

Stepmother's New Daughter



Susan Hulbert

An "Adult TV" Novel

Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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

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



Copyright © 2021

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

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

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

Call toll free (800) 359-2116

reluctantpress.com & magsinc.com

New Authors Wanted!

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

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

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

Contact

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

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW

Our monthly newsletter can keep you in the know. It's free, and you can cancel at any time! We'd love to see you there... Just send your name and address to Reluctant Press, P.O. Box 5829, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 or call 800-359-2116 and leave a message to be included our free newsletter.

Stepmother's New Daughter

By Susan Hulbert

When I think back, it seems like the first twenty-odd years of my life were in black and white. Now I'm living in full Technicolor; it's so much more fun being a girl.

I love being a girl; I love being blonde and wearing perfume. I love that I can change both next week if I want.

I love the makeup and the jewellery. I love it that I can wear jeans or a dress, heels or flats with either.

I love my false eyelashes and my long painted nails.

I love long scented baths with candles, and being pampered in the atmosphere of the beauty parlour.

Guys watch me as I pass through a shop or a bar, a restaurant, or simply along the street or the beach. They watch me in the gym too.

I'm slim and usually blonde, with hair down to my shoulder blades; it took a couple of years for it to grow that long but it was never short, even in the "Before Times."

They watch my bum as I walk past, I know, I see them! It's pert and tight, not a "big booty."

They look at my breasts and down my top. They're nice breasts too, maybe a fraction too large for my frame, but I'm not out of proportion.

I like the way guys come on to me, trying to impress. I love to be impressed but they should know that I'm not going to fall for it.

I can flirt and get away with it... unless I don't want to, and you can guess what that means.

I love my little Mazda two-seater; driving with the hood down beside the ocean with the sun and the scents of Provence in the air.

I think I enjoy being a girl far more than girls who never knew anything other than being a girl.

And it was all down to my stepmother and a bunch of coincidences, accidents, wrong choices, and right ones too.

All those things are what I'm going to tell you about.

I quite liked Gillian when my father introduced me to her. I think I was about ten years old when I first understood that she was to be my stepmother. She smelled so nice and treated me like a real person. I wasn't used to that much attention.

I never knew my mother. Since she left me with Dad not long after I was born, I'd been all over the place with child minders and after-school care. I didn't know how to behave in a proper family before.

Gillian had two daughters, Carrie and Shona. They were nice too but they were much older. By the

time I was into my teens, Carrie was away at University and Shona was a senior on her way to college. They let me into their lives and I guess that was when I was first dressed up as a girl for Halloween.

I did as I was told in those days, grateful to be included in their lives. It wasn't difficult; they were as nice to me as if we were really related. They treated me as if I was a dress-up doll sometimes.

Shona and Carrie even pierced my ears. I didn't expect it and couldn't see what they were doing.

"Keep still," Shona said. "We need to measure from ear to ear, so that we get the right size when we collect your wig from the costume shop."

I sat still. One of them was on my left, the other on my right.

"Are you ready?" Shona asked Carrie as each had a hand on one of my ears.

The next thing I knew, the piercing gun clicked and I felt a pain at both sides. It wasn't a bad pain and I held still as they were still at either side of me.

"That's going to complete your look." Shona stood back with a grin on her face. "You can see in the mirror."

I stood and went to look. Of course I was shocked, even though by that time I had an idea of what they were doing. I had a gold stud in each ear.

Carrie had slipped out of the room and returned with Gillian. She almost pulled her across to look at me.

"That's really good." Gillian looked at me. "You're going to be really with the cool guys at school."

"Oh no!" I said. "I can't go to school like this."

"You're in the minority going to school without earrings," Shona said. "Don't you notice these things? Some of the boys have more than one."

"I guess..." I replied, thinking of things I had noticed but hadn't registered.

No one said a word when I went to school afterwards. Maybe that's because they never really noticed me anyway.

"You're not going to school today," Shona told me when Halloween came round. "It's going to take a few hours to get you ready."

"Surely all I have to do is put the wig on?" I asked. "That's all we've done before."

"This time, it's not going to be like that at all." She laughed at the thought. "When we're finished, you are going to disappear. There'll be nothing left to make anyone think that you're a boy."

It took all day. I was like Gwen Stefani when they finished getting me ready. I had a bombed-out bleached blonde wig with generous waves which tumbled over my shoulders. It took them ages to get the wig right.

