
Savannah's Secret
2
Charlotte Mayo
A "Her Tv" Novel

Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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



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Love,

Ms. Chrissie
Editor in Chief

SAVANNAH'S SECRET
part two

by Charlotte Mayo

Chapter One

Having played the part of his half-sister, Savannah, to perfection when he was fourteen years old, Jamie found himself drawn to looking at female clothing in women's magazines as well as seeing how women dress when they go about their daily business. He became fascinated by them. When he returned home from school over the summer holidays, he would occasionally try on a dress belonging to his mother or wear her lingerie – something that the family's maid, Nancy, was only too well aware of. However, despite his best efforts, Jamie could not replicate the time when his mother and Nancy had turned him into Savannah for the visit of Oscar. As he got older, it became something he longed to do again. He became obsessed by the fact he had become another

character and that everyone who had seen him had been seduced by his feminine persona.

As time went by and Jamie matured into a young man, his parents seemed to forget about the incident and never referred to it again. Indeed, his mother continued her life in much the same way as before - wearing lovely evening dresses, fussing around the house and making sure everything was neat and tidy. However, Jamie found himself admiring and appreciating her clothes with a renewed interest. It was as if he had suddenly become hyper-sensitive to women's clothing and all their numerous adornments such as shoes, handbags and jewellery – not to mention makeup.

The world of femininity seemed so glorious and wonderful he could not understand why he had not appreciated it before, especially his mother's clothes. Compared to other mothers and other women he saw, his mother was extremely slim and good looking and always dressed in very elegant, up-to-the-minute fashions. It was as if, since the "Savannah incident," the scales had fallen from his eyes and now he relished seeing his mother in a tight, white sheath dress, a full-skirted blue evening gown or wearing elegant daywear set off by needle thin stiletto heels which artificially altered her height. Oh, her wardrobe had become an Aladdin's Cave of riches cocooned in delicate scents and fragrances.

At home at night or in the dormitory at school, he would think about his adventures as Savannah - reliving the whole episodes over and over again. He could still not quite believe that it had happened. He even wrote about it so he would not forget a single detail, then he would re-read what he had written, correcting it and altering it until he had a "perfect copy" of the original event. As Jamie became older, the

words took on a pornographic significance which reinforced his desire to impersonate his unknown half-sister again. But it wasn't really about her – it was the clothes, it was the feeling of being feminine and vulnerable and admired that Jamie had so loved. In an instant, by donning female guise, it seemed to Jamie, you could become popular and loved and wanted.

The trip to the theatre with Oscar was his almost perfect memory of the time he had spent dressing as that had been his first experience of being out in public. He had just felt so unbelievably good, almost euphoric. Jamie had been amazed that other people were so taken in by his transformation. While there was a part of him that was shouting inwardly, I'm a boy, let me out of here! There had been another part that had whispered I can deceive all these people - isn't it just fabulous. How they look at me! How enchanting it all is!

It had led to his first sexual experience when he returned from the Apollo theatre and swished the dress around himself and experienced his first orgasm. Jamie wondered if his liking for female clothing made him a homosexual and, knowing such a thing was illegal, he kept his desires very much to himself. Even so, as he grew older, he found he liked girls even though he was very shy and scared to approach them. He just did not know what to say to them – they were like an alien species. Unfortunately, being at an all-boys school had placed him at a great disadvantage when it came to women.

Eventually, Jamie left school. He was eighteen years old and for the past four years – ever since the "Savannah incident" - he had hated school. The incident had come at an impressionable age and it made him distant and lonely. He no longer thought about

joining the cricket team or partaking in the school's activities for he no longer wanted to have friends and be popular. He kept himself to himself and read a lot of books.

He had also started to misbehave and become lazy in his work which resulted in him being called to the Headmaster's office on two occasions to be caned. Jamie didn't care, he became fascinated by all things feminine and rued the fact that there were no women at the school – only strict, drab Masters who eagerly used the cane if there was the slightest hint of disobedience or a lack of effort put into school work.

Despite his lack of motivation, Jamie passed some exams and, at age eighteen, managed to scrap into a minor Southern England university to study law. His heart was not really in it and he found he did not get on well with the other students who were far more academic than he was. He thought of them as "swots" and he began skipping lectures and taking a train into London at least once a week. Sometimes he would see a show or sit in a pub, watching the world go by. Inevitably, he failed his exams. He had to re-take the first year – his parents were disappointed and told him he must try harder. Jamie promised to do his best but he knew he was only pursuing the degree course because it was what his parents wanted for him while his real interests lay elsewhere.

He felt drawn to the Soho area of London and visited theatres to see matinees or just wander around the place. On one visit to London he saw a drag queen on stage who was obviously homosexual. It made Jamie, yet again, question his own sexuality. He was in a turmoil over his sexuality and wondered why he liked women's clothes. One day he decided to visit a prostitute to see whether or not he was a heterosexual. It took several attempts to build up courage but

eventually he saw a "lady of the night" (although it was actually the middle of the afternoon). The "lady" was of medium build with peroxide blonde hair; she was wearing a tight, sweater that showed off her ample bust; a black satin skirt with a wide belt around it and high heels. She stood on Greek Street in Soho smoking a cigarette and walking up and down like a sentry. Jamie wandered passed her several times, the collar of his coat pulled up, trying to look casual.

"Looking for business?" the prostitute eventually asked.

Jamie nodded shyly.

They went into a hotel nearer by and Monique, as she called herself, began to undress, revealing a large pair of flabby breasts shielded by a black lace bra. Jamie felt his manhood rise on the sight of her bare flesh.

"You a virgin?" Monique asked.

Jamie said he was. He guessed Monique was in her early thirties. She told Jamie to undress and lay on the bed. When he was in position, Monique straddled him. Using her mouth, she eased a rubber over the tip of his cock and rolled it down the stem with her fingers. Jamie's manhood expanded at the feel of her feminine touch. When she had completed the essentials, she moved forward and employed her fingers to press his meat into her soft clit. Jamie's penis expanded into her. He had never felt anything so thrilling in all his life. She stretched back, her breasts flattening as she did so. Jamie's meat expended and then she was riding him, back and forth, back and forth. Jamie tried to fondle her large, oscillating breasts but his hands were slapped away.

"Don't touch," Monique said.

Jamie lay still on the bed – he felt like a girl in the missionary position with Monique doing all the work. It was hardly what he had expected. Friends and acquaintances he knew who had had sex had all described how they had been in control and that the girls had had to just "lie back and take it".

But Jamie wasn't complaining, he liked looking up at Monique: her face fully made-up, her blond, curly hair neatly coiffured. He could smell the cheap perfume on her body. He started to think about the satin skirt she wore and how nice it must feel, the glorious high heels too – how great to slip a stockinged foot into them! His cock rose and stretched upwards.

After a few minutes, Jamie spluttered semen into her. He was twenty years old and he had finally lost his virginity. He smiled with relief. The Government grant he received for going to University had enabled him to lose his virginity. In Jamie's opinion, it could not have been money better spent.

"That was great," he said. "Thanks."

He felt elated.

Monique kissed him on the cheek in a motherly way and he rolled off the bed.

"You are certainly different from my normal clients," she said. "You are more refined, like a gentleman, not rough and ready like some of them. I am sorry I had to stop you touching my tits – I would not have minded you doing it but some men are too rough. With you, though, well, I think I can trust you. If you come back, next time you get a tit fondle and I won't charge you no more."

Jamie smiled. He knew he would be back.

"Who do you normally have as clients then?" Jamie asked as he pulled up his trousers.

"Oh, manual workers; men who work on the railways and city types on their way home to their wives." Monique lit a cigarette. "Most of my clients are married."

Jamie was surprised; never having been in such a world before he imagined married men would be faithful to their wives. Monique zipped up the satin skirt and pulled on her sweater; then she gave Jamie another kiss – this time on the lips.

"Come back," she said.

"I will do," Jamie said. And he went back to his university a happy man. He had hated the idea that his interest in women's clothes may have meant he was a homosexual and he was pleased he had performed with Monique who seemed to like him. When he had been at school he realised some of the boys were homosexuals and he suspected some of the masters were too but he was glad he was heterosexual, Even so it did not stop him feeling guilty about his interest in female clothing. The vicar at church he attended and the Headmaster had both preached that men should be men and not be tempted by the sin of femininity.

After his liaison with Monique, Jamie found that Soho was an even greater draw and he started frequenting the area regularly. He used all his Government grant money and money his parents had given him to visit pubs and go in search of prostitutes. He thought of himself as an artist, like the ones who had lived on the Left Bank in Paris in the Nineteenth Cen-

tury. To look the part, he tried to grow his hair (for the first time), wore a duffle coat and a long scarf.

He started to make a few friends in Soho and even achieved a rather friendly kiss and fondle with a pretty bar maid at the pub he visited most regularly, The Spread Eagle. In fact, Sophie proved to be his first girlfriend. She was impressed by his good manners and middle class up-bringing so they started to date: they visited the cinema together and went out for meals. Eventually, she succumbed to his amorous advances in her bedroom which was in a flat above the pub. They made love on a creaky bed when her parents were out. The house shook every time a train passed by. One time, when Jamie took Sophie out for a meal, she was wearing a glorious, silky full skirt with yards of tulle under it.

"That's a lovely skirt you are wearing," Jamie commented. "Nice and full, it really suits you and the material is so nice to touch."

Sophie frowned. "That's a strange thing to say... most men never notice what you are wearing, If they do, they wouldn't comment or if they did it would just say 'you look nice.' They wouldn't say things like you have just said."

Jamie blushed, he felt embarrassed; he felt his secret had been revealed.

"I notice such things," he said softly.

They continued to date, however, and they continued to make love.

For the first time, Jamie was enjoying life. Even so, time was running out for him and he failed his first year exams again. This time his Head of the Faculty

wrote to him to say he no longer had a place on the course. The letter read, "Mr. Queensbury, you neither have the aptitude or the inclination to pass your degree, still less your legal examinations. There is little or no prospect of you ever becoming a solicitor or in any way qualified in the field of law. Therefore, you are removed from the course and your place at Southern England University is terminated. I wish you well in your future career."

Jamie had to pack his bags and return home.

"We expected more from you, Jamie," his dad said. "We had high hopes of you buckling down after the first time you failed your exams. We wanted you to become a solicitor. You could have started your own law practice and become a respected member of the community. Do you know how much those men earn?"

Jamie shook his head. He hated it when his dad lectured him. His dad continued.

"They earn a very good living and they all have nice wives, lovely houses and cars and they are members of the golf club. You have never liked hard work, have you? You have always been a lazy blighter. A really lazy, good-for-nothing blighter."

"Now, that's enough, Hugh!" his mother chided. "But Jamie dear, we are disappointed in you. You can't expect to live at home for the rest of your life rent free. You need to make your own way in the world. You are, after all, twenty years of age."

"You're a bloody disgrace," his dad bellowed. "You have really let the family down. What am I going to tell people down the golf club? I have a son who is a

good-for-nothing idler who flunked his exams not once but twice."

Not for the first time, Jamie lay on his bed in his childhood bedroom with tears in his eyes. He knew his parents were right. Rather than using his grant from the Government and the money his parents had given him to buy law books and course materials, he had squandered it all on prostitutes, drink and betting on the horses. Jamie just seemed to be drawn to the seedy side of life. He had much preferred dating Sophie to the drab, colourless girls at university who often wore unfashionable tweed skirts and plain clothes. He was just pleased his parents did not know the true extent of his debauchery. They thought he was lazy but had no idea he spent all his time in London, running up debts, drinking, smoking, visiting prostitutes, betting on horses and watching drag acts. Mind you, it had been fun while it had lasted and he had met some real characters along the way, including writers, poets and artists.

On his regular visits to Soho, Jamie had often stopped to buy magazines of an adult nature at assorted newsagents which had "back rooms" where customers could find pornographic material. He had discovered that there were men, like him, who liked to dress in women's clothes. When he could he had purchased an American import magazine entitled Female Impersonators International which depicted gloriously feminine women who were in fact men. Later he would buy another magazine from America called Female Mimics. Female Impersonators International magazine opened a whole new world to Jamie. He started to realise that being kicked off his university course was not such a bad thing. Who wanted to be a stuffy lawyer anyway? No, Jamie's interests lay in performing as a woman on stage and

seeing the magazines made him realise it was possible.

One of the downsides of university life was that he had lived in a rented house with an inquisitive landlady who had cooked and cleaned for the five students who lodged in her house. That meant it had been impossible to have much privacy but once he was freed from the constraints of university life, he knew he could have more independence to dress and do as he pleased. So, once he was back home, he started applying for jobs eagerly. He wanted to move out of home as soon as he could and start renting his own place in London – as close to Soho as was possible. He wanted to get a job as a female impersonator. That was his aim, his ambition – to be a successful female impersonator.

"Why don't you apply for another university course?" his mother, Madeline, said one day. "Something that is not as difficult as law."

"No, I don't want to go to university again, Mother," Jamie said. "I want to get a job and earn some real money. I'm not really cut out for academia and, as you and dad say, I am twenty years of age and need to stand on my own two feet."

His mother was disappointed in him – Jamie knew that – but he was determined to fulfil his dream and go onstage as a female impersonator. He knew the first step on that path was to apply for jobs so he could earn money and support himself. That meant he would be able to leave home and find some rented accommodation. Over the coming weeks Jamie bought national papers every day and started to apply for jobs which appeared in the vacancies column.

Soon letters were falling through the letter box inviting him for interviews and, in no time at all, he had secured a position as an insurance clerk for a company in London. That meant his hair had to be cut to a short back and sides style. At the interview he explained that he had tried university life but it was not for him. He wanted to get a job and be part of the "real world." Mr. Dodds, who interviewed him, was impressed.

"It is nice to meet someone who has plans," he said.

The fact that Jamie had a little legal training was also considered a benefit and he was given the job.

The job was quite boring but it gave him a weekly salary and the chance to save up. It also meant Jamie mixed with girls. He loved seeing the well-dressed secretaries wandering around the City of London and meeting up with their friends on their lunch breaks. By that time, Jamie was confident enough to pat and pinch the backsides of the pretty secretaries who worked for the firm or whom he passed in the street or on the train. Some of the men went a lot further but Jamie was too refined for that. Even so, he adored being around women and started to observe their mannerisms. So, Jamie commuted up to London each day on the train – often accompanying his father, Hugh. He did not date girls as he was determined to save as much money as he could. Within four months, Jamie had accumulated enough money to be able to afford the deposit on a rented flat. He moved out of his parents' house and into a tiny, musty flat in central London which was close to his beloved Soho and that was all that mattered to him.

