. He began to hum the ballad coming from the other room. He carefully put down our wineglasses and put his arms about me.

“Geoff!” I protested as he took my hands in his.

“I'm your only proper dancing partner tonight,” he said, his dark brown eyes looking down at me. “Men are supposed to dance with women, aren't they?”

“Y-Yes,” I agreed, my heart beating rapidly, my skin on fire as he stroked my shoulders, bare but for the tiny straps of my dress and my bra, making me shiver at the thought of ‘my’ female clothing.

“I thought I could get at least one dance with you at the Ulysses but I could never get near you,” he murmured as he pulled me close and I naturally began to dance with him in my bedroom as any woman would have. “I had thought men would be afraid to dance with another man but they were disappointed to find out that the Marilyn they were dancing with wasn't you! I never had a chance to rescue you!”

He hugged me as tightly as any of the men had that night and twirled me in our little space beside the bed. I could feel my chest so hard against me, his head on the collar of my dress. My dress swished about my heels, which felt like stilts as he nimbly twirled me again. What had he said? I panicked as I realized that he had just said that he knew who I was.

He laughed as he deposited me on the bed. I tried frantically to protest but it was inevitable that he kissed me, pressing me back into the soft, fluffy quilt that Kelly had insisted we all put on our beds earlier that day. My dress split apart and my stockinged legs were exposed as he put his hand on my thigh and caressed me even as he ardently kissed my lipsticked mouth. Tingles ran up my legs and I shuddered as he stroked and kissed me. But my quivering lips didn't resist, didn't say anything, and neither did my frozen hands resist his scintillating touches and caresses.

I tried to say that there was a party going on and we shouldn't, couldn't, but his mouth was insatiable. He was turned on to some inner high that didn't let him stop and consider anyone else. I could feel his fingers trembling as he massaged my stockings and thighs. I couldn't help reacting to that but every squirm I made only encouraged him more. I should have resisted more but he was nice to kiss and his body did feel nice pressing down on mine and he didn't mind at all that my hands rested on his back, pressing him to me.

He eased himself fully on me and began to do things that I didn't mind at all which were very pleasurable. I had fantasized a man making love to me with me in a dress. I had never thought to ever meet a man who would do such a thing, to set out to pleasure me and pleasure himself with me madeup, perfumed, clothed as a woman.

So, my excitement grew and grew as Geoff kissed me, tongued me and began to stroke my panties and stockings between my legs. I was solidly tucked away but the pain grew by the second as he caressed me, his hands all over me, opening the zipper of my dress so that he could reach more of my cleavage, free of the dress's confining neckline.

I kissed him in return about his face and neck and he responded by opening his costume, yes, I mean his pants, so that I could feel more of him. I could feel his passion rising. It would have been most unfair to withdraw, I reasoned shakily, with such a warm, vibrant man in my arms who wanted me in the most intimate of ways.

He eased me out of my dress, my skin feeling as hot as his as he began to caress my little bodyshaper and teddy. Then he was out of his costume in a flash, naked, as he rolled back the covers of my bed. Kicking off my high heels, bothered and feeling so guilty, I followed him.

"You should take off your makeup," he whispered levering himself onto me, kissing my ears, making my earrings pull on my earlobes. I tensed at that and he began to kiss my mouth again and I felt rapture as he became so aggressive, his tongue exploring my mouth as he ardently pressed against my women's under-clothing.

It couldn't last and he had to release me from my pantyhose, the body shaper and panties before we worked my gaff free and I was in agony as he held me and stroked me where I really needed no arousal of my own. He wouldn't let me unhook my bra or take off my earrings as we made passionate love and I found myself releasing so many pent-up emotions, stored for far too long, as he rode and gyrated on me, loving every second of our ecstatic, unexpected union. It only hurt a little the first time and I was long past caring by then. I might even have told him that I loved him. I was his woman entirely.

It took some time to exhaust him. He had to have it inside me several times before he slid from me and lay quivering, as much as me, his head on my arm.