My hair was wrapped under a wig cap, bound with tape. They glued the wig's lace hairline to my forehead so that it looked for all the world like it was my own hair growing there.

"That's wrong," I said with a smile. "There should be a tiny fraction of black root showing."

"Pretend that Gwen was at the salon this morning," Shona quipped back.

"Now you sit very still and I'll do your eyes."

I felt the touch of the brushes. I looked up and looked down when I was told. The weight of the mascara surprised me. The false eyelashes, like two hairy caterpillars looked far too big to fit on my eyelids, but soon they were glued in place.

"Will I get used to this?" I looked up at her, feeling the weight.



“You will, but I doubt the boys will.” Shona’s reply made me feel a chill of fear, then a frisson of excitement.

For the first time, I thought it would be exciting to make the boys think I was a girl. Then I wondered how I would handle the things that boys want to do with girls. I didn’t really know what they did anyway, apart from the odd chaste kiss.

That shows how naïve I was back then.

They shaped my eyebrows carefully and filled them in with a black brow tint, then just like hers, my lips were shiny signal red. I didn’t have the super shaped lips that she had, but when Shona had finished with lip liner and lipstick, they looked really good.

I got into plain red panties and tights. They felt really strange as they slipped up my legs for the first time.

“Maybe we should have given him hold-up stockings?” Shona asked.

“You’re right, but it’s too late now,” Carrie laughed. “Stockings would be too exciting; just think if anyone saw them.”

She and Shona laughed. Back then, I didn’t know that they meant by saying it would be exciting if any of the boys saw them.

“You need a bra next.” Shona saw my face and stopped me from saying anything. “You need something to fill out the top of that dress and that means you have to wear something to keep them in place.”

Obediently, I held my arms out; I knew what a bra was.

“You don’t need to do that.” Shona held up a red bra. I recognised the cups, but there were no straps. Instead it was much wider.

“It’s a longline bra,” Shona explained, fastening it behind me, and adjusting it. “It’s strapless and these are your breasts.”

She slipped a cold, wobbling lump into each of the cups. They were cold against my skin.

“They’ll warm up and you’ll forget that they’re there.”

“You’re kidding.” I looked down and saw how the cups were filled.

“Wait until you get the dress on,” she replied.

I hadn’t seen it before she brought it from the wardrobe and held it up. It was red and looked to have a piece to go over the top of my arms and leave my shoulders bare. It looked to be decorated around the neckline and the bottom hem which was longer at the back than the front.

Shona held it out for me to step into and pulled it up my body. She arranged it carefully off my shoulders.

“Hold it carefully,” she told me, then went to the back.

“Are you sure that this dress is the right size?” I asked as Shona raised the back zipper. “It’s squeezing me really tightly.”

“It’s meant to squeeze you tightly. Be careful, it’s really skin-tight, but the Spandex in the material should let you move,” Shona said. “Remember to be careful that the top doesn’t slip too far down.”

That really gave me confidence!

She took out my studs and replaced them with long dangling red earrings. They brushed my shoulders whenever my head wasn’t up straight. A matching necklace completed the set. I got a couple of rings on each hand’s ring finger and a couple of bangles on my left wrist.

Although I’d seen it step-by-step, I wasn’t prepared for the complete image I saw when she allowed

me to look in the mirror. The dress left my shoulders bare and hobbled me when I walked, not that I wanted to walk far in the red stiletto heels they made me wear. I remember how they were amazed that I could walk at all.

Somehow as soon as they were fastened around my ankles and I stood, they felt real, comfortable, and easy to walk in. I think I tried too hard to swing my hips as I walked.

It wasn't the heels that gave me the problems though; it was the worry that I might not be able to act the image.

I needn't have worried; somehow it came easily. They'd shown me a video which told me how to walk; left foot directly in front of right foot, and so on. It said to overlap them if you could and I could, with the result that I had *the* walk.

"Be careful with that," Shona cautioned. "It's going to make the boys watch your bum swing from behind."

"Are you telling me that my bum looks too big in this?"

"Far from it; I'm telling you to be careful if you feel a hand there."

Immediately, I could picture that happening. I loved thinking about the touch and the effect, but I knew I shouldn't. I tried to hide my smile.