Chapter Two

Jamie now had a plan and the plan was to practice being a female impersonator so he could take to the stage. He longed to relive the day Savannah had walked into the Apollo theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue with all the men looking at "her." He knew that, with training, he could relive that day on the stage. He recalled how his mother used to tell him how wonderful it had been to be applauded at the end of the night after a successful show and he wanted that too, only he would achieve it as a female impersonator. So every night, when Jamie came home from work, he started to rehearse. He even had singing lessons so he could improve his vocal range and he was amazed to find that he could sing like a woman. He also started to dress again which meant he shaved all over.

Although he had his own flat. the house was divided into a series of apartments. There was limited hot water, therefore he had to choose his hours carefully and he often had to have baths at night. Buying clothes was not easy but he had been lucky that Nancy, the maid at his parents' house, was sympathetic to his "dressing" and had helped him purchase some clothes while he had been living back home. She seemed to like the fact that she shared a secret with him and she even added some old clothes of his mothers to his wardrobe and gave him some of his mother's lingerie,

"I've put some frillies in your drawer, Master James," she would say with a wink and Jamie would know his collection of underwear had increased. In that way, when he moved out of the family home into his own lodgings, he had quite a collection of women's clothing – all nicely stashed in a locked brown leather suitcase, out of the way of prying eyes.

It was not long before Jamie was able to re-discover the shops his mother had taken him to as a fourteen-year-old. The shops, and indeed the whole experience, were so indelibly etched on his mind he knew their exact locations and found them easily. Jamie went back to the wig shop and purchased another hairpiece. Now, at twenty, his reaction to looking at the soft, blond wigs in the mirror was completely different to when he had been fourteen. At twenty, his emotion was one of excitement and a desire to try the wigs on fully dressed so he could gauge whether or not they made him look female. Of course that was not possible in the shop where he had to go in male clothes and pretend he was in a performance which desired him to dress in "drag." That meant it took him several attempts and a lot of unnecessary expense to find the "right" wig.

Equipped with a wardrobe of expensive clothes and lingerie, Jamie set about dressing as a woman. He felt a flush of freedom - the desire to dress was overwhelming. How pleased he was to have been booted off his law course. The idea of spending three whole years in the restricted confines of the university would have sent him crazy. To become fully qualified, there would have been further exams. Now, though, he had freedom and money. Fortunately, the flat was not far from the office where he worked so he took a bus to and from work which was cheaper than the train.

He used to sit on the bus in his suit and read his copy of the Daily Express, looking every inch the city worker. In reality he wore soft, feminine lingerie under his trousers and when he got home he dressed in female clothing every night. The hardest part was practicing the makeup (which he had purchased from the theatrical makeup shop his mother had taken him to) but, with constant repetition, he grad-

ually got that right too. He regularly purchased magazines which depicted female impersonators and looked in awe at the photographs of men dressed as women. That was his aim – to be as good as they were. They were so convincing it was impossible to tell they were men and his goal was to be so credible no one who saw him would believe he was male.

Eventually, Jamie built up the courage to go out dressed in public. He knew such activities were dangerous and risked arrest. Even so, he was determined to test himself and announce his female persona to the world.

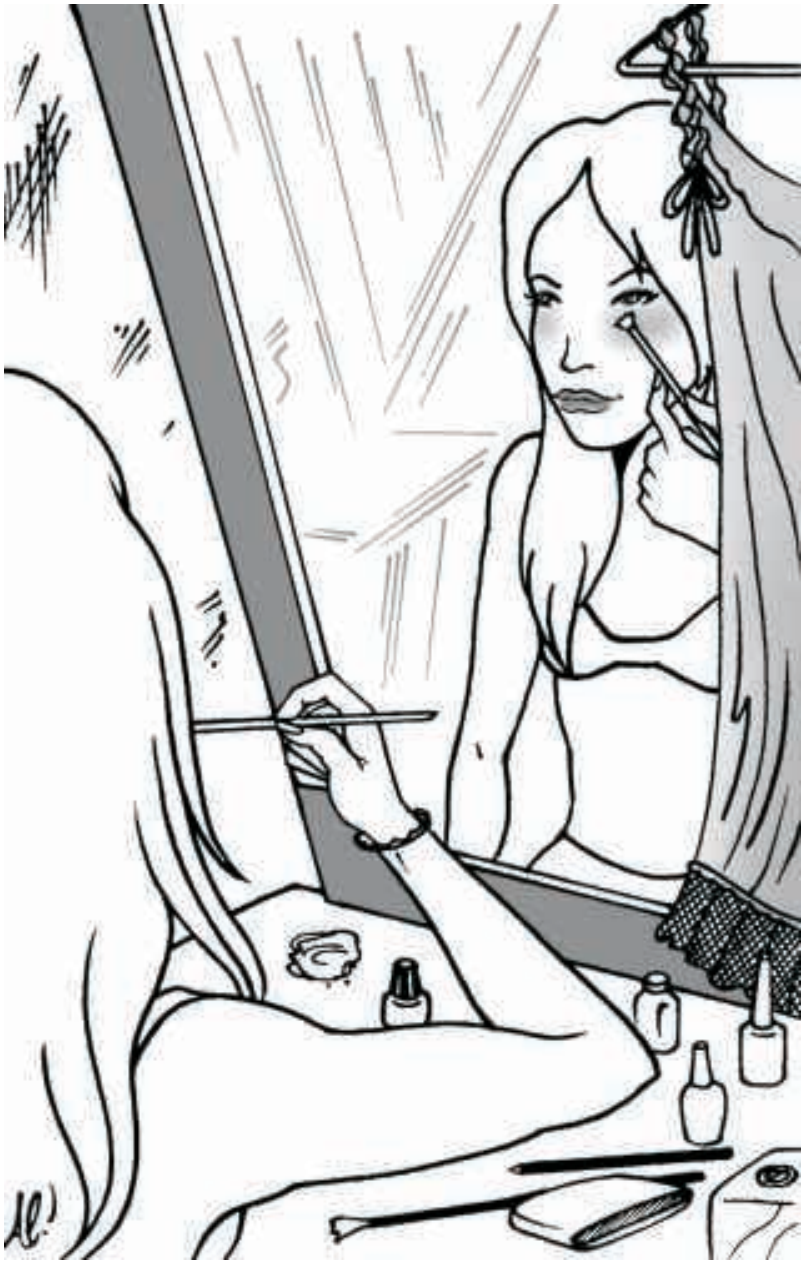
One Saturday morning, Jamie got up very early and ran himself a bath. The old copper pipes vibrated noisily as the water poured into the tub. Jamie added some bath crystals, took off his cotton pyjamas and got into the hot, soapy water; then he started to shave his legs, arms and chest with a newly purchased Wilkinson Sword safety razor. He was careful not to cut himself. After about an hour, he got out of the cooling water and dabbed himself dry with a thick red and white towel. He felt nervous and apprehensive.

When he had dressed as Savannah he was young and his face had not grown manly hair. Now, however, he needed a shave, so, having bathed, he stood in front of the circular shaving mirror in the bathroom and mixed up foam in a small pot. He applied it liberally to his face with a brush, then started to shave with a cut-throat razor. He was careful to ensure his face was smooth and he did not cut himself. The day before, he had invested in some new razors in order to prevent such a disaster. When he finished, he rubbed on some face cream which he had purchased that week. Then he wrapped a silky, pink negligee around himself and did up the tie.

He came out of the bathroom and walked into the bedroom. The flat was self-contained, two floors up in a low block of flats which were art deco in style with small, iron framed windows. The living room overlooked the busy High Street at the front of the flats, while the bedroom was at the back adjacent to the kitchen, next to which was a small bathroom.

Jamie went into his dingy bedroom. He had set his clothes out on the bed and the dress he had chosen to wear was hanging up on the picture rail. He started to feel aroused and his heart beat with excitement. He had a small dressing table in the bedroom by the window which he had purchased from a second hand shop. He went over to this and sat down. He felt like that fourteen-year-old boy again and could almost imagine his mother, Madeline, next to him, telling him it would all be alright and that she was convinced she could make him look like "Savannah," the half-sister he had never met. His body pulsed with excitement. He took a deep breath and went to work.

First, he added foundation to his face, then he dabbed powder onto the foundation with a thick brush. Next he drew around his eyes with a pencil and decorated them with a brush before adding rouge to his cheeks. Finally, he painted his lips with a pencil and stuck on false eyelashes. He took his time as he knew he had to look good. When he had finished his face, he painted his nails a deep red colour and waited for them to dry. There was a part of him that felt guilty – he knew he should not be doing this. He thought about the people he worked with. They would not approve. There was a girl in accounts whom he liked but he was scared to approach her because he did not want dating to get in the way of his dressing. It was a lonely life with no one to confide in.



He knew that society thought his hobby was "wrong" but the desire to dress, to test himself in public – like the young Savannah had done all those years before - was overpowering. He wanted to see if he could do it again – repeat that magical experience of going to the theatre in a full-skirted, satin evening gown. He so desperately wanted to re-enact those days which had lived in his memory for so, so long and, like all memories, had become more enchanted and rich as the years had gone by. Oh, how Jamie loved to read and re-read the story of Savannah which he had written. In fact, since he had been in his new flat, he had bought a small portable typewriter which enabled him to type out his experiences. He kept them in a folder marked "Savannah's Secret." One day he hoped to publish it.

When the varnish had dried, he wrapped a corset around his waist. Once in position, he carefully did up the hook and eye fastening, a time consuming and painstaking undertaking. He loved the firmness around his waist and the feeling that he was shaving inches off his already slender physique. Then he pulled on a pair of red French knickers. He attached a suspender belt to his waist and sat on the soft single bed. He rolled up stockings and pulled them over his freshly varnished toe nails and newly shaved legs. He smiled and shook his head. Hadn't he once screamed and fussed and had tantrums when he had been asked to do the very same thing to order to try to keep his mother out of prison? It was hard to believe how far he had travelled from those early beginnings. Back then he had hated the idea of femininity; now he embraced it and had a plan to make money as a female mimic if he proved to be any good.

After he had put the stockings on and attached them to a suspender belt, Jamie affixed the bra to his chest and placed a pair of false breasts, which he had

purchased in the same theatrical shop where he had purchased his first wig, into the pouches. He stood in front of the mirror and looked at himself.

"If the fourteen-year-old Jamie could see me now," he said to himself as he looked at his reflected image.

He was thin and clean-shaven and he was beginning to look like a woman. A shiver rolled down his spine. He saw a female figure taking shape before his very eyes – just as he had done all those years ago in his mother's bedroom. Only Nancy knew the truth: that the period of enforced dressing every day for eight days when he was fourteen, then meeting Oscar who had been convinced he was female, had induced in him a love of female clothing, of female impersonation that he could not resist. Since those days he had read copious books and magazines on the subject and borrowed female clothes whenever he could. He was starting to understand that he was not a homosexual but a transvestite. Apparently there was a difference, although not to the wider society which considered men who dressed as women to be homosexuals. He had not been able to understand the apparent contradiction that he liked dressing as a woman but that he also he liked women and he had had many liaisons with prostitutes, as well as with Sophie, after his initial fumbling encounter with Monique. However, according to research he had read at university, there were men like him who liked women's clothing and, this surprised him, not all the female mimics in the magazines were homosexuals either. Jamie picked up a packet of Players cigarettes from his bedside cabinet and took one out. He tapped the cigarette on the sailor motif on the front of the box, lit the cigarette with a Bryant and May match and blew smoke into the room. It helped him relax. After a while, he placed the cigarette on the ashtray and went back to dressing.

Once he had his lingerie in place, Jamie pulled a slip over his breasts. The slip reached down to his knees and was blue and satin. The dress he had chosen to wear was pale yellow. It was full-skirted and required an underskirt. The dress was made of a thick cotton material, the bodice was high-necked and had three-quarter length sleeves. Jamie sighed deeply, took another draw on his cigarette, then placed it back on the ashtray. Finally, he took the dress off the picture rail and removed the coat hanger. He unzipped the back and placed the dress on the floor. He positioned one stockinged foot into the body of the dress and then the other one. He pulled the dress up his legs and torso, wriggling his body as he did so. What was it about the feel of a dress which made him so excited? It was a tight fit and clung snugly to his body. He pushed his arms into the sleeves.

The dress was on but the difficult part was doing the zip up at the back. Jamie had thought of a solution. He had tied a piece of cotton to the zip and this hung down. He managed to affix the hook and eye at the neck. Then he took the cotton, wrapped it around his finger, and gradually drew up the zip from the bottom and then the top. Then he cut off the cotton with a pair of nail scissors. The dress was finally on. Jamie felt fantastic. He walked to the dressing table, the fabric of the skirt of the dress swishing around his stockinged legs. The dress felt heavy and cumbersome and that appealed to Jamie. He remembered how awkward he had felt when his mother had first made him dress as a girl, Hadn't he hated the idea that he could not move freely in the clothes his mother had sourced for him? Hadn't he rebelled at the very restrictiveness of the clothing?

He sat down at the dressing table and took up the blonde wig which he had placed over the mirror. He

pulled it on and twisted it into position. He shuddered. Already he looked like a woman, such was the power of the wig to transform. Jamie already realised that the wig was the most important element of any female impersonator's art, indeed for any transvestite. He took combs and sprays and styled it into shape. Then he re-applied his deep red lipstick with a brush and dabbed some more rouge onto his cheeks. He smiled at himself and a beautiful woman smiled back. He stood up and lifted his skirts, adjusting the slip and the underskirt so they hung neatly.

He walked to his wardrobe and removed a pair of low-heeled, black court shoes: he slipped them on. Next, he took up a large black leather handbag (stolen from his mother) and a purse (also stolen from his mother's wardrobe). He walked back to the dressing table and sprayed on some perfume (bought for an imaginary girlfriend) with a puffer and put on some jewellery (also bought for an imaginary girlfriend). Finally, he took a pair of white gloves from a drawer. He stood in front of the mirror, his hands folded across his body with his bag seated on the crook of his arm. He swished this way and that, taking in his appearance. He looked good. Convincing. He took a deep breath, cigarette smoke mingled with the smell of his perfume, wig spray and deodorant to cause a heady mix. Jamie felt intoxicated, a light feeling of euphoria rolled over him. He knew he looked good and he felt he was ready to mix with the London shoppers. His cigarette had gone out so he relit it with a match and sat on the bed smoking for a few minutes. Smoking and thinking and observing himself in the mirror as he did so.