"You are a mess," he said at last, looking at me from swollen lips. I was sure they were like my own. "Which drawer do you keep your nighties in?"

I didn't have any nighties then and I told him so. He was surprised. "You have to sleep in a nightie," he protested. "It's the most wonderful, girlie thing that there is."

He got up, put on his pants and shirt. "Wait here, girl," he laughed at me. "And I'll see what I can borrow."

"Geoff!" I hissed, panicking as he opened the door. Soft music floated in as he tiptoed out.

I got up myself and seeing the mess of makeup on the pillow, whipped it off and changed it right away, putting the used clothing into the laundry basket beside my bedroom mirror and table. I looked obscene with my bra on and no panties and so I quickly found a pair of white panties where Kelly had stored them and put them on. I couldn't have put a gaff on then.

I changed my earrings to small studs. My face was mussed up and swollen like his but it wasn't awful. I took off my false eyelashes and then the wig. In the net, I did look like a man, trying to makeup as a woman. I put the cleansing cream on my face and tried not to look at myself as I removed my makeup. I was actually creaming myself with moisturizers when Geoff returned. What had I done, I thought guiltily, as I looked at him.

He stood stock-still when he saw me. "Where has the beautiful girl gone that I made love to tonight?" he asked wistfully, coming up behind me and putting his arms about my shoulders.

I wiped off the excess cream and took off my wig cap. I ruffled up my hair with my fingers.

"Oh, there she is," he said, leaning down and kissing my bare skin, near to my bra strap. "Hmmm, you smell so nice. I love Chanel on a woman."

I looked at my image. My earrings glinted back at me. My lips were still red and full without lipstick. My eyebrows... Oh goodness, my eyebrows! They were so thin and feminine. I could never explain them away. I would have to be sick for a week or more! I couldn't go in to work looking like a woman. Which I did now, with my dark hair on top of my ears, sort of bangs on my forehead, and my eyes still out-

lined with vestiges of the liquid eyeliner we all used. I would have to scrub and scrub to get that off.

I could sense that Geoff was turning himself on again, as he stroked my shoulders and black bra straps playfully, and I didn't mind at all. "Keep your bra on," he whispered as he helped me put on one of Kelly's white, silk nighties.

He took off his pants and shirt and we 'retired' to bed. We pleased each other gently and softly and he mounted me once, I think, and that was the end. We were asleep when my alarm went off automatically at six o'clock and he was out of bed in a flash, almost sleepwalking as he struggled with his pants.

All I wanted to do was sleep more as well. It had been a wonderful night but so stressful. I wanted him gone though before I had to explain to the 'other' girls. I quivered at the thought. But I'm not gay, I thought, I'm not. "I suggest that you put on panties and the negligee I brought for you if you're going to see me out," he said. "I think you've got guests sleeping over."

Then I realized that I was in Kelly's silky nightie. I put on my white panties quickly and removed the bra I had worn all night. I had marks where the tape had pulled on me but it didn't hurt to take off. I had no hair to be pulled on thanks to Kelly and Ginny.

Geoff grimaced as I took off the bra and the inserts and then donned Kelly's frilly negligee. "You should get implants," he said. "Then you'd be an incredible woman."

I shook my head, my stomach churning. I put on a pair of Kelly's white, fluffy mules, which he had come back in, last night. It was really shivery to be barelegged inside the soft silk of Kelly's negligee, its shoulders slightly padded. The thin straps of the nightie showed through and I would have showed cleavage if I had had any.

I put on my long red hair, which he had not seen me in, brushing it out over my shoulders. I wasn't Marilyn, but even without a bust, I made a fairly good-looking, fresh-faced girl. Remembering Kelly's instructions, I took some cream and rubbed it into my skin as he yawned and yawned.

"Put on a bra," he urged, sitting on the bed and watching me arrange my long wig hair about my shoulders.

"You are a sick man," I said but I complied, my emotions heating and fluttering as I put on my lace-outlined Fredericks' bra and the implants for them from the drawer in my dressing table. He had me hold my hair while he came and did the bra attachments at the back beneath my negligee and nightie.