The party we went to was great. There was Superman and Madonna, Laurel and Hardy, as well as several cowboys and Marylyns. I stayed as close to Shona as I could and tried not to say anything above a whisper.

I was horrified when I turned and couldn't find Shona. When they realised that I was on my own, I was surrounded by cowboys and a terribly poor drag queen. The music was so loud that I couldn't hear

what they were saying but when the queen mimed that we should dance, I gratefully accepted.

His makeup was heavy. His wig wasn't fixed properly and as we danced, I could see his false eyelashes beginning to come unstuck. He could tell and tried to nip them back on as well as dancing closer and closer to me. His balance on vertigo-inducing platform heels was amazing as we danced.

For my part, I was afraid to stop dancing. I looked around for Shona, but she was nowhere to be seen. How I hoped she would come and rescue me. Eventually the music changed and my new companion held out a hand for me to take and together we left the dance floor.

He forced his way to the bar, pulling me along behind him. I smiled to the left and right as he forced our way through the throng. I stood behind as he ordered at the bar.

"I hope you like this." He handed me a colourful glass; a tequila sunrise by the look and smell. "Girls always love these even if they haven't had one before."

I mumbled my thanks and looked at him, realising that he may be dressed as a drag queen, and a pretty poor one at that, but he thought I was the real thing. I sipped a little through the straw in my glass. It was strong and something to be careful of.

Conversation was impossible as the music started again and the crush of people around us was moving and jostling uncomfortably. The heat in the place was getting to me too. I raised my hand to my forehead and was immediately reminded how securely my wig was bonded to my skin. I was so grateful!

Slowly we moved through the crowd. I was almost praying out loud for Shona to come and rescue me. I didn't feel comfortable with where this was going and I didn't want to get too far out of sight.

When he lunged in to kiss me, I was mortified. One hand went around me, pulling us together, and the

other groped at my breast. That frightened me even more. His tongue was pushing at my lips all at the same time. I was terrified.

All kinds of thoughts flashed through me, all in the same second. Should I hit him or should I scream. If I did, would anyone hear me above the music? If he found out that I was a boy, would he beat me up?

Goodness knows why I did it, but I did. I let myself melt away as if I was enjoying his attentions. I let my stiffness relax and melted into him and allowed his tongue to complete the kiss. I may have squealed a little as if I was enjoying it.

He pushed into me and I wasn't so naïve that I didn't recognise which bit of him was pushing the hardest. Instinctively, I put my hand down there. On reflection, that was a mistake. He pushed harder and pulled up the dress he was wearing so that my hand felt a guy's erect penis for the first time.

What do I do now? I remember thinking that too. This may read as if I had time to think, but it wasn't like that. I was really afraid and wasn't thinking anywhere near properly.

I wrapped my fingers round it, pushing his dress up at the same time so that anyone could see what he was doing – if anyone had been close enough to see. Perhaps if they had been, they'd have assumed that it was something I was doing willingly.

I worked my hand up and down, feeling it grow even more. I scratched my long nails along it. I wanted to hurt, but he seemed to enjoy it. Then he started to come. I could feel it on my hand.

At that moment, I let go, pushed myself away and as quickly as I could, went back into the crowd, knowing that his penis would keep coming for a few moments and then he'd have to re-arrange his dress before he could follow me.

As luck would have it, as soon as I was back in the crowd, Shona was there. She looked at me and guessed something was wrong. She took my hand and for the second time that night, I was pulled through the crowd to the bar. She pushed a glass into my hand and pulled me to the side where it was a little quieter.

I'm ashamed to admit it but I wept a little as she made me tell her what had happened. She looked round and grabbed the arm of a guy standing a few steps away. She whispered to him and he came to stand beside me. Shona disappeared into the crowd but this time, I could tell that he wasn't a threat.

His smile was kind and I couldn't help but like the way he was looking at me. I didn't object when he placed an arm around me. I thought it was comforting. I knew that he thought I was a real girl too. There was something in his eyes. I liked it.

I was happy as he steered me further to the side. I didn't object when his arm slipped around me. Right then I knew I was going to cry. I pushed myself against him and buried my face in his shirt as I let a sob out and struggled to control myself.

I remember thinking that I didn't want tears to ruin my makeup. I didn't want my makeup to smear across his shirt either. His smell was really nice though and I could have stayed that close for longer but then Shona returned and took me from him.