He tried to sit in a feminine way and crossed his legs, holding the cigarette in his hand close to his left cheek, his fingers extended. He had observed women doing this. One advantage of working in an office

which employed a large number of women was that he was able to study them, watch them closely, take in their subtle movements. He knew that to be able to perform on stage, he had to do this – he had to be able to show the world that he was a convincing woman. He even carried around with him a small note book and a pencil in his jacket in which he would write down any observations. That was one of the reasons he liked taking the bus to work: it gave him a chance to make notes and think about things he had seen during the day or women who were also on the red double decker. He told people he was a poet and he was looking for inspiration. He hoped, in that way, he would not be too closely questioned. Fortunately, no one had asked him to read any of his non-existent verses.

At last he stubbed the cigarette out in the ashtray and got up. He hesitated. He checked his look in the mirror one last time. He wondered if he would pass. His legs felt bare and exposed under the heavy dress. His heart pounded, his hands felt clammy. He was twenty-one years old. In fact, he had spent his twenty-first birthday alone in the Spread Eagle pub two weeks earlier. He had no friends and no one understood his desire to dress as a woman – except maybe Nancy. He had hoped to see Sophie in the pub but apparently she had gotten engaged to a man who worked in the Post Office.

Jamie knew if he were caught walking around the streets of London dressed as a woman, he would be placed in a psychiatric institute and he would be condemned to electric shock treatment. Even so, despite the fear that gnawed at him, he was determined to leave the house and go out in public dressed en femme. Eventually, he plucked up enough courage to take the door keys from the shelf above his bed, wrap

a shawl around his slim shoulders and walk to the door.

"Please, God," he prayed, "don't let me get caught."

With a sudden determination, Jamie opened the door of his flat and stepped outside. He was standing in the communal landing, exposed. He felt the door shut as if it were a prison door but he was a prisoner on the outside. Now he had to walk and act naturally – just as his mother had taught him all those years ago. He placed a first tentative foot on the stair and started to totter downwards. Even in low-heeled shoes the movements seemed awkward and difficult. The shoes felt tight, the dress cumbersome. He felt the breeze around his stockinged legs, the tightness of the bodice against his body, how heavy the full-skirted dress felt, how his ankles ached due to the unnatural shoes. He held the handbag in his cropped arm. He toddled on, taking careful, precise steps. Thinking and planning. He was conscious that he was breathing heavily and the wig felt warm on his head; the thick makeup made his face feel hot. Fortunately, it was a cold day and he was not overdressed, at least not in comparison to other women but compared to what he would normally wear as a man, he was swathed in clothing.

At last he reached the hall and walked along it until he reached the front door. He pulled it ajar and walked outside onto the busy, breezy street. So far, so good. He had not passed anyone but that was to change. Now he was mingling with members of the public at close quarters and he needed to be convincing. He stood at the door and looked this way and that, like a frightened fawn. Then Jamie took a deep breath and he started to walk with purpose along the street, his dress swinging around his hips. And, as he

walked, he gathered up confidence as if picking it from the stone slabs.

No one seemed to take any notice of him. No one seemed to take any notice of him. It was unbelievable. He felt euphoric. He felt an unbelievable sense of achievement – just as he had as a fourteen-year-old boy who had passed in public when he went to the theatre and when he had dinner with Oscar who had been convinced that he was Savannah, his daughter. How good was it to be back out in the street dressed as a woman!

Jamie walked on. After the initial surge of adrenalin, he started to slow down and look around him. He started to observe his surroundings. For the first time he saw men in long coats and trilby hats giving him sidelong glances and smiling at him. He noticed their looks. At first he thought that they may be "reading" him but then he realised they were admiring glances and he began to smile back at them. He walked on along the High Street and into Soho. The skirt swished around his legs, the low-heeled shoes felt every stone, every bump. He folded his arms across his waist as he walked as he had seen other women do, or he placed the handbag down at his side.

Careful not to swing, he told himself, careful not to swing.

And, Don't march, don't march, small steady, steps.

He almost had to pinch himself to think he was dressed as a woman again and out on the street. He loved catching his reflection in the shop windows, seeing the beautiful blonde lady in the full skirt, look-

ing so content. He took deep breaths, smiled at the world. Life felt good, he felt good.

He stopped at a small shop to purchase some food which was placed in a brown paper bag for him by the gentleman who served him. His voice was good and the shopkeeper took no notice whatsoever. Jamie walked on. He was enjoying himself. He felt happy and confident. He even walked into a lingerie shop and purchased some more nylons and panties. Oh, how good it felt to do those things as a woman! To be able to pick up and examine boxes of fine lingerie before making a purchase. The purse gave him trouble and the catch on the handbag was awkward but he survived. My, how difficult it was to remember all the things a woman had to do just to part with her money. He realised he needed practice and mentally added it to the list of things he would do when back in his flat. He wanted to get the part right. He wanted to be Savannah again.

Then he left Soho and just walked – perhaps for two miles – enjoying the mild, sunlit day. He strolled along the wide London pavement, feeling the swish of the full skirt against his stockinged legs, the rustle of the nets as he moved, the tightness of the bodice of the dress on his chest, the restriction of his waist caused by the corset: it was uncomfortable but was there ever an experience so wonderful? As he walked and as he realised he was convincing, he grew in confidence. He wished he could tell someone, share his secret, celebrate his success. Wasn't loneliness his greatest enemy? Cold, dark loneliness. The loneliness of an outsider trapped in a conventional society. The loneliness of person, trapped, by an accident of Fate on the outside, whose destiny was never to be understood or accepted. The thought he could not share his desire to dress and his triumph that he had been out in public with anyone else hurt him deep,

deep down inside. But no one would understand him. No one. He was adrift and alone in late 1950's Britain. His desire to dress as a woman must always be a secret, he considered, and perhaps that gave him the drive to be a female impersonator and seek acceptance from an audience by being on stage.

Finally, he stopped by a department store. He wandered in and tried some perfume testers. He smelled the delicious scents, then he bought a bottle. Afterwards he visited the makeup counter and purchased some, refreshing his stocks of lipstick, rouge and powder and here he was read for the first time. His heart beat fast when he realised he was discovered but the young girls only smiled knowingly... although as he left, they laughed together in a little cosy group like a coven of witches who didn't understand nor cared to understand.

Finally, he turned on his low heel and made his way back to his flat. He had achieved what he had set out to achieve – he had only been read once as far as he was aware and generally the shopping trip had gone better than he had expected. He had things he could improve upon but by and large it had been a huge success. By the time he pushed the key into the blue front door of his flat, his legs felt tired and ached and the dress felt heavy on his body. He felt as if he had waded through treacle all day but he had passed in public dressed as a woman – with the exception of the assistants on the makeup counter. But there was always next week when he would once again go out dressed as a woman. He knew once he had broken his "duck" it would become a regular occurrence because it was what he wanted more than anything else in the world.

Once safety inside his flat, he had a celebration drink of single malt whisky – nice and strong and re-

freshing. He lit up another Player's cigarette. He sat for a while wallowing in the triumph of the occasion, then he took off his female clothes in his bedroom. When he was naked he wrapped the silky negligee around his body. He went to the bathroom and removed his makeup. He ran a bath and came back out to the bedroom. He looked at his small bedside travel clock. It wasn't quite two o'clock. He had been out for less than two and a half hours but it was a start. The longest walk starts with a small step and Jamie was pleased, very pleased. How he wished he could confide in someone.

He went back to the bathroom and took off his negligee and then, for the second time that day, he laid down in the soapy lukewarm bath water, closed his eyes and thought about his great achievement. He had passed in public en femme. He had passed! Was there ever a greater thrill? Was there ever anything more wonderful? He reached out a soapy arm and picked up his whisky and cigarette – they were seated on a chair by the bath taps. Then he raised the glass to his lips, Savannah had been resurrected. Savannah was back!

Chapter Three

The week at work was drab and boring. Jamie looked at pieces of paper with accident details on them which had been sent in by claimants. His job was to ensure claims were settled in a reasonable timeframe. He stamped them to say they were valid and that the company was liable for settlement or to say that the claim did not met the correct criteria and the claim should be refused. The claims were then organised into batches marked "Flood," "Motor Vehicle," "Household and Garden," "Assorted Others" and "Undecided" as well as "Refusals." All were placed in neat wooden boxes. He then passed them onto an-

other section of the claims department where more senior staff checked and verified his work and signed off on the claims, which were then sent to the finance department for settlement. The stuffy Mr. Dodds was in charge of the claims section and he had the authority to settle claims on behalf of the company, Willis and Pewter Insurance Services.

Every Friday a cheque book was brought to him and a young, attractive secretary stood by his desk as he signed cheques with a fountain pen while another member of staff recorded the number of the cheque, the payee, the reason for the settlement and the amount in a large ledger – it was almost like a military ceremony. Then the ledger was then taken away - along with the cheque book which was locked in a large metal safe - and the total value of the cheques issued was added up and recorded by the Finance Department. Then, on Monday morning, the procedure would start all over again...

Compared to Jamie's weekend fun, which consisted of dressing up as a woman – sometimes during the day and sometimes during the evening, the job was very dull but the thought of his weekend activities kept him going – as did the weekly pay packet in cash which was brought around every Friday by the stern-looking Mrs. Sharpe from Accounts.

Jamie's female impersonation skills improved and he gradually gained in confidence. He was determined to develop to such a point he could become a professional female impersonator so he could start applying for paid employment. To that end, on one of his trips out dressed, he had some photographs taken of himself. The photographer knew he was male, of course, and had no issue with Jamie's gender. In fact, he suggested certain cabaret acts that Jamie should visit to get some ideas. Jamie called in

on the clubs in male guise and saw the shows. When he had seen a few acts he started to trawl around the same clubs with his portfolio of photographs: he went backstage to show his pictures to the club managers.

"But what act do you do?" he was asked by one impresario.

"I don't know," Jamie admitted. "I just want to go on stage dressed as a woman and maybe sing a few songs."

The impresario laughed. "You look really good but you won't go far unless you have got an act of some sort."

That was the main issue. He had no act. He started to go around Soho and visit drag acts so he could find some inspiration and some subjects to rehearse. He felt his best chance was to try to impersonate well-known stars. So in his small apartment he would stand in front of the mirror and pretend to be Sophie Loren, Marilyn Monroe and Mae West. Then, whenever he could, he would go and see films which starred the famous actresses. Fortunately, living in London, there were a huge number of cinemas and often a cinema showing a film starring one of his "leading ladies" was only a bus or tube ride a way. Sometimes he would ask girls from the office out on dates and they would go to the "flicks" together as he realised it was a place for couples. They were often surprised when there were no subsequent dates but Jamie had his mind on other things; it gave him an opportunity to observe his date at close quarters. After, he would mimic how they spoke and tried to imagine what it must feel like to be them – he did not have the clothes and the wigs but he worked on the mannerisms, walk and his voice.

Finally, in late 1960, Jamie found a slot in a cabaret. He wore boas and a body stocking and a large blond wig with a feathered tiara on top. He was only in the chorus line but it was a start. The club owner helped him with his figure, giving him padding for his hips and showing him how to create a natural-looking cleavage by pushing up his male breasts. Jamie was staggered by the result. He learnt a lot from the other "girls" too – all of whom had a lot more experience than he did. For the first time in his life. Jamie was able to talk to other female impersonators but he was disappointed that none of them seemed to be transvestites and didn't like dressing for pleasure in the same way that Jamie did.

Even so, when he was at home in his flat, Jamie continued to develop his act in his spare time after work. He mimicked female celebrities, telling jokes and singing songs. He got some advertising cards made up which he handed out around Soho clubs and he used the contacts he had built up from being in the cabaret line-up. Eventually, in September 1961, he was given a slot at another club in Soho. He called himself "Sensational Savannah." It was only once a week in a jazz club. The idea was he would come on and sing songs and tell jokes. He had to work during the day but it was the big break he had been looking for and Jamie was delighted. He went to work with a permanent smile on his face and in the evenings he rehearsed and rehearsed. He managed to source a costume and a wig from a theatrical supplier and then he was finally ready to take to the stage.

Jamie's first ever female impersonation was of Marilyn Monroe. That Wednesday night he sat nervously in the dressing room wearing a corset and fish net stockings: on his head he had a lovely platinum blond wig. The owner of the club, Norman, had pulled

him into the corset so tightly it restricted his breathing.

"You need the corset as tight as possible to give you the famous Marilyn wiggle," Norman said as his strong hands pulled at the laces. Jamie had felt his waist restrict under its vice-like grip.

Jamie could not help thinking that Norman had taken an almost sadistic enjoyment in tight lacing him. He had not been quite so thorough in the dress rehearsal but now that an audience was waiting, Norman seemed to be determined to make sure Jamie's waist was as thin as possible.

Jamie looked at himself in the mirror and he saw not himself but the famous actress. He shivered – a sense of excitement tingled up his spine. He had spent hours in front of the mirror at home modelling the actress' mannerisms and looking at photographs of her in magazines. The platinum blond wig had been carefully styled and curled – he had even added a small black mole to his left cheek. He leaned forward and began to paint his lips with a brush. Then he added gloss. His lips sparkled and shone. He pouted seductively at himself. A tingle ran down his spine. He was not only impersonating a woman but the most beautiful woman in the world! He was determined to ensure the night was a success and that Sensational Savannah become famous. That was one of the reasons he had allowed Norman to tight lace him – he wanted to be damned sure he did everything right. He needed to ensure he pleased Norman and got future bookings and, as he looked in the mirror, he could not have been happier with the way he looked.

He turned away from the mirror and, still seated in the chair, he pulled on high-heeled, silver, sparkly,

sandals. He done up the strap on each shoe carefully. When he was ready, a lady dresser named Margaret placed a lovely, long purple satin dress on the floor and Jamie stepped into it, careful not to damage the lining with the heel of his high-heeled sandal. She drew the dress up his super-slim body, attached the hook and eye on the collar and edged up the zip. The dress had been made to measure and it hugged Jamie's body so tightly it allowed for little movement. The advantage of a made-to-measure dress was that padding had been added to the hips and buttocks so when Jamie saw himself in the long mirror he looked completely feminine.

As he examined himself, Margaret placed a large, chunky paste necklace around his neck and done up the clasp. She then attached long dangly earrings to his ears and sprayed on some perfume.

"Chanel," Margaret said. "I have heard that it is Marilyn's favourite."

Finally, Margaret passed him a pair of long, satin purple gloves and he pulled these up his arms, fastening the pearl button at the top. Margaret gave him a silver bracelet to go over his wrist. The gloves felt restrictive and added to the feeling that he was a vulnerable ornament – all maleness had been removed. It was how he had felt when he had been fourteen and had been made up by his mother and Nancy to greet Oscar for the first time. Jamie pirouetted in front of the mirror, rubbed his gloved hands down his smooth torso. The satin of the dress felt wonderful against his smooth skin and it was sooo tight and figure hugging. Movement was difficult. Jamie really was an ornament – a decoration.