I pulled the negligee about my inflated chest and was excited by how female I now appeared without any makeup at all.

He sat beside me, put his arm about my trembling shoulders and reached over to kiss me. "Mmm," he said. "I want you all over again. You're so female, you know."

I felt a stiffening in my panties beneath the softness of the short nightie and long, white, silk and satin negligee. I felt my temperature rising again as we kissed. It would have been all right with me if we had got back into bed. He was the one to break it off.

“Oh, I do have to go to work,” he said with yet another yawn, stroking my arm and looking me in the face. “Thank you for a great evening, David darling. You really are a fabulous girl.”

He stood up and I did, too. I quivered as the negligee swept about my hairless legs. He was much taller than me when I was without my high heels. He put his arm about my waist, hugging me, as I tried to usher him out of my bedroom.

He was right about people staying over. Our living room had many sleeping bodies there, both male and female. The CD player was still on though it had exhausted whatever had been in it.

I swayed as I walked on Kelly's high-heeled mules across our apartment, hugging the soft, flowing, airy negligee about myself, the front opening to show off my shivering, smooth, bare legs and the lacy edge of Kelly's white silk nightie as I swished the way the girls had taught me.

He put his finger to his lips and pointed back to our kitchen. Holding my negligee in place, conscious of my hair about my face and that I had on no makeup, I followed him, trying desperately not to let the negligee open and show off my legs and nightie. I hadn't realized how red and long my nails were and how feminine they would look as I clutched the negligee at my chest and at the top of my legs as I had seen my mother and sisters do so often in the past to avoid showing what I didn't want to show, my bare legs, my little nightie, my panties or my bra and chest.

He whispered that he wanted to know where the kettle was and if he could make coffee. He looked at my hands and smiled. He looked up and must have read the panic on my face for he stepped back and opened his hands in a non-threatening gesture.

Trembling as I felt his scrutiny of my negligee and the figure I presented beneath it, I looked over the disaster of the kitchen area and sighed. I pointed to the cupboard where we kept the coffee maker and the negligee opened, revealing my smooth-skinned chest, bra straps and lacy edge of my nightie.

I felt so absurd to be standing there in the kitchen in women's nightclothes and lingerie which Geoff had had me wear and which I had sort of rationalized as a costume when we had got out of bed. Now, with this man looking at me, he was kind of nice-looking, black, rumpled hair, a little unshaven, not a problem now for me, and dark, sunken eyes, shadowed as if he hadn't slept in days. He looked as I felt, I thought. I was desperate to get back to bed and just sleep. He had been so active all night long and I hadn't wanted to say, “No”, to him, have him leave me. And he was still treating me as if I was a desirable woman when I felt anything but.

I had to show him where the coffee was and the sugar and how to work the coffee maker. He smiled as I got out what was left of the milk from the ruins of our neatly ordered fridge. I put it down beside the two clean cups he had found and he reached out and held my hand. He stretched out my fingers and put his hand beside mine, smiling all the time while I tried to pull away, panicking inside again.

"What a contrast!" he whispered, his thick eyebrows going up in mock surprise and I saw what he meant. His fingers were thick and had hair on the back. His hand was wide, his nails bluntly cut across. My hand was much thinner than his, my fingers were smooth and hairless like the back of my hand, and of course they ended in long, red, shiny nails.

"I like girls with nails like yours," he said letting my hand go, while I felt a stab of pleasure go through me at his words. Then he began to tidy up, opening the dishwasher and stacking things and rinsing dishes in the sink and stacking them for another load. He took out a garbage bag from beneath the sink and began to quietly clear up the place.

I couldn't just stand there and watch him and so I began to cap the liquor and wine bottles and put them away or empty what I had to. It was hard and I understood my mother and sisters better as I tried to keep the negligee closed about me as I worked but I'm sure he saw everything I had on at one time or another as we tidied up the place.