Quite literally; she took my arms from him and steered me to a chair at the side. I could see him hovering, but Shona ignored him.

"The ugly sister won't be bothering you again," Shona said, putting her hand under my chin and raising my face so that she could inspect me.

"Let me fix your face. In two minutes I'll have you as good as new and you can go and talk to Prince

Charming over there.” She nodded to where my new friend was still waiting.

“Is he someone you know?” I asked.

“He’s harmless,” She replied. “He’s usually following me around, but he’s not my type.”

“What’s he called?” I asked, still looking at him and meeting his eye.

Shona looked round and saw him then. “He’s Phil something or other, and from the way he’s looking at you, I think he may have been cured of following me around.”

“Should I be scared?”

“I don’t think so but you know to be careful now anyway.” She dabbed at my cheeks, looked carefully, and smiled. “Now go and play safely.”

“Spray me with your perfume, and I’ll do exactly that,” I said and lifted my chin for her to spray there and around my shoulders. It was a deliciously girly moment; we both knew it.

“Don’t get into trouble.” she said to my back as I walked away.

I know you’re not going to believe this next bit. I was there but as I think back, I can hardly believe it myself.

I stood and straightened my dress. I took a second to collect myself and in full-on, girl-on-the-make mode, I decided to make the most of the time left.

He was still looking our way. I walked up to Phil, taking deliberate steps and holding his eyes. I wrapped my arms round him and kissed his cheek.

“That’s for being my saviour,” I said.

“If that’s what I get for doing so little, what do I get for being nice to you for the rest of the evening?” His expression told me that could be something worth re-

warding but don't ask me how I knew that. I could feel that I was glowing.

He took my hand and for a third time I went to the bar, this time much more gently than before. Moments later, a drink was in my hand; something fruity but loaded with alcohol all the same. I sipped and smiled my thanks.

"I haven't seen you before," he said. "Are you related to Shona?"

"I'm her cousin," I lied. "I'm visiting from Kansas."

"I hope it's going to be a long visit," he replied.

I liked the way he was looking at me and right then, I was hoping for a long visit too. It must have been the alcohol.

We talked about this and that; mostly I looked into his eyes and stayed quiet. Mostly he talked about himself. I remembered that boys liked to talk and they like a girl who listens. I don't know how long we talked, but my glass emptied and was re-filled.

"It's really so hot in here," he said. "Should we get some air?"

I agreed; I guess I knew what he meant, and it wasn't all about the air. We walked a little way from the building into the shade of some trees. He stopped and I knew that he was going to kiss me.

I wrapped my arms round him and with one hand on the back of his head, I tilted my face up and he bent towards mine. This time I was ready and willing. His tongue probed my lips on the second kiss. My lips opened immediately and accepted his advance.

We kissed some more and I could tell that I wanted more. I almost forgot that I wasn't really the girl he was kissing; I was the *boy* he was kissing. He didn't know that. I didn't want him to know that, but I didn't want him to stop either.

His hands started to roam. I could feel one gently squeezing my bum and then it slipped forward and

felt between my legs. A flash of electricity seemed to ripple up and down my spine; I was tingling all over, but I couldn't let him go further.

"It's the wrong time," I said softly. "I'd love to but it'd be too messy."

"I'm sorry; I should have guessed when I felt the padding."

I didn't want him to know that it wasn't padding, it was my penis growing there. That's what he could feel. Much as I wanted him to hold it, I had to be more careful.

I let one of my hands slip down his body. I knew what I'd find there because I could feel it pushing against me.

"I could use the back entrance," he said.

It shocked me. It wasn't the way he said it which was quite soft and gentle. I hadn't thought of that and I didn't know how to do it. Well, I didn't know how to do it apart from the obvious bits. I simply wasn't ready back then.

"Let me," I said, slipping my hand into his jeans, through his underwear, then carefully pulling his penis out through the gap.

I stroked it carefully; I caressed it, and allowed him to feel my fingernails stroking up the underside. I could tell he liked it. I knew what to do next; I'd read about it. Slowly, I slid down his body, almost to my knees, until I could see the tip in the twilight and shadows of the trees.

"It's now or never," I thought, as I brought my tongue to touch the tip where a little drop of liquid had emerged.

I licked it and then looked up at him. His face said he liked what I was doing. He didn't taste too bad so I did it again, this time taking the head into my mouth and running my tongue around it.