"You look amazing," Margaret said. "You are easily the best female impersonator we have ever had here

at Jacko's in terms of how convincing you are," she continued. "Norman has always liked female impersonators and I can tell he likes you the best."

It was what Jamie had always wanted – to be the best. Maybe he could not hack it at exams or sport but he could be the world's best female impersonator. His cleavage had been pulled up to give a natural bust – it was one of the tips he had learnt from the other impersonators when he had worked on the chorus – that and the "tuck" to disguise his manhood.

For no reason at all he said, "At one time all I wanted was to be in the school cricket team... I thought it would make me popular with the other lads." He smiled and rubbed his hands along his svelte. feminine body, felt his artificially narrow waist. "But I was no good at sport."

The dresser smiled. "Well, you are certainly a very convincing female impersonator and if your act goes well tonight, I am sure you will become a regular feature. As I say, Norman likes you. He thinks you have talent and he likes to mix up the jazz shows with some variety – the punters like it too. The thing with entertainment is you have to look for new acts the whole time... new ways of doing things. When Norman heard you sing, he just knew you'd be perfect. There's not many of you men who can sing like a woman but you have really mastered the art."

Jamie felt unbelievably happy. It was what he had worked for. All those nights in front of the mirror in his small, dingy flat. Speaking, singing, reading, looking, observing, making notes and now this – he had his own show in a small jazz club in Soho. He hoped he would be able to turn professional and give up the boring day job...

"Time for the show to begin," Margaret said.

Jamie could only take tottering steps, such was the restriction of the dress. He took a deep breath and moved to the stage entrance. He stood and waited. His heart beating rapidly, but he knew there was nowhere to run (even if he could!), nowhere to hide. From beyond the curtain he could see small, round tables with candelabras on top. Cigarette smoke rose in the still air. He inhaled and breathed in the nicotine polluted air. He could just about make out darkened, blurred faces... men in dinner jackets, women in fine evening gowns. There were mutterings of anticipation; Norman had said that a new act always causes a buzz. The audience wondered what Norman was going to pull out of the hat, act wise. The jazz band sat to the back of the stage, holding their instruments ready for "Marilyn's" introduction. Norman pranced onto the stage grinning broadly. His shirt came out of his tuxedo as he walked.

"And now, new to London and appearing for the first time at Jacko's, we have Sensational Savannah!" Norman announced in his nasally tones. "With his... and yes, ladies and gentleman, I mean his... impersonation of the great American actress... Marilyn... Monroe!"

The band struck up, a big cheer went up and Jamie tottered onto the stage, remembering to smile broadly. He took the microphone from Norman and said, "Thank you, thank you very much," in a soft, sultry Marilyn voice. His heart was pounding.

Jamie could tell the audience was surprised, shocked even. As if they were one, they took a sharp intake of breath which was followed by "ohhs" and "ahhs".



Jamie heard a woman say, "No... really. That can't be a MAN!"

He smiled. He felt beads of sweat form around the top of his wig and forehead. His hands felt clammy in his long satin gloves, his heart beat rapidly.

There was light, embarrassed laughter, then applause and Jamie had not even sung a note. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Norman: big, brash, confident, watching on from the wings. The grin had not left his face. Norman had said that straight couples and mixed groups were interested in female impersonation whereas drag acts tended to attract homosexuals and from what Jamie could see of the audience they were couples and groups of young men. The band started to play and Jamie sung his first ever notes on stage dressed as a woman.

"The French are glad to die for love," Jamie almost spoke in a weak and stuttering voice. Then he took a deep breath, closed his eyes briefly and continued.

"They delight in fighting duels
But I prefer a man who lives
And gives expensive jewels."

He was really getting into his stride, tapping his foot, his voice was rising,

"A kiss on the hand
May be quite continental,
But diamonds are a girl's best friend."

When he came to the end of the song, the audience were on their feet applauding. Jamie curtseyed, then kissed his gloved hands and blew kisses at the audience.

"Thank you, thank you," he said in his breathless Marilyn voice. "You know; I am sorry to keep you waiting... I am always late.... even though I have been on a calendar."

The audience laughed and applauded. Jamie continued.

"I know this guy who works in the insurance game." His voice was husky and sultry. "He told me about this dumb blond who had an accident in the new car her husband had bought her. In answer to the question what gear were you in when the accident happened, she wrote on the form..."

Cymbals crashed.

"Twin set and pearls."

The audience laughed and applauded. Jamie felt euphoric, he sauntered up and down the stage taking small, restrictive steps in the long dress. He was enjoying himself. He had never felt so alive... so energised.

"Anyway, time for another song," Jamie said flirtatiously, winking and pouting.

There were wolf whistles and applause.

Jamie started a rendition of My Heart Belongs to Daddy.

Then he told some more jokes and had some banter with the audience. Then another song and before he knew it, his short set had come to an end.

When he got off stage, Norman embraced him excitedly and kissed him on the lips as if he were a real woman.

"God, you were good." Norman said as he wrapped his giant arms around Jamie's thin frame. "The audience loved you. If you continue like this, we'll get you on a Saturday night and that will mean more money."

And that is exactly what happened. Jamie became a regular feature at Jacko's and was eventually able to give up his insurance job. He loved being on stage and, of course, he improved and developed his act. He delighted in putting his own act together and performing and gradually he honed his performance and made it better and better. He noted the jokes and the songs that the audience liked and those they didn't respond so well to. Gradually, he was becoming a professional. It wasn't long before he was getting other bookings and he was signed by a manager, Brain Mills, who insisted he signed contracts before he did any paid work (he had never had a contract at Jacko's – Norman had just paid him cash each night plus some money from tips. That way Jamie did not have to declare it to the taxman and he had a good extra income on top of his insurance clerk job). Brian put a stop to that. Jamie's wages went up 25% and that was after Brian's 15% cut.

"You're too naïve," Brian said. "You take the first offer they throw at you because you are desperate for work. The secret is to negotiate. I bet Norman could not believe his luck when he got such a professional act at such a good price."

"Yeah, but it is hard to break into show biz," Jamie said. He was getting undressed after another show in a different club.

"It is but if you sell yourself short, word will get around that you are not that good. The more you demand... and get...the better people think you are. That's why people in show business demand high wages – it is a barometer of how good they are."

"I suppose so," Jamie said.

Hiring Brian was a great leap forward in Jamie's career. Immediately he became more proficient and found he got a large number of bookings because Brian was on the phone making calls and promoting him. He was taken out of the dreary, Soho clubs and put on bigger stages – which meant touring. Most of his costumes were made to measure and designed for the various acts he did on stage. Jamie was making real money for the first time and he felt proud. He had come a long way and he felt he had made it but he still loved to go out on the street dressed as a woman. He took a lot of notice of the fashions of the times. It was the Sixties so he changed his blond wig for a dark bob, the full skirts for pencil skirts and box jackets and he wore higher heels. That meant when he went around town he looked like a Sixties girl who was right at home in Swinging London.

By 1964, Jamie had been working full-time as a female impersonator for two years. His gay manager, Brian, was adept at getting him work and he travelled the country performing in working men's clubs, social clubs and gay clubs as a cabaret star. Quite often it was not practical to take a band on the road so Jamie managed to get some tapes mixed by a minor pop star called Eddie Armstrong who had once performed on the same bill as Jamie. The pair had become firm friends.

Marilyn Monroe was Jamie's most famous and favourite impersonation but he started to branch out

and do other performers as well. Also, he started to make his act more risqué as he noticed his audience liked lewd jokes or "adult humour." They were called "blue jokes" and Jamie noticed that the bluer the better – it seemed that being in "drag" allowed him to be ruder than he ever could be as Jamie – especially to the audience.

If he was wolf whistled he would say, "The only thing you are going to attract with that whistle, darling, is a poodle... and a fucking dead one at that."

Or if a heckler shouted out something offensive he would put them down by saying, "That shirt you are wearing reminds me of something. Now let me think.... (cymbal)... I know, the table cloth in Sid's café where I have my breakfast."

Or if a sexual remark were thrown at him he would say, "Don't insult what you can't afford . if I were a painting, I would be a Rembrandt. If you were a painting, you'd be colour-by-numbers."

The audience loved it and would howl with laugher. He noticed he often got the most laughs for putting down hecklers from which he guessed the audience derived some sadistic pleasure and assumed the put-downs were off the cuff when in fact he had used most before.

He began to mimic well known female pop stars like Cilla Black and Lulu and Cher who were young and "happening" – but he would always come back to his Marilyn act which was the audiences' favourite, especially as he added Marilyn quotes to his rendition. Some were real and some imagined but sounded like the kind of thing the great actress would have said. Jamie found that he was unusual

because he could sing in his own voice and sound like a woman.

Although he toured around the country, his favourite venues were in London. His parents knew of his career choice, of course. They weren't keen on it but when he visited, they didn't say much about it. Jamie would be dressed conventionally and, as he was quite well off, they could not complain. Jamie liked having cash and bought a red MG sports car and a flat in London. It was hard to believe that his impersonation of Savannah, which he had invented at the tender age of fourteen, had taken him so far. Then, one day Jamie was asked to do a photoshoot and interview for Female Mimic Magazine. Sensational Savannah had come of age and Jamie felt he had really made it – especially as he was on the front cover.

By 1965 things were changing socially in Britain, Beatlemania had broken out across the world and the beat groups dominated the charts. Everything was "trendy" and "groovy" and the young were taking over, man, as the older generation were all "squares" who weren't "with it" and didn't "dig" the "young scene." Jamie loved it, especially being in the "happening" hub which was London. Although Jamie really enjoyed working as Sensational Savannah, in some ways he quite liked it when things were quiet and he was between jobs or he took a well-earned break. It was tiring touring all the time and he done a few amphetamines to get him through the endless round of performances which were physically and emotionally draining.

Brian found him gig after gig which meant going from one town to the other to do a performance which would last a couple of hours. Then he would sleep in the small bus Brian had bought before going onto the

next gig. Jamie put up with it because he knew it was the only way to become well-known. Even so, he found he was pigeonholed as a "drag queen" or a "female impersonator" and the market was very niche. The days of a long-standing run at Jacko's seemed to be over. But when he was back in his London flat he could relax and unwind and forget about show business and all the stresses and strains of constant touring. At those times, he would go back to dressing and going out shopping as a woman, which he loved.

One day in 1965 was typical. It was a sunny Saturday morning and Jamie was between jobs. He awoke early in his lavish London flat, had a bath and, as he did every day, shaved all over and applied oils and creams to his skin, rubbing them in carefully. Then he walked to his large second bedroom which he used as a dressing room. He had left out clothes on the spare bed. Dressing as a woman had become so normal to him that at times he didn't even think about it as anything other than a costume in which he applied his trade. That was why he preferred it when he dressed when he was not working for then he could choose his own outfits and wear clothes he liked which were not "over the top" or too glittery.

On this particular Saturday Jamie tucked in his tackle, then pulled on a pair of silky pink panties. Then he added the ubiquitous waist clincher, followed by a pink bra and proper false breasts. Being in the trade meant he had access to the best and highest quality equipment for female impersonation – most of which was imported from America.

He looked at himself in the mirror. He was slim; with the clincher in place, it gave him a female physique. He then took a thin black and white checked polo neck jumper from the wardrobe and pulled it on over his head, turning down the collar. Next, he took

a barber's cap and wrapped it around his body. He went to the bedroom window, under which he had positioned a white dressing table. The flat overlooked the Thames and was quite modern. Jamie liked the location as he was not overlooked by houses and the light was good.

He started to work on his makeup, dabbing on powder, then adding rouge to his cheeks. He applied eyeliner with a pencil in the modern style of thick black lines, then added some light shadow. He took his time and worked like the expert he was. Finally, he added false eye lashes. He applied crimson lipstick with a brush. Just making up his face made him feel excited, especially painting his lips with the lip brush.

When he had finished, he put on a light brown, real hair wig which was bobbed and modern. He used this to gauge the makeup and insure he had powdered up to the hairline and the neckline; when he was satisfied, he re-adjusted the collar of the jumper and took the wig off. One thing Jamie had learned was the importance of the wig and make-up. He had had a number of lessons with makeup artistes to help hone his skills as he did his own makeup when he was performing – oh, how his mother had helped him when he had been fourteen!

Now doing his own makeup was perfectly natural and something he did easily. In fact, with his keen eye, he often observed that he was far better at applying makeup than a lot of women. Next, he walked to the spare bed, sat down and pulled on a pair of tan-coloured tights. He pulled them up over the satin panties so they were just below his clincher.

He looked at himself in the wardrobe mirror. His large breasts looked real under the thin jumper and

his face was perfectly made-up. Savannah was beginning to take shape. God, how he loved watching the transformation. He knew it was the eight or nine days he had spent dressed when he was fourteen which had given him this bizarre love for watching himself transform from male to female, then back again, for Jamie had plans for the evening too. Male plans.

Sometimes he wondered what his life would have been like without the "Savannah Incident" - the period of enforced dressing which he had at first rallied against and then loved. He somehow knew it would not have been so good or interesting. There were times, when he was younger, when he had been lonely but since he had gotten into show biz he had met more people and had formed a firm friendship with a musician called Eddie. The problem was so much time was spent "on the road" it was difficult to have close friends and Eddie Armstrong had joined a pop band, The Targets, who had had a minor hit in the USA and had gone on tour over there. The song, Do You Really Love Me, Baby? had hit the dizzy heights of number 29 in the American Billboard. That very morning Jamie had received a postcard from Eddie saying how wonderful life was and that he hoped that the song would be the start of "something big."

When Jamie was satisfied with his look, he went to his wardrobe and removed a black PVC miniskirt. It was risqué but Jamie liked to look up-to-date and modern and was determined to walk around Oxford Street, Regent Street and Carnaby Street which he knew to be really "happening" places. He pulled the skirt on and edged up the zip before turning the skirt around on his slim body. He then lifted the skirt and pulled the jumper down so it was under the waist-

band of the skirt and even all the way around. He looked at himself again. He looked good. Very good.