It only looked like half a disaster when the coffee was ready and he poured two cups and gestured for me to sit down in our breakfast nook where he had cleared away the effects of several pizzas, I think.

I tried to drink and hold onto my negligee with one hand, trying to think how to act as a woman in the morning with her man. I felt so subservient. As I clutched at my negligee but that only meant that the lower part slid open and he could see my thighs and the edge of the white, silky nightie. The soft nightie was emasculating me. I shuddered.

He looked down and smiled appreciatively while I was so flustered and tried to cover up. "Don't worry about it," he said very quietly.

I shivered more in apprehension, and felt the hair about my neck. Nervously, I nodded in agreement.

"I'm Geoff Dysart," he said, smiling wearily. "Filmmaker."

He wouldn't know but I knew the name. At State, he had made several films, amateur productions, for university classes. I didn't know that he had continued in the business since.

"Well," he said, tiredness seeming about to overwhelm him even though he had almost emptied his mug. "Would-be filmmaker is better. I haven't done anything since I left the university." He had a nice, self-deprecating smile and he gave a shrug of his shoulders. "Not like you girls," he said, looking up into my makeup-free face and I trembled to think what he saw as he looked at me.

"Of course, you have heard a hundred times how well you performed at the Ulysses," he said with a tired grin. "And it was you who was the key, you know. I didn't think a man could fool me at all but I couldn't tell which of you was the guy. Which is why I followed the crowd here."

I suppose I should have thanked him for the compliment, which is probably what he intended, but I could only flush at his comments and look away even though I felt his eyes on me. "I could make a film out of this," he said. "I could call it, 'Three Sisters', all about your life and loves. Would you be interested?"

I shuddered, thinking of the thousands of people who would be looking at me trying to act like a woman. "N-No," I whispered, unable to look at him.

He was quiet for a moment and when I risked a look at him, he was staring at me, bemused. "Most drag queens I meet want the limelight," he said slowly, reaching for the coffee and pouring himself another cup. I declined his offering gesture by putting my hand over my cup. He smiled as he looked at my red nails again.

"You're quite different from the usual queen, aren't you?" he asked.

"I don't think I'm that different," I whispered back, thinking of my pen friend transvestites. I felt so weird as I tried to be demure in front of this guy.

"Most queens want me to put them in one of my pictures," Geoff went on as if I hadn't spoken. "They promise me a sensation if I'll only put them up on the silver screen, as if the Wong Foo and Priscilla movies haven't glutted that market. Besides, I'm having enough trouble just finding the money to get my first professional project under way."

He looked very gloomy and it didn't take but a soft enquiry in the manner Ginny and Kelly had told me women used all the time before he was pouring it all out to me. He had so much going for him, even commitments from some very good young actors that I knew about, but he knew so little about money.

"You should start your own company and sell shares to raise enough to finance your movie," I told him. He was dubious until I told him I was a stockbroker. He looked astounded and then began to laugh which maddened me.

"I'm sorry," he said, toning it right down as we heard some moving from the living room. "I had heard that but I had forgotten you had day jobs."

He was more than a little paranoid about keeping control of his movie, if it ever got made, and at the same time needed to raise money. I knew of several 'angels', who invested in new theatrical projects. I suggested them to him and he wanted the names right away.

I sensed he was testing me. "I have them in a file in my briefcase in my bedroom," I said.

"Show me," he said. I clutched my negligee to me, standing and feeling the intoxicating swirl of long, feminine hair and smooth silk on my bare legs. I minced on the high, fluffy mules down to my room and was surprised to see that he had followed me.

He suddenly looked with longing at my bed. "I haven't slept for a couple of nights, not counting last night," he said, leaning back from where he was sitting on the edge. "Ah," he sighed. "This is so nice."

"You can't stay here," I protested immediately as he stretched out, bringing his socked feet up onto my bed, his head almost on my pillow.

"Why not?" he asked slowly, his eyes closed. "You have such a large bed and I'm dying for sleep. I couldn't bother you at all, really."