He then went back to the wardrobe and took out his latest purchase – a pair of low-heeled, white plastic boots. He sat on the bed and edged up the zip. There was no doubt about it – he looked "fab" as the teenagers said. Next he sat down at the dressing table again and pulled on the wig, carefully preening it into position. He added some rings to his fingers and attached a bulky plastic necklace around his neck and pulled on a plastic bracelet too. Then he inserted hooped earrings though his earlobes. One thing Jamie had done as soon as he had become a professional female impersonator was to have both ears pierced. That had taken some nerve as not many men had both ears pierced but he was pleased he had done it as it allowed him to have a wide choice of earrings which looked more natural. Once again, the fact that he had the excuse of female impersonation came in handy: all he had to do was to carry a card around with him which advertised "Sensational Savannah" and it became a passport for him to cross to the feminine side in terms of buying women's clothes and make-up.

When he had finished, he put on a brand new white strapped watch made by a new company called Timex. The good thing about having a large disposable income, Jamie considered, was that he could ensure that his outfits matched. He sprayed on some expensive Chanel No. 5 perfume, then went to the wardrobe to get a large, black PVC handbag which he intended to carry on his shoulder. In the bag he placed some makeup and perfume, address book, purse and the obligatory ciggies and matches.

He stood in front of the mirror. He looked good, very good indeed: he liked how he had done his eyes

with the thick black Kohl. He knew no one would think he was male. He rubbed his hand over the smooth, black skirt. Hidden away from view, his manhood lurked, waiting to escape. He loved that... that feeling of deception.

"I would like to try this dress on," he practised in front of the mirror watching how his red lips made shapes. He smiled at himself. Shivered. What was it about dressing as a woman that made him feel so, so good? In a way performing didn't give him the same fix as the audience knew he was male. although he loved the gasps when he first came on stage and the audience gawped in wide-eyed wonder,

Male? Really? Never? But she's sooo beautiful.

He much preferred it when he was so convincing he "passed in public." That was a bigger test than an audience reaction. Brian didn't understand that. He didn't understand that Jamie liked to dress and got more of a thrill dressing off stage than on. Well, in some ways that wasn't entirely true – Jamie loved performing and the audience reaction but the audience knew he was male whereas when he was out on the street everyone thought he was female.

Likewise, Brian could not grasp the fact that Jamie was not a homosexual.

"But you dress as a woman," Brian had said once. "You must like men."

"I don't," Jamie had insisted. To prove it, he still frequented the prostitutes who loitered around Soho. He even had the numbers of a few call girls he could phone. If his sexual appetite needed satisfying, they would visit his flat. After a while, Brian had had to concede that Jamie was not a homosexual.

"But you will never get a bird dressed as a woman," Brian had said one day in his matter-of-fact way.

On that score, at least, Jamie felt Brian was right. Where would he ever meet a woman who liked the fact that he dressed as a woman? Jamie had resigned himself to living alone and using the services of unquestioning prostitutes or girls who were available for one-night stands.

On that particular Saturday, Jamie closed the door of his London flat and made his way down the steps to the entrance. There was a commissionaire in the block and he waved a cheery "hello" to Jamie. Of course, a lot of the residents knew of his trade and that he dressed as a woman sometimes but, as he was in show biz, they took no notice. On the street, however, it was a different matter. No one knew Jamie was male and he wanted to keep it that way.

Fortunately, the block of flats was close to a tube station and Jamie queued up and bought a ticket for Oxford Circus. The man in the ticket booth took no notice of Jamie – expect to give him a large, flirtatious smile. Soon Jamie was standing on the tube. He was conscious of his nyloned legs and the train swaying as he held onto the spring-like handle. He felt the draft of warm air rush up his legs as the train manoeuvred along the track. It stopped and more people got on. He felt someone brush against him and pat his backside gently. Then the train was moving again. He got off at Oxford Circus and he climbed the steps to the pavement, his skirt pulling tightly over his buttocks as he walked. Men coming down looked at him admiringly and he felt excited. How great it was to be a woman and, like a peacock, attract attention.

Jamie was out on the street, strolling down the pavement in his white boots, conscious of how short his skirt was, how exposed he felt with just the thin tan-coloured tights covering his legs. He walked down Oxford Street, browsing in the shops as he went. At one point, he lit a cigarette. He loved window shopping – not to look at the clothes on the mannequins but to see his own reflection.

He strolled down Regent Street with a calm, measured and confident step. How different he now felt. He was so at ease he was in a zone where he felt he was Savannah. At last he turned onto the pedestrianised Carnaby Street with its coloured paving stones. There he found others dressed like him – lots of girls in short skirts and with big hair or short mannish haircuts (they called it the "college boy" look and the blond model Twiggy was its biggest ambassador), men in parkas, boating jackets, and brightly coloured military style coats – the butterflies were out to impress. Jamie knew they loved just hanging around, preening themselves.

He walked up and down, then started to do some shopping. He loved browsing in the shops, perhaps catching his refection in the glass; the thick black mascara, the red lips, the false eyelashes, the lovely legs barely covered by the short skirt. Oh, how wonderful Jamie felt! And when he caught the glances of men looking at him, he felt even better. He went into the fashionable "happening" Biba where Twiggy herself shopped and looked at some clothes on the rail. Then he came out and went back onto the street.

Almost at once, he noticed one young man in a long, red tunic with gold braid who smiled and winked at him! Before he could approach, Jamie popped into Lady Jane and started looking at dresses, his large bag on his shoulder. He took up

several dresses and looked at them in turn. He held them up against himself, moved his head this way and that in a girlish fashion, kicking out his boots to hold the dress up.

"Can I help you, Miss?" the female assistant asked. Like Jamie, she was dressed in the modern style with long, brown hair parted by an Alice band, a flowery minidress, sandals and thick eye makeup.

Jamie smiled.

"Yes, I would like to try these dresses on," his female voice was so good he spoke without thinking and gave a response which was naturally in the female range. (Sometimes, back in his flat, he practiced answering the phone in a female voice and, if the call was for him he would say, Oh sorry, Jamie is out, I will ask him to call you as if he were a girlfriend or secretary. He had fooled his mother and Eddie and many others – in fact, the only person who had not fallen for it was Brian, his manager.) A shiver ran down his spine, he loved being called "miss" and being spoken to as if he were a female.

The assistant showed Jamie to the changing rooms and he entered into a tiny cubicle. How he loved trying on dresses when he was dressed as a woman! It was so much easier than in the Fifties when the clothes had been cumbersome and restrictive. Jamie was aware that he could not remove his polo neck jumper so he took off his skirt and pulled the dresses on over his head. He was not keen on either but he had plenty of money and he would buy one all the same, if just to give himself a bag to carry around. He liked having something to show that he was a proper shopper. Having selected a dress, he took it off, zipped up his miniskirt, had an extended look at himself in the floor to ceiling changing room

mirror, then left the cubicle. He handed one dress back to the assistant who was lurking by the entrance.

"I will take this one," Jamie said.

"I prefer that one too," the assistant said as Jamie followed her to the till. "The colours are really vibrant and alive."

In the background music played, pumping out the latest hits by The Beatles, The Kinks, The Who, The Stones, The Small Faces. Such music was played constantly and it was hard to get away from the latest pop songs in fashionable shops. Like aliens from outer of space, the young had taken over the world.

Jamie felt so confident he started to hum along to the song that was currently playing, Help by The Beatles.

When the assistant glanced up at him, he said, "I love that George Harrison; he's real cute."

The assistant smiled. "I like Lennon the best," she said. "He's the brains of the outfit."

Jamie smiled; just two girls comparing notes. He pulled his purse from his large bag, opened it with ease and placed pound notes and shillings on the counter.

"Thank you," the assistant said.

Jamie thanked her in turn and left the store.

Mr. Red Tunic was lurking by the entrance, smoking a cigarette.

"Hi Miss," he said. "'Cuse me for asking but haven't I seen you in a magazine?"

Jamie smiled, "I very much doubt it," he said. "I don't suppose the magazines I appear in, you read." He shifted his handbag on his shoulder.

Mr. Red Tunic's eyes widened as he looked at Jamie's substantial bust. Jamie knew what he was thinking that Jamie was a glamour model. He thought that Jamie took "her" clothes off and appeared in magazines like Playboy (and certainly not Female Mimics International!).

"Yeah? Well, I do read that stuff. Thought, like, you looked familiar," Mr. Red Tunic said. "I was wondering whether you would like to come for a lunchtime drink? There's a bar around the comer which plays all the latest hits, it's really groovy."

Jamie patted Mr. Red Tunic's arm reassuringly. "You're not my type."

Then he sauntered off down Carnaby Street, swinging his hips so that Mr. Red Tunic had a nice, long view of his lovely, shapely legs. Jamie wondered if Mr. Red Tunic was erect, if he was turned on. Such thoughts pleased him. He didn't fancy guys but the thought that he was so convincing men wanted to chat him up... well, that was the ultimate in passing in public en femme.

If only he knew, Jamie thought, if only he knew. Jamie felt so happy he could not help laughing out loud, much to the bemusement of the other pedestrians.

Jamie wandered back down Regent Street to Oxford Street which was packed with shoppers. Mr. Red

Tunic was not the only man to give him the "once over" but he was the only one to chat Jamie up, although he did attract a wolf whistle as well which made him smile. There were a new bunch of women who called themselves "feminists" who hated it when a guy looked them up and down or wolf whistled or chatted them up but Jamie loved it. He could not understand the attitude of the feminists; a girl liked to dress up and look pretty. If she got looks and smiles from men, then surely it was meant as a compliment, no?

It felt so good. He was twenty-six years old and he could pass in public en femme. Easily. He was full of confidence and didn't expect anyone to read him – and no one did. He went to a department store and bought some makeup and some more clothes and lingerie. Then he did some food shopping.

Finally, Jamie took the number 19 bus back to his flat just to try a different mode of transport. He loved sitting on the rickety, red double decker bus and even went upstairs so the large coloured conductor got a good view of his derriere as he walked up the narrow stairs. It wasn't long before the conductor was at his side.

"Where to, Miss?" he asked in a broad Jamaican accent.

"Grassmere Street," Jamie said.

"1 and 6," the conductor said.

Jamie fiddled in his purse and passed over the money. The conductor gave Jamie a big, toothy smile.



"Thanking you, Miss, and I hopes you takes my bus again someday."

Jamie smiled – self-satisfied. Then he took a magazine out of his bag and started to read it. He loved doing reading women's magazines so he was up to date on fashion trends and makeup. At last the bus reached his stop and he clambered down the steps and jumped off the bus as agile as a gazelle. He ambled across the road to the block of flats where he lived. He opened the communal door, then walked up the steps and back to his flat. Pushing open the front door, he dropped his bags in the hall, wandered to his own bedroom and collapsed on his bed. It felt fantastic to have passed as a woman.

The other occupants knew he was a female impersonator and, as most of them were quite young, they considered it to be "right on" and "groovy." It was a far cry from the staid Fifties when, Jamie had read, men who dressed as women were often considered to be insane and were given electric shock treatment or, worse, locked in mental institutions!

It was not long before Jamie was feeling for his flesh under his short, black PVC skirt. He closed his eyes and relived the events that had just happenedL the bottom pat on the tube; the conversation with the sales assistant; Mr. Red Tunic; the constant looks and glances from men and, best of all, the thought that he had been wandering around London, dressed as a woman for more than three hours, with no one – and he had to keep repeating that to himself with no one, with no one...suspecting he was male. Soon his flesh was hard so he popped it out of his tights and knickers, pulled up his skirt and started to play with himself. How he loved to dress! How he loved to dress! A deep, satisfied smile creased his face as he pulled vigorously on his hard flesh.

That night Jamie had plans to join the young crowd. Some of his purchases had been male clothes as he was determined to look like a trendy man about town (Jamie often considered how easy it was a for a woman to buy men's clothing without anyone taking any notice at all). So that evening, after having cooked himself a light meal, Jamie put on a flowery shirt with a ruffle, high-waisted trousers and a velvet jacket as well as winkle picker boots. He splashed on plenty of aftershave and unbuttoned his shirt just enough to show an expensive gold chain and a glimpse of bare, hairless chest.

He looked at himself in the mirror: with his slim figure, blond hair and blue eyes he looked the part but his hair was still too short as he had only just started growing it again. He had considered long hair at various times but had always cut it as it was thought of as being effeminate. With the changing times, it had become fashionable and having long hair was now an option. He hoped that eventually he would be able to stop wearing wigs when he performed as Savannah.

When he was ready he had a couple of shots of Jack Daniels, then he left the flat and walked along the shady London streets. His trousers itched his bare, shaved legs but the silk shirt felt good against his body. He loved transferring from male to female and back again as it gave him an insight into both worlds.

He found a trendy bar, walked in and eased up onto a stool. He ordered another Jack Daniels, this time with Coke. He always drank shorts as he felt they were more sophisticated. Also, beer was too filling and he was constantly watching his figure. He sat on his stool and from his vantage point he watched the young crowd groove around the juke box. He

looked at one girl in a short, flowery minidress and another in a white and black checked PVC dress. They danced in tune to the music, their boyfriends standing close by. Jamie liked the way they rolled their hands and mirrored each other's actions.

Jamie had bought himself a record player and had started to build up a collection of records. The new one by the Stones came on – (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction. He loved that – Keith Richards had created such a powerful lick and Jagger's vocals were so mean and jarring. He wondered what it must be like to be Mick Jagger and have women falling at your feet. Not for the first time he wished he had bought a guitar and learnt a few chords. That seemed the key to an easy life with no hassles. Just make a few three-minute singles and girls would be screaming at you. Also, there was plenty of money in it. Another girl, who appeared to be single but was with the two girls and their boyfriends, came to the bar to buy a drink.

"Do you like The Stones?" Jamie said. He often did that, hone in on what was playing on the juke box and then drop it into a conversation. It sounded more innocent than a chat-up line. Also, it made him sound "hip" and "with it."

"Yeah, they're alright," the girl said. "I'm more a Motown fan myself. I think that Mick Jagger's an arrogant so and so who thinks he's God's Gift. God, he's not even good looking."

That seemed to end that conversation. The girl bought some drinks and went back to her friends. The music still blared out. He thought about Motown; specifically the girl groups . The Supremes were the most famous but then there was The Shangri Las, Martha and the Vandellas and The Ronettes. He wondered if he could impersonate Di-

ana Ross, the lead singer of The Supremes. He would have to black up but he was always looking for new elements to add to his show as his career as a female impersonator had never really taken off in the way he had hoped, certainly not like Danny La Rue and some of the other drag queens who were big stars and who had made a lot of money from it. Jamie knew he was still chasing the dream and, although he lived comfortably in his flat, he had never really hit the big time in the way he had hoped. He wanted television work like La Rue. He wanted to get his name out there. He wanted Sensational Savannah to be a big star.

He had a couple of drinks and then he slipped off the bar stool and made his way to a cellar club called The Purple Room where he had once performed to a few men and their partners one Thursday evening. That had been a year ago but the owner had seen that the market was for youngsters and pop music so he had removed the tables and chairs, renovated it and re-opened the club as a dance venue. That was the thing Jamie hated, everything was geared to the young. Female impersonators appealed to an older audience, often married couples or older men. All the teenagers seemed to want to do was groove to the latest sounds, take drugs and go on demos against the Vietnam war or some other "right-on cause" that they felt was really "worthwhile, man" like "ban the bomb" or saving the fucking whales. Jamie had no truck for such things. The world was what it was and you couldn't change it, but that didn't stop the teenagers from making up placards, shouting about this and shouting about that.

Jamie paid his money at a small booth, walked down the steps of The Purple Room and into the darkened club. A handkerchief-sized dance floor was surrounded by soft, red velvet seating and high round tables. Strip light surrounded the seating and

dance floor. The place had had a complete refurb since the year before when he had stood on the stage (now removed) in a sparkly gold dress and sung "I Want to be Loved by You" as Marilyn Monroe, then got changed into a PVC mini skirt and white boots to do a rendition of Lulu's Shout and Cilla Black's Love of the Loved. He had found it hard to imitate a Scouse accent but he liked doing jokes dressed as the Sixties singer and would do Cilla at the end of his act followed by a number of risqué jokes.

"What do you call an Italian whore? A pasta-tute."

Or saying things like, "I got chatted up by a guy the other night in a bar. I didn't like him so I asked if he liked animals.

He said, "Yeah, why?"

I said, "That's good, I've got a cock and two balls in my knickers."

The music was loud and kaleidoscopic colours twirled around the ceiling and across the dance floor. The air was heavy with pot smoke when he went to the toilet there were a few youngsters standing around taking purple hearts or uppers. He came back out and started to groove to the latest disc: "Lulu's The Locomotion". It was a lucky choice as he used the song in his act and could dance to it. He loved looking at the girls and how they swung their arms and snaked their hips in time to the music. He noticed a blond girl wearing a striped cotton minidress and black PVC boots. She wore an Alice band in her hair. He moved up to her, trying his best to do some locomotion type moves with his arms, swaying his body slightly.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Sheila," came the shouted reply.

"On your own, Sheila?" Jamie asked.

"With a friend." Sheila looked back to the seating area.

Jamie glanced in the direction of Sheila's friend. She was a brunette with long hair and slender, bare legs fringed by a super short tartan miniskirt.

The girl laughed. "You on your own?"

"Yeah," Jamie said. "I just come here to groove to the latest sounds, man. I'm not really interested in drinking and all that square stuff. I prefer to hang out with girls."

The girl looked at him. Suspiciously. "You're a good dancer."

"Thanks," Jamie said.

"A lot of men don't like to dance."

"I know what you're saying," Jamie said. "But I love it. I often go clubbing on my own."

"I've not seen you in here before," Sheila said.

"I like to get down here when I can, man, I live nearby, see. I often have to work on Saturday nights but when I get the time off I go out to a club and groove until dawn."

Sheila laughed again showing a line of uneven, stained teeth. "You must really love it."

"I do, man," Jamie said. The song came to an end. "But I could do with a rest right now. Do you fancy a drink? We could talk where it is less noisy."

Sheila agreed and he found himself taking her by the hand and leading her to the bar. It was not long before Sheila's friend had joined them and he found himself buying drinks for both girls. Sheila told Jamie that her friend, Barbara, was waiting for a guy she had met the previous week in The Purple Room and who had promised to meet her again that Saturday. The three took their drinks and went to a booth together. Barbara lit up a cigarette and offered one to Jamie, lighting it for him before she handed it over. There was a glimpse of red lipstick on the filter. Jamie winked at her.

"You not partaking?" he asked Shelia.

"I don't smoke," Sheila said.

"Not even pot?" Jamie asked.

"Especially not pot," Sheila said. "My dad says smoking cannabis is bad for you and people who smoke it are likely to end up mad."

Jamie laughed. He leant forward and placed his cigarette on the edge of the Courage ash tray. "You don't want to listen to what some old square has to say. Pot really makes you feel good, man. You should try it someday. In the future it will be shown that taking pot is good for you. It's like all this nonsense the squares talk about cigarettes. There's nothing wrong with them. Ciggies don't kill you, man."

In reality, Jamie tried to steer away from the drug culture which revolved around amphetamines or speed and dope and would later lead to psychedelic

drugs like LSD. Even so, he had scored a few amphetamines on occasion to get him through the endless touring and smoked the odd joint at the end of a show.

"What do you do then?" Sheila asked, changing the subject. "You said you work Saturdays."

Jamie took up his cigarette and took a deep draw before once again resting it on the edge of the ash tray.

"I'm a female impersonator," he said slowly and carefully, looking at the girls all the time for a reaction. "In fact, I have performed at this very club when it was the Go West."

Both girls giggled. Barbara put her hand to her mouth.

"You're a what?" she said.

"A female impersonator."

"What? Like a drag queen?"

"Yeah, like that, only better. I really look like a bird and I'm straight whereas most drag acts are gay."

"I don't believe you," Barbara said.

"What, that I'm straight? Come back to my flat and I'll prove it."

Barbara giggled, she was embarrassed. "No, that you are a female impersonator."

Jamie put his hand inside his velvet jacket and pulled out a promo card. It pictured him straddling a chair. His arms were on the back and his legs either

side. He was wearing black fishnet tights and a corset. A fur coat was draped around his shoulders. A long blonde wig brushed his back; his eyes were dark with liner, false lashes and mascara; his cheeks were stippled with rouge; his lips were coated deep crimson and glowed with gloss. He pouted sexily. His shapely legs were supported by high-heeled shoes. Both girls gasped. Amazed.

"That's not you?" they said in unison.

"Sure is," Jamie said. "If you come back to my flat, I will show you an album of photos and the clothes I wore in each and every one of them to prove it to you."

The girls were silent for a while, they passed the photograph back and forth and examined it like an epidemiologist examining an insect.

Finally, Barbara said, "I don't think I have ever slept with a female impersonator before."

Jamie laughed. "Well, now's your chance."

They left the club together.

"Fancy a nightcap at my place then?" Jamie asked.

Sheila hesitated. "Is it far?

"No, only around the corner. I'll call a taxi to take you both home in the morning – on me."

Sheila hesitated. "I'm not sure."

"Oh, Shelia, don't be such an old fuddy duddy. I'm longing to see Jamie's wardrobe of female clothes and his photos. I still don't believe he really is a female impersonator... he seems so masculine."

Meanwhile, Jamie hailed a taxi. The cab arrived and Jamie opened the door. Barbara got straight in and her friend followed. Jamie squeezed Shelia's backside as she passed by him. Hard.

"Here, enough of that," she said.

Jamie smiled. His heart was pounding with excitement. In the morning he had been out dressed as a woman and a man had patted his backside on the tube and now he was the man and he was in control. His dad had always told him that women were second class citizens and, as a man, he should be dominant – although his mother had had a lot of influence. He knew that once they got back to his flat, they would be impressed. And they were.

"You afford to buy this flat by making money impersonating women?" Barbara asked as she strolled into the front room and stared through the French window onto the twinkling London lights on the far side of the Thames.

"Sure," Jamie said. He went to his bedroom and produced an album of photographs which the girls went through slowly.

"You would never believe that you weren't female," Barbara said.

Jamie loved those compliments – from real girls no less. it showed that he was as good as he thought he was. Then Barbara wanted to see the dresses and the wigs so Jamie gave both girls a guided tour of the flat. He showed them the second bedroom where he kept his Savannah wardrobe. He showed them the gowns he had stored in the wardrobes and more photographs of himself and the wigs and the falsies. Then,

to add further proof, he took off his shirt to show his smooth chest.

"Wow," Barbara said. "We don't meet many female impersonators working in a shoe shop."

"What made you wanta do that as a job?" Sheila asked. "It seems to be a strange thing to go into."

Jamie smiled. "It's a long story."

He walked to his drinks cabinet and poured some drinks. Then he took cigarettes from his silver, engraved case and lit one for himself and one for Barbara. When he finished, he sat on the sofa bare chested, his expensive gold medallion lay across his hairless chest. He put his arm around Barbara as she was the closest to him. He whispered in her ear.

"I like you. You're a lot more with it than your friend, she's a bit square."

Barbara giggled. Then she whispered back, "Make sure you have her too, otherwise she'll think I'm a tart."

Jamie smirked. Then he started to kiss her.

Jamie was as good as his word – he ordered a taxi to take both girls back to their bedsit. By then it was Sunday afternoon and he had had sex with Sheila and Barbara. Twice. First he had had Barbara – he knew she wanted to feel wanted after being stood up as it had made her feel vulnerable and insecure: also, she was the more adventurous.

Then he had Sheila because she was jealous that he had had sex with Barbara first after she had been the one he had initially chatted up. Jamie knew ex-

actly how a woman's mind worked. He loved being the predatory male after having been out as a girl earlier in the day. It was such a turn-on. While he pumped Sheila again in the morning, he thought about Savannah walking around Carnaby Street. Just a girl about town, with no one knowing "her" secret.

"Will we see you again?" Barbara asked when the taxi arrived.

"Not unless we run into each other in The Purple Room," Jamie said. "We've had our night of passion and fun and while it was nice, there are plenty of other fish in the sea."

"Charming!" Barbara said, her eyes flashing angrily. "And I thought you were different."

They left the flat, slamming the front door. Jamie laughed and went to make himself a cup of coffee. It was the second time in a week that poor Barbara had been left "high and dry" after a one-night stand.

Jamie loved doing one night stands, taking girls back to his place or going back to some rickety bedsit for a night of passion. Deep down he knew it was because he wanted to prove to himself that he wasn't gay as he was so hung up on dressing as a woman. Even though he had gone into show biz where it was acceptable not many people, apart from his friend Eddie, understood his desire to dress when he wasn't working. Jamie knew he was an outsider and didn't "fit in" but he didn't care, he had achieved his aim of being a female impersonator and he couldn't give a damn about what people thought about him.

Still, the stage act wasn't going well. Live bands and working class stand-up comedians were taking

over, especially those from "up North." They had followed in the wake of The Beatles and the other beat groups who were taking over the entertainment business. Jamie knew his act just wasn't funny enough or original enough. Most importantly, he wasn't in touch with the "young scene" for female impersonators and drag acts were seen as "old hat". He got a second job in a book shop to help support Sensational Savannah but he knew his days as a performer were numbered. He had followed in his mother's footsteps and, like her, failed to make a career for himself in show business.

Chapter Four

A few months later, his mother called him to say that his father, Hugh, had passed away: Jamie hadn't realised he had been so ill. Jamie had not had a lot of contact with his parents – his dad was vehemently against his female impersonation act while his mother had wanted him to get a proper career. Her wish was that he would marry a nice girl, have children and lead a conventional life – but that was not what Fate had planned for Jamie's life. The suspicion was that they thought he was gay as he liked to dress in female clothes, although he assured his parents he was actually straight.

He went home a few days before the funeral and was surprised that everything was how he remembered it/ Nancy was still in post as were Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs. Jamie dumped his bags in his old room and came back down stairs for tea. Nancy was keen to see photographs from Jamie's female impersonation act so Jamie had to retrace his steps and get an album he had brought with him (he had anticipated such an eventuality and also wanted to show his mother that he was a professional performer). Nancy was shocked at the photographs. She could not believe how con-

vincing he was, particularly in pictures where he had his own blonde hair rather than a wig.

"Sometimes I'm mistaken for a girl in the street," Jamie said. "Even though I am dressed as a man. One time this guy pinched my bum and he got such a shock when I turned around."

"Well, you do look girlish," Nancy conceded. "There's no way anyone could look at these photographs and not think you were a girl. It must be so cool to go on stage and impersonate the stars."

"It is," Jamie admitted. "Still, getting work is difficult. The highest paid stuff I do now is in chorus lines and as part of troupes rather than my own act. I much prefer to do my own thing as I like to create something original on stage. Also, people pigeonhole me as a Marilyn impersonator when I can do Lulu, Cilla, Sandy Shaw and Cher. I do Marilyn first as the audiences love that, then in the second half, I do the modern stars and tell a few blue jokes. You should come and see me one day, Nancy."

"I would love to," Nancy said. "I guess it must be hard finding work," she acknowledged. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know," Jamie said.

Madeline was still as well-groomed and composed as ever: she was dressed in a black pencil skirt with matching box jacket under which she wore an ivory coloured silk blouse. Pearl beads were draped around her neck. She sat listening to the conversation and, when Nancy finished talking to Jamie, she came and sat on the sofa beside him. Apparently, Hugh had been ill for a while and his death had been expected as the diagnosis was cancer. Madeline ex-

plained to Jamie that his illness had been terrible as she had watched his decline at home, aided by a live-in nurse.

"Hugh loved his home and did not want to go to hospital. When he knew he was dying, he wanted to live out his final days here," Madeline explained as she dabbed her eyes with a delicate square of perfumed handkerchief. Jamie knew that his parents had been very close and very much in love. Although Hugh had liked to give the impression that he, as the man of the house, was in charge, the reality had been that Madeline tended to get her own way by using her feminine charms. She had persuaded Hugh that dressing Jamie as a girl when he was fourteen, was a good idea to get them out of their predicament even though Hugh had found the whole thing repugnant. In fact, right up until to his death, he had not been prepared to acknowledge that it had lead Jamie to his current choice of career in show business. Madeline, on the other hand, was more circumspect and did accept that there was a link. Jamie knew he had been a big disappointment to his dad.

The funeral was set for a week later and Jamie did all he could over the following days to help his mother. Then he left the house and came back for the funeral and the wake. The day after the funeral, Madeline said to her son, "Before you go back, Jamie, we will need to have a serious chat."

Nancy winked at Jamie. He knew his mother would have concerns about running the house now that Hugh had passed away and that he would be expected to take some responsibility. It was something he had been dreading.

The following day after breakfast, Madeline called Jamie to the front room. It was the same room Jamie

had sat in as a fourteen-year-old boy when his mother and father had told him about their plans to dress him as the mysterious Savannah. On this occasion, however, Madeline came straight to the point without any preamble.

"I have inherited the house and it will pass to you on my death but in the meantime you have a responsibility to help me maintain it. I can't be expected to keep the house up on my own and I have no intention of moving out of the family house Hugh and I have worked so hard for. Hugh loved this house and one of the last things he said to me was that he did not want the house sold." She dabbed her eye with the corner of a handkerchief and took a stuttering breath. "All we – your father and I - ever wanted was to live peacefully and comfortably in our own house. Is that too much to ask?"