"But I want to sleep myself!" I exclaimed. "You can't sleep in my bed with me!"

He kept his eyes closed. "Whatever will the neighbors think, right?" he said fuzzily. He eased himself up onto my soft, frilly pillow and sighed again, even grunting.

"Hey!" I raised my voice. "Don't go to sleep! This is my bed!"

I tried to roll him out. "Don't," he said as I shook him. "If you want to share, okay. Put a pillow down the middle, if you want, but I have got to get some sleep."

I flounced around the bed. I couldn't let him stay there. What would the other girls think if they saw him there or coming out of my room? What would they think of me? And I was desperately tired, too. I went over to Geoff again and he was snoring!

I tiptoed out to Ginny's room. I opened the door quietly. I couldn't see her but there were two male bodies, unknown to me, asleep on her floor. I tiptoed to Kelly's room. There was more heavy breathing and it was clear that there was more than one person in bed. There was male clothing on the floor.

I went back down the hallway and took some extra pillows from the hall closet. I then went into my room and put a little hill of pillows down the bed to keep Geoff to one side. Then I slipped out of my heels, hung up the negligee, and in short nightie, panties and bra, went to bed with another man. I was asleep under the covers in minutes.

XI. THE LEASE IS BROKEN

When Kelly finally awoke me, it was after two in the afternoon. She was shaking my bare shoulder and telling me to get up while I could only feel someone holding me down. I struggled to open my eyes and Kelly was grinning at me. It wasn't her hand about my waist, her body against me. I pushed away the arm and sat up, revealing the nightie to Kelly and to a smiling Ginny who was by the door.

"Want to introduce us to your date?" asked Kelly as I struggled free of Geoff's arm about my waist and his legs through mine.

"He's not..." I said, swinging my bare legs free and the nightie rode up my legs letting them see my panties.

"She does everything a woman does now, doesn't she?" mocked Ginny from the door well. "She wears nighties to bed and keeps on her bra and wig for her boy friend. I guess he likes her like that."

I stood up shivering while Geoff kept on sleeping, out like a log. "It's not like that at all!" I gasped, reaching for Kelly's negligee, wrapping myself in it quickly. They, of course, were dressed in jeans and t-shirts. Kelly took my hand and led me out of my room before I could change and dress like her.

I babbled out my story as quickly as I could as they went "Ah ha" and "Oh sure" as I tried to explain how I hadn't gone to bed with a man at all. I wasn't gay, I wanted to scream at them. It was an accident! The apartment was empty of people, I realized, as Kelly sat on the sofa and looked at me in her negligee, pushing my hair over my shoulders, smiling and disbelieving everything I babbled at them.

"We had to get you up anyway because the manager has phoned us," she said. "He's on the way up to see us."

"And read us the riot act," said Ginny with a smile on her face.

"Then I have to change," I gasped.

"No," they both said at once and Kelly stood up and guided me to the sofa.

"But I don't understand," I said, really not understanding what was going on.

Just then the doorbell rang and Ginny bounced over to answer it. "Oh, come in, Mr. Hannigan," she said brightly and a short, middle-aged, red-faced man came bustling in. Kelly stood up and sauntered towards the kitchen.

"Coffee?" she asked. Ginny plopped herself into the armchair and Mr. Hannigan had to sit beside me. I clutched again at the negligee, my fingers trembling so much that he looked at my hands and his eyes travelled up my body to my curvy breasts and long hair. He looked quite approving but then he turned back to Ginny and frowned.

"I'll get to the point," he said. "I've been hearing some terrible things about you girls and the goings-on in this apartment. Wild parties!"

"Wild parties?" asked Ginny in fake innocence while I sat there trying not to reveal my nightie and underwear to this man.

"You instigated the romp in 320 some weeks ago," he said angrily, "and last night here was the end. Drugs, loud music, and there's even people saying that one of the girls in this place isn't a girl at all!"