"You want me to sell my flat and move back home?" Jamie said. He was only too aware of how emotionally manipulative his mother could be. She had already told him that his dad had said, on his death bed, that Jamie had been a "huge disappointment."

"Yes," Madeline said. "Or find another way to support us all."

"But what would I do for a job?" Jamie asked. He knew that his father had earned a good wage as a stock broker in the city of London. To support his mother and servants would be very costly. Even though the mortgage had been paid off which meant there was nothing owing on the house and his mother had some life insurance and savings, it would not be enough to cover the day-to-day costs of the house and supporting his mother and staff.

"Can't you work in the City like your father did?" Madeline insisted.

Jamie wasn't so sure. There was no way he would give up the dressing and he told his mother that he did not want to give up his job as a female impersonator which he loved.

That night he didn't sleep. He lay awake and fretted. While he knew he had a responsibility to support his mother, he did not want to give up his female impersonation act. It was difficult for him to put a strong case for continuing his act because after the first flush of success, his career had stagnated with the same round of bookings and some chorus line work coming up, but nothing new. In fact, in some ways, Jamie considered, he had been better off working at Jacko's for Norman. At least then he had been building up his reputation and had begun to get regular customers coming back for his night. Even so, he was still earning reasonable money and he knew he was actually quite well-off compared to office or factory workers.

He had no mortgage on his flat and he had a good lifestyle but there were a lot of overhead involved in ensuring that Sensational Savannah was dressed in the best made-to-measure costumes. On top of that, his manager took a 15% cut of his performance fee (Jamie always had a suspicion that Brian was not paying him what he was owed and taking extra, claiming it was for "expenses"). Plus, the Labour Government, under the Premiership of Harold Wilson, had just introduced a massive Income Tax hike for high earners. It all meant Jamie was not as financially well-off as he wanted to be.

By the same token, he knew his mother was not keen on his profession and he had to admit that he



had no spare money. The following day, he left the house and returned to the flat he had bought when times had been better. He discussed the matter with his manager, Brian. After a few sleepless nights, he told Brian that he was thinking of giving up.

"Well, it's up to you," Brian said. "You have to admit that things are not going great at the minute."

Jamie shrugged. It was true. He was unsure what to do for the best. He decided to test his mum out. One day he phoned her and said he was coming down the next day. Then he dressed in a short, black and white dogtooth check minidress with a matching box jacket. He wore white, plastic boots, white gloves and white pearl beads around his neck. With his own long, blond hair stylish coiffured at a ladies' salon and hooped gold ear rings he looked every inch the young woman about town. He was now 28 years old. He drove to his mother's house in the small Mini Cooper he had bought as he had had to sell his red open top MG sports car. He parked on the gravel drive.

"Jamie, is that you?" his mother gasped when she opened the front door.

Jamie smiled. "Yes, it is, Mum. This is how I like to dress. Ever since that incident with Savannah, I have preferred women's clothes. The female impersonation isn't just a job, it is something I really enjoy doing as well. I am fortunate I can make money out of it as I can sing and speak like a woman."

Jamie could tell his mum was deeply shocked. Even so, she did not forget her manners and invited Jamie into the front room. She asked Nancy to make some tea. The maid smiled at Jamie knowingly as she walked off to the kitchen. Jamie watched her turn and take little glances at him, unable to believe that

he wasn't a woman. He knew she was fascinated by him and how he could transform from male to female.

Jamie sat on the sofa just as he had done fourteen years earlier when his dad had told him he would be expected to dress as a girl as his mother was in "something of a pickle" (he would always remember those understated words) and how, when the full horror of what awaited him had been explained, he had run to his bedroom in floods of tears. At that time it would have been hard for Jamie to imagine a worse Fate than being dressed as a girl. While at school he had been summoned to the Head's office and caned, nothing could replicate the feeling of cold fear, dread, and total despair that he had experienced that day. Now he dressed as a girl out of choice. Nancy bought the tea and sandwiches. Jamie picked up a cheese sandwich and ate ravenously as his mother poured the tea.

"Mum, I came down today to visit you dressed like this because I wanted you to see who I really am so you realise it is something I will never give up. I like it too much. OK, I am happy to move down here and get a job in the City and take the train to work but under my suit I will wear women's lingerie. When I get home, I will bathe in soft soaps and put on a negligee and then I will put on a day dress or an evening dress. You need to know they are my terms and conditions. I am not saying I will do that every night but it will happen and maybe some weekends I will go out to discotheques as a guy and maybe sometimes as a girl. I like to experience both sides; don't you see? That is who I am and that is what I do."

Madeline's eyes were wet and she was having difficulty holding back the tears. She seemed to be more emotionally effected by seeing Jamie as "Savannah"

than she had been by Hugh's death although, Jamie suspected, she had had longer to get used to that and had prepared herself for the inevitable.

"Oh Jamie, Jamie, how can you do this to me, your poor mother? Have you no pity? No shame?" Madeline finally sobbed. "All I have ever wanted was a normal son who goes to work and starts a family and has children..."

And she cried and cried just as Jamie had sobbed all those years earlier.

"You know I can't agree to your ridiculous, ridiculous demands," she said at last. "Why can't you just be normal like everybody else?"

"I am sorry then, mother," Jamie said. He left his sandwich and tea, got up and walked out of the house. He got to his Mini, opened the car door and sat in the driver's seat. Thinking. Not about his mother whom he felt ambivalent towards but about how he looked. He liked the fact he had grown his hair as it looked a lot more natural and he ran his hand through it and felt its softness. He also admired his legs as the minidress rose up to reveal his long, slender limbs. The fact that his mother was so upset did not affect him at all. In fact, he felt quite numb towards her. He had hoped she would understand that she had made him into a transvestite by her desire to dress him when he was fourteen when, against his will, she had wanted to train him to be Savannah. Although she had some consciousness that his female impersonation and the "Savannah incident" were connected, she could not quite grasp that he was a transvestite who liked to dress in women's clothes. Earning money from it was one thing but to enjoy it for its own sake? Well, that was something completely different. Jamie had made that point to his

mum but she seemed oblivious to it. Still, it was clear that living back at home was not going to be an option. In some ways Jamie had liked the idea of returning to the family home, working during the week and then dressing. He knew Nancy would support him and he knew his mother's wardrobe presented an Aladdin's Cave of clothes – but it wasn't to be.

So Jamie returned to his London flat. He had a plan – he was going to start working full-time to ensure he paid his way. He called up Brian and told him he was ditching the role of Savannah. Then he bought a typewriter and started to practice typing. He also went to college and learned to do shorthand and took some typing exams. When he was ready – some six months later – he was living full-time as a woman and applying for secretarial jobs using the name Savannah Queensbury.

Chapter Five

It was 1968 and Jamie was twenty-nine years old. His hair was long and blonde, his nails were long and well-manicured, his face was smooth and moisturised, his legs, arms and chest were shaven. He was, in every respect a young woman and he lived as a woman most of the time but he needed a job as he had been living on his savings. He sent out his resume and letters to companies as Savannah and he went to interviews but he was nervous and it was difficult to account for his former life. He tried two tracks. Firstly, he tried to pretend he was a real girl and then, when that proved unsuccessful, he said he was transgendered and was transitioning to become a female. It wasn't true, of course, because Jamie rather liked being male and pulling "birds" as he called them.

He actually found his long, blonde hair helped in that department as a lot of girls seemed to like long hair on a guy. In fact, he had teamed up with a little known pop star by the name of Eddie Armstrong who crooned around clubs doing copies of early Sixties pop songs. They had met when Jamie had been preforming as Savannah at a club and Eddie had been on the same bill. After the show, Eddie had knocked on Savannah's dressing room door.

"You were really good. I must say, if I didn't know different, I would think you were a real bird."

Jamie laughed. It was a compliment he received all the time. Sometimes he wondered if he was male or female himself – such was the ease with which he moved from one gender to the other.

Eddie had wandered into the dressing room and Jamie had given him a beer. The artists often mixed with each other before and after performances and it wasn't not unusual for them sit together in their dressing rooms, discussing their acts. They got talking and after a while , Eddie said.

"I guess you get a lot of guys after you just like I get a lot of birds."

Again Jamie had laughed. "Yes I do but I'm not a homosexual." Then Jamie remembered the new term, "gay" which he added hastily.

Eddie raised his eyebrows. "God, you could blow me down with a feather. You mean you like birds too?"

Jamie said he did. That night, when Jamie had changed back into the male, they went out for a drink. A couple of nights later, Jamie and Eddie went

to a music venue and "pulled a couple of birds." They had gone back to the girls' bedsit and they had both had sex with each of them.

After that, Eddie and Jamie formed a firm friendship. Eddie was the first real friend Jamie had ever had. Eddie was quite liberal minded and liked Jamie's dressing and the fact he could transform himself into a man about town who was popular with women. The two formed a strong bond. Although Eddie was working class, like Jamie, Eddie had been a big disappointment to his parents because he had chosen to be a rock star rather than a Docker or some other manly job which had earned good, steady money.

"Of course, I never made it," Eddie said one day over a pint in the London Porter public house. "I've tried groups and going solo but I've made fuck-all money out of it. Now look at me, thirty-one and hacking around clubs trying to earn a few bob doing covers of well-known songs. I got fuck-all in royalties for the only song we ever did have a hit with when I was in The Targets. Do You Really Love Me, Baby? reached Number 29 in the American Billboard but because I didn't write it, I earned virtually nothing from it."

"It's the same for me," Jamie admitted. "I've never made it as a female impersonator. That's why I'm going to settle down and become a typist."

Eddie laughed. "And you'll make a damned good one. You've got lovely legs, a great body and look sexy in a short skirt."

Jamie laughed too. He loved being able to be open about Savannah with Eddie, it felt great to have someone to whom he could confide.

The two met up regularly and one day Jamie told him about his difficulties getting a job.

"I may be able to help in that department," Eddie said. It transpired he had a few contacts around Denmark Street and he managed to get Jamie an interview with a publishing firm.

"I've told Mr. Bernstein all about you," he said. "He'll interview you, really to see if you are as good as I say you are but then you've got the job. Mr. Bernstein is an old Jewish chap but I told him you are straight and he won't make a pass at you. In fact, like me, he is rather fascinated by the idea that you can move effortlessly from one gender to another."

Jamie wore a minidress for the interview and an Alice band in his blonde hair as well as his favourite white boots with the Winkle picker toes and stiletto heel. Mr. Bernstein raised his eyebrows when Jamie walked in. There was a girl sitting outside by her typewriter who looked at Jamie enviously as he came into the office complex. Jamie was far slimmer and more fashionable than she was.

During the interview, Jamie crossed and uncrossed his legs nervously. The skirt felt much too short and he regretted wearing it – but he was sure the same did not apply to Mr. Bernstein who did not seem to be able to take his eyes off his nice long legs. Jamie wondered if Mr. Bernstein would, in fact, make a pass at him.

"Eddie has told me all about you," Mr. Bernstein said and winked. "And I could not give a fuck about you being a guy. In fact I think it is rather cool and you will fit in with the in crowd. Of course, the girls outside don't know and we should keep it that way. All you will have to do is take a bit of shorthand, type

the odd letter and answer phone calls. Look pretty and the job's yours. Do you think you could do that?"

Jamie said he thought he could and was offered the job on the spot. He was told to start Monday.

"Thanks, Eddie," Jamie said when, later that night, they were stood in a club. He was back "in the male" of course. "It's great that you got me a job and the fact the boss knows my situation takes the pressure off me."

"Mr. Bernstein is a nice chap. He likes to look after people. When I told him your situation, he immediately felt sorry for you."

"Thanks," Jamie said, although he didn't want people to feel sorry for him.

"No, I don't mean it like that," Eddie added hastily. "What I mean is he is an older chap and he likes to befriend people and look after them. He was a refugee from the Germans in the war. He won't make a pass at you or anything but I suspect he will ask you to take some of his more confidential calls and type some of the private letters as he knows he can trust you. I didn't like to say anything, but Mr. Bernstein likes to sail close to the wind at times, from a legal point of view, and has one or two irons in the fire."

Jamie started that Monday; he was to be known as Savannah. There were three others girls in the office and Savannah's first duties were to make the tea and do some filing. The work was a bit boring but Jamie loved it. It was fantastic to be dressed as a girl all the time, then come home from work and lay in a hot bath tub and relax. He really was in his element. Mr. Bernstein saw a number of agents, song producers and writers during the course of the day and it was

Jamie/Savannah's job to look after them. On occasions he even got to meet rock stars who would walk in off the street; they were often very demanding and would think all the women were at their beck and call. One would even sit in a chair, put his cowboy boots on the desk, and say, "Make me a cuppa, darling," in a strong Birmingham accent. He did not seem to understand that the office was a working environment and he thought all the women were at his service.

Having not looked at the writing credits of songs when he had bought singles and long playing records, Jamie was surprised to learn how many pop songs were actually written by professional writers and not by the artists themselves. Mr. Bernstein's business was to publish the songs, often from professional writers, and sell them onto the groups and singers. He worked with a number of groups and their managers. His agency would marry pop songs up with groups, then promote the songs by using contacts in the music industry. Although he did not directly manage the groups, he worked closely with them and the groups and singers knew he had a "Midas Touch."

"That's how it is, Savannah," Mr. Bernstein said one day. "The singers get the credit but despite Lennon and McCartney, Jagger and Richards and Pete Townshend of The Who and Ray Davies of The Kinks, most pop songs are still written commercially. What we do is publish songs by professional writers so we have the copyright and then offer the songs to groups, duets or soloists."

Of course, Jamie found his bum was patted and pinched regularly by the visitors to the office, which amused Mr. Bernstein. One day he said to Jamie, when he was alone in his office.

"I can't understand how you can downgrade yourself to being a bird. All that harassment women get. I don't do it myself but a lot of guys think women are only there for one thing."

"What? Making tea?"

Mr. Bernstein laughed. "You know what I mean, Savvy."

"I do," Jamie said. "But I like it. I like being Savannah or Savvy as you call me."

Mr. Bernstein smiled. "It's a pity the female impersonation didn't work out, Savvy, but it's been to my benefit. You're as quiet as a cove and very trustworthy and you are intelligent... very intelligent."

Eddie was right, Mr. Bernstein was a dream boss to work for and he never made a pass at Jamie. In fact, as Eddie had said, he asked Jamie to take private calls and type confidential letters which he did not want the other girls to see. Some involved pop groups which were in the national eye and Mr. Bernstein wanted to ensure details of contracts and publishing deals stayed confidential. Also, Jamie got to realise that Mr. Bernstein regularly paid radio disc jockeys to play the latest songs from pop stars when he had published their music which was illegal but was "industry wide" according to Mr. Bernstein.

Jamie was frequently taken out to lunch by Mr. Bernstein when he was meeting "clients" such as disc jockeys or promoters – which made the other girls in the office jealous. At such times Jamie would carry a wad of notes in an envelope in his handbag which he would pass discreetly onto the client. The fact that Jamie was a guy and had a "secret" meant Mr. Bernstein could trust him implicitly. It also

meant Jamie often got some extra money, given to him by Mr. Bernstein, which the other girls did not know about. In fact, Mr. Bernstein relied on Jamie so much that at times Jamie would go for lunch alone with some disc jockey or other if Mr. Bernstein was busy and make the illegal payment.

"You are good at this, Savvy," Mr. Bernstein said one day as they returned from lunch in his chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce.

"Thank you," Jamie said. "I do my best."

Mr. Bernstein lit a cigar. "No, you really are very good. You really make transferring the money seem effortless and I know I can trust you. With the other girls, yes, I can trust them up to a point but they are not as clever as you and who knows? They get pregnant, they go off on maternity leave, they blab to their boyfriends or their husbands or their friends and then the Old Bill are breathing down my neck. With you, well, I know what ever happens you will keep stum."

Jamie agreed he would always keep quiet and thought back to the "Savannah adventure" which he had never really told anyone about – except Eddie.

"The thing with you, Savvy," Mr. Bernstein continued, "is that I don't have to explain things to you. You just get on with the job. It is like how you pick up on how to be a bird. It is natural. A gift. You watch, you observe, you mimic. I've said it before and I'll say it again – you are wasted as a secretary."

"Thanks," Jamie said. He knew his mother had been wrong to take the money from Oscar for all those years. Yet she had justified herself to both Jamie and Hugh and had gotten them to take part in

a criminal activity in which they had set out to deceive poor Oscar. Perhaps Jamie's desire to help Mr. Bernstein stemmed from having a slightly skewed view of right and wrong.

Even so, Jamie loved the job and liked being in the heart of "happening" London. By then there were a lot of tabs of LSD being ingested and pot being smoked in the clubs and pubs but Jamie and Eddie steered clear of all that. Neither of them were keen on the Sixties drug culture. Their interest was just "pulling birds" and having a good time. Jamie would return to work on Monday after a weekend of fun with Eddie and listen to stories from the girls and then describe the one-night stand he had had as Jamie as if he had been the girl. The other girls thought he was a bit "loose" and a "tart" but he did not care. It was the Swinging Sixties, after all, and people were liberated. Eddie and Jamie's friendship grew and on occasions Eddie would even take Jamie out as Savannah which reminded Jamie of the time Oscar had taken him as a fourteen-year-old. It was great. Life could not have been much better.

Chapter Six

Then one day he got a letter from his mother, Madeline. She wanted to see him urgently. Jamie took a day off work and, knowing how upset she had been before when he dressed as Savannah, he travelled down to see her dressed as himself.

Jamie was shown into the front room of the familiar family home. He noticed things were a little more worn than before. He also noticed that there was no Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs to greet him. Even so, his mother looked as stylish and sophisticated: she was wearing a black and white checked Chanel outfit. His mother

sat down beside him on the sofa. She came straight to the point.

"Look, Jamie," she said. "I know I was unkind to you when your father died but we really have fallen on hard times. The little money I had, the saving, the money Oscar gave me and the money from the necklace he gave you, have all but been spent and I need your help. Desperately."

She went on to explain that she had had to release Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs who, fortunately, were able to retire to the coast. Madeline said she was anxious for him to come home and support the household so she did not have to move from the family home which she adored.

"It would break my heart to leave," she said.

Jamie closed his eyes. He knew his mother did not want to move from the house but he realised that was what she would have to do it if she had no income. He also knew she did not want to give up the fine clothes and luxury lifestyle. Jamie understood that his mother liked the best of everything. Still, he loved his mother and he could tell she was in really dire straits.

"OK, Mother," he said. "I will help, however, you have to allow me to dress as a girl. At present I have a job as a secretary in London and I will continue to commute up to town each day dressed as a girl. That is how I earn my money."

Madeline was shocked.

"But you can't... I mean it is not possible! Doesn't anyone know?"

"Mr. Bernstein, my boss, knows but no one else and he's fine about it."

"How much do you earn as a secretary?" His mother asked. Jamie knew that she was reflecting that he had had a good, expensive education but ended up as a secretary. When he told her exactly how much he earned, she was even more shocked and upset.

"But I thought you were a female impersonator?" Madeline said. "At least that seemed to pay well."

"It did," Jamie said. He went onto explain that the work had dried up and he had never really made it. "Brian, my manager," he continued, "kept getting me gigs in working men's clubs and social clubs and they didn't really pay enough. I did a lot of chorus work and bits and pieces but I never really made it."

A wry smile spread across his mother's face – she knew how hard it was to make it in show business. "Come back home, Jamie. Give up that low-paid job as a secretary and we will start again. As you know, I love the theatre and I will manage you. We will make Sensational Savannah really sensational!"

"Really, Mother?" Jamie said. He was shocked by his mother's reaction. "Do you mean it?"

Madeline took her son's hand and patted it gently. "Yes I do. I'm not quite fifty. There's still life in me and I think, together, we deserve another crack at show business. I never quite made it, you have never quite made it but if we join forces, well, who knows what could happen?"

As Jamie headed home, he felt a sense of excitement. Not only was his mother on board with the

dressing, she was going to help him relaunch his career. It was what he had always wanted. He had realised that one of the reasons he was not successful as because he had not been able to afford the best outfits and equipment when on stage and that his manger had often taken the easy gigs (which meant a lot of work for Jamie and a huge amount of traveling) rather than try to get better paid gigs and a long-term engagement in some club or other.

Within a month Jamie was back home, living with his mother. Of course, Nancy, who Madeline still hired as a servant and general help, was on his side as well and so his mother and Nancy started to polish his act. He was thirty years of age and he started to train and rehearse like never before. He was determined to give it one more chance before he gave up for good. He had more voice coaching and singing classes as well as deportment classes – his mother using the last of her money to fund her son's career. When he was ready, she managed to get him a few local shows which did not pay well but were good practice. And then she re-launched him on the London stage. Sensational Savannah was back.

In a short while he had built up a reputation and a small following. Jamie loved going to the dressing room each night before a show. Nancy would help dress him. First, she would tighten him into a corset. Then she would hand him his undergarments, after which he would select the dress he was going to wear. He started to build up a repertoire. The first part of his act was film stars and he would do Mae West and Marilyn Monroe, then he would mimic singers like Lulu, Cilla Black, Sandy Shaw and Cher. He even added Eddie to his act and the two of them performed duets together. Jamie had an unusual talent for speaking and singing like a woman and it came very naturally to him.

It wasn't long before he was given a regular sport at the Flamingo Club in central London where he performed three nights a week. The money was rolling in and his mother had a new lease of life managing him. She really enjoyed it.

"Well, I have always been good with money," she said to Jamie one day. "It makes sense that I should manage your affairs. At least that way everything we earn is kept in the family."

Jamie was only too happy with the arrangement. His mother, it transpired, was a fine financial judge as well as highly successful at getting him really good gigs. Jamie soon found he was earning more money than he had when Brian had been his manager. Madeline was a tough negotiator and really looked after his interests well. He started to get all his costumes handmade by a proper seamstress (before it had only been the Marilyn costumes and a select few others) and he became a minor celebrity.

Then Las Vegas beckoned. Madeline was contacted by an American impresario who had seen Jamie's show in London and wondered if Jamie would like to come over to the States. It was what Jamie had always wanted – a regular spot in a Vegas club. He travelled to America with his cases loaded with boas and dresses and shoes and makeup.

He and Eddie had tried out different routines and finally settled on one which depicted an old Wild West saloon. Eddie would be dressed as a cowboy standing at the bar drinking and talking to the barman when Jamie would make his appearance. He would be dressed in a tight-fitting, red sparkly dress with a large boa on his head. He would start at the top of the stairs and slowly make his way down as he sung. Meanwhile, Eddie would join the duet as he

made his way down. They would link arms for the last few lines and walk to the front of the stage. It was a way of introducing Jamie to the world and it always got great applause. Jamie found that the sets were lavish and more expensive and he was able to ask for things to be done to improve his act. Sensational Savannah had arrived in America.

Jamie loved Vegas. He had a passion for gambling and both he and Eddie would play roulette on their nights off or blackjack. They had private rooms in the hotel complex in which they performed and would regularly bring girls back for one night stands. Jamie was amazed at how many girls actually like him dressed. Jamie knew his mother was secretly pleased that Jamie, despite his dressing, was not gay. Even so, Jamie still liked to go out dressed at times.

It was the early Seventies by then and short skirts and boots or high-heeled wedge shoes were in vogue as well as long maxi-dresses or culottes. Jamie would often walk around the gaming floor so dressed and play cards or roulette or the slots. It was amazing how may men would pass him chips if he was on a long losing streak or they would ask him out on a date. Jamie loved it. There was so much more fun to be had when he was dressed. At other time he would see concerts or boxing matches in other hotels. He saw Elvis and Sinatra concerts as well as a host of others. He also saw world heavyweight boxing matches at Caesar's Palace including the likes of Muhammed Ali and "Smoking Joe" Fraser. He and Eddie formed a very close friendship and were inseparable on stage and off.

He also toured a bit and did a few stints at the Finocchio's Club in San Francisco where he met the incredible Paul Cummings who had a stage act called Laverne Cummings (Jamie considered Paul

Cummings to be the best impersonator he had ever seen). He also did a stint at the Club My-O-My in New Orleans and he met other female impersonators. In addition, he got to meet a lot of famous personalities and sat on the laps of one or two famous Hollywood film stars. He even did a duet with Frankie Valli. They sang Walk like a Man together on stage one night in Vegas.

His mother loved it all. Managing her son had given her a new lease of life and she enjoyed meeting well-known people and famous stars. As an aspiring actress she had always wanted to live and work in Hollywood with Jamie becoming a well-known female impersonator, her dream had become a reality. She got to lead the lifestyle she had always wanted. In fact, she met and married an American lawyer named Dominic Holland who worked on some of Jamie's contracts. The couple spent their time between the USA and Britain, having houses in both countries. Mrs. Queensbury became Mrs. Holland.

Eventually after ten wonderful years in the USA, the Sensational Savannah act came to an end and Jamie's contract with the Vegas Hotel on The Strip was not renewed. The hotel wanted a new act. Jamie came back to Britain, which was in the midst of a recession. Even so, he managed to find the odd gig and did some TV work including an advert for a drinks company and some bit parts in comedy shows. By then he had married a cocktail waitress named Stacy who had also worked in Vegas and who had seen Sensational Savannah one night when it was her night off. She had gone to see him with a group of girls and had been "blown away" by his performance. Afterwards she had sought him out backstage and asked Jamie on a date. Eddie was his best man at the Vegas wedding chapel where the ceremony had been conducted by an Elvis impersonator. By the time

Jamie had completed his stint in Vegas he had enough money to buy a large house back in the UK for cash. His mother had enough money to keep her house so she was very content. Nancy had married by then and her husband also worked for Jamie's mother and step-father as a driver and gardener.

So, one July day in 1983, Jamie was sitting by the swimming pool of his large Surrey home talking to Eddie. Stacy was lying on a sun lounger wearing a dark blue bikini, large sunglasses shielding her eyes. Jamie could not help but admire her pert backside and her long, auburn hair. It was a lovely hot summer's day. The plants were in bloom, the bees were buzzing and he felt fresh and alive. It took Jamie back to the day in 1953, some thirty years earlier when he had come back from school for the summer holiday in the hope that he would get some cricket practice which would give him an opportunity to join the school team the following academic year and perhaps gain some friends and increase his popularity. That had not happened, of course, and Jamie had remained a lonely, friendless child. He smiled contently, though. Life had actually turned out rather well – far better than he could ever have imagined. He knew his mother, as his manager, had invested some money for him and he was very well off. Also, he would inherit her house when she passed away or if she decided to relocate to the States as her new husband was also very well-off. Jamie thought for a few minutes, then he turned to Eddie. They were both seated on sun loungers drinking beer, watching the world go by. Eddie was wearing shorts which exposed his long, bare, tanned legs and a flowered shirt which was unbuttoned, exposing a hairless chest and an expensive gold chain. A cigarette rested on the edge of an ash tray. Jamie fanned a hand through his long, blonde hair.

"Do you know what I would have been if my mother had not wanted to transform me into her daughter, Savannah for the day Savannah's father, Oscar, was visiting?"

Eddie shook his head. He was very familiar with the story and found it unbelievable that such a deception had taken place and that Oscar had been so deceived, although he was not surprised that it had led to Jamie wanting to impersonate females for a living. While in the States, Jamie had undergone a long period of therapy with a psychiatrist. The therapist had told him that it was quite alright to be a transvestite and that his desire to dress as a woman had undoubtedly come from the period when he was fourteen and had been dressed by his mother, with his father's approval, to save her from personal ruin.

"That must have created a great personal conflict for you, Jamie," the therapist said in a rich South African accent. "You must have had to juggle many many emotions and feelings. In a way, every time you dress as a woman, you are replaying those anxieties in your mind and wondering if, what you did, when you were fourteen, was indeed right."

Jamie had never thought of it like that.

The therapist assured him that he did not need to constantly bed women to prove he was a man. Consequently, Jamie had been faithful to Stacy throughout their marriage and was a lot happier and more content. He had also given up smoking as the therapist assured him that was something else he did to prove he was a man.

"What would you have been?" Eddie asked, although he thought he knew the answer. He picked

his cigarette up off the china ash tray and took a long, slow draw on it

"A fucking lawyer," Jamie said.

They both raised their glasses of beer and laughed.

"Can you believe it? Me, a fucking lawyer!" Jamie laughed.

And even Stacy looked up from the sunlounger and smiled.

"I'm sure glad you didn't," she said. "It was a lucky day for us all that your mother dressed you up as pretty little Savannah."

"I'll drink to that," Jamie said and raised his glass again. "Cheers," he said to Eddie. "Life never quite turns out as you plan it, does it?"

"No," Eddie said. He placed his cigarette back on the ashtray. As he did so, he looked down at his own smooth, shaven legs and painted toe nails. He was so pleased his best friend was a transvestite too. "It certainly does not."

THE END