"Oh," said Ginny brightly. "That reminds me. We never did introduce you to the third roommate, did we?" I shuddered and tried to protest, knowing what was coming. "Mr. Hannigan, I like to introduce you to David McCann, who has taken Sue's place." She indicated me.

If Mr. Hannigan's face had been red before, it was volcanically shining now. He jumped up from the couch and looked down at me as if I really was something re-

pulsive. I pulled my negligee even tighter as I experienced sheer terror at the look on his face.

"You can all move out!" he screamed. "I don't care about the lease. I want you all gone from my building!" He stomped to the door and crashed it open. "Perverts!" he yelled and I'm sure everyone in the open elevator heard him. He slammed the door and we could hear him yelling more as he went off down the hallway.

"Yes-s-s!" said Ginny, jumping up and running to Kelly to hug her. "We broke the lease! We broke the lease!"

Kelly was smiling, too. "Don't forget to make him pay," she said. "He broke the lease, not us. He can pay our moving expenses and our first month somewhere else."

I stood there, the negligee quivering about me. "What is going on?" I asked anxiously.

"Well, I couldn't just move out and leave you guys in the lurch again as Sue did to us," Kelly said, smiling at me. "But Dave Matthews has been after me to move in with him for the last six months at least."

I felt my whole world come crashing down. I had never thought of Kelly with some other guy. I knew that this arrangement wouldn't last forever but to all come apart, the day after being Belle of the Ball? I tried to think how it had been at the club with everyone wanting to dance with me, hold me, and make love to me.

"Oh oh," said Ginny to Kelly. "I told you that she would take it hard."

"No," I began but the sudden sympathy from Ginny, of all people, was too much and I had the urge to cry.

Kelly came to me then and threw her arms about me in a hug and I didn't care how the negligee opened and how it enfolded us, her arms at my waist. I hugged her back, wanting to kiss her, but I knew it wasn't right.

"We can still have Threesome," Kelly said, leaning back to look at me. "Dave said that he can book us right now if we want after all the publicity we have had. Did you see today's papers? Our picture even went out nationally! We can do some of the other things we practiced, other songs, make up quite an act. Couldn't we all use some extra money?"

"I sure could," enthused Ginny.

"Why don't you get dressed properly," said Kelly to me, "and after we've gotten rid of your boyfriend, we can either rehearse or make plans."

"And we've got the money to split!" said Ginny. "Since we're going to be kicked out anyway, how about we invite Peter and his friends down for another party!"

Kelly winced. "I can't," she said.

"Faithful to Dave now, is it?" jeered Ginny. She put her arm through mine, which caused my negligee to open further, showing off my nightie and bare legs to

anyone who cared to look. "Never mind! Heather and I will take them all on, won't we? Girl power!"

I was shaking inside, hurting terribly, but I had to laugh. I turned from the girls to go back to my room and walked right into Geoff's waiting arms. He slipped his arms about my narrow waist and even as I looked at him in alarm, he kissed me, right in front of my friends. It was a long, wet kiss that shook me up and left me in a state of nervous tingling all over.

As I leaned against him unsteadily, Geoff smiled at my wide-eyed roommates who had believed my earlier story. "You won't believe what this girl has done for me," he said. "It's more than letting me go to bed with her. I love everything she does in and out of bed."

They stared at us, even more astounded.

"Geoff!" I gasped as he hugged me, my breast forms pressed into his chest. He kissed me again before releasing me and I realized that I wanted him to keep on doing it. I quivered, not pulling my negligee back as he sat in the armchair, putting on his soldier boots. He looked me up and down, from my fluffy mules to my studded earlobes. I liked the way he raised his eyebrows as he looked at my legs. He drew me to the door to say goodbye as my two bemused roommates looked on.

"Did I say something wrong?" he asked as he drew me close and I surrendered to him.

As I stood there quivering, my soft negligee about my smooth legs, Ginny grinned at me. "Oh, she's not going to have any problems leaving here," she said to Kelly. "Her boy friend will see her right."

Little could she know how wrong those words would turn out to be.

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