I don't remember how I did the next bits. I remember taking it into my mouth and gagging as it touched the back of my throat. I remember too that I licked up and down the shaft as if it were something sweet.

The bit I really remember was absolutely mind blowing in every sense. He was deeply in my mouth and he seemed to stiffen. I knew he was way past the point of no return and I stayed there. My tongue kept moving; encouraging and willing him to come.

Then he was pumping. I could taste and feel it at the back of my throat. I swallowed but fast as I could swallow, he filled my mouth more. I could feel something dribbling down my chin and wiped it with my hand.

All my attention was on him but I was conscious enough to understand that it would look bad if my dress was stained, and wiped it with the back of my hand. I knew he'd finished as he slowly started to shrink.

The stiffness wilted. I don't think I was prepared for the feeling as it slipped out of my mouth. I'm ashamed to admit it but I spat some of him away before I stood. Without my asking, he gave me his handkerchief and I wiped my face.

"I must look a mess" I said as I stood next to him.

"I wouldn't say that," he said and to my surprise, he kissed me again.

I remember feeling pleased with myself that he did so. Our tongues wrestled together. The taste of him inside my mouth can't have been something he was used to; or maybe he was. How was I to know? It didn't matter, I was in the moment, not planning a lifetime.

"Can we sneak back in?" I asked. "I'd better repair my face before Shona sees me."

He kissed me again and together, with hand in happy hand, we walked back inside. There I left him and almost ran into the ladies' bathroom. I locked

myself in a cubicle and took the mirror from my shoulder bag to inspect the damage.

“You were missing.” Shona caught me as soon as I came out of the bathroom and looked at me suspiciously. “I’ve just asked Phil if he’d seen you and he told me where you were.”

“He must have seen me coming in here.” I tried to keep my face straight.

“Of course, that must be why he knew where you were.” Shona looked at me critically; I knew she didn’t believe that. “You’ve been drinking.”

“Phil bought me a drink,” I replied. “It would have been rude to refuse.”

“It might have been wise. Drinking can lead you into all sorts of indiscretions.”

“Really?” I feigned surprise. “Have you secrets to tell?”

“If I did, I wouldn’t be sharing them with my little sister.” She tried to hide her amusement. “Seriously, be careful; boys can become addictive and that’s dangerous, especially for a girl with something to hide.”

“I haven’t made a date with him if that’s what you’re thinking,” I replied defensively.

“It wasn’t, but I get the impression that you’re more of a girl than you were a few days ago.”

I smiled sweetly but said nothing. I danced a little, drank a little, but kept out of trouble as instructed until it was time to go home.

I was so sorry to see my Gwen disguise being taken off when we got home. I could have cried when the wig revealed the wig cap underneath. Removing my

lovely eyelashes and creaming off all the makeup made my spirits sag. She left me to soak off my nails.

I thought I'd said a sad farewell to femininity and all the good feelings it gave me.

I'm sure that it all made a deep impression upon me but I didn't think anything of it at the time. I didn't steal my sisters' clothes or try their makeup. I let them dress me up for the next Halloween, but it was a pretty tame and boring affair.

I think my expectations were too high and I didn't like my costume. To be honest, I felt rather frumpy; no wonder I played wallflower.

It all stopped when Shona went off to University. She didn't come home for Halloween, no matter that I hinted how good it would be.

At the same time, I was thinking hard about what happened to me when I changed into that blonde girl. I couldn't work out if it was something in me which compelled my actions.

Did I really want to be a girl?

I don't think I did back then. Sure enough, I'd acted like one; I loved that I could get away with it. I loved the whole thing, the preparation, and the feel of the wigs hair down my back; the weight of the false eyelashes, and the way I walked in heels.

But the thought of being a girl all day every day was something else. If that was my destiny, I couldn't play this dressing-up game with myself. I knew that I had to keep it under control or it could run away with me.

The more I thought, the more I decided to steer clear of dressing up again... even though part of me wanted to feel more of what girls could do to a guy.

But I'm jumping ahead of myself; let me back up a little.

Things changed after Dad died when I was about twelve. He was part of the crew of a friend's racing yacht. The wind grew much stronger than anyone expected. At the inquest, they said that the accident wasn't anyone's fault. I only read that some years later.

I went to High School, and then to college. I wasn't the greatest student but I worked at it all. I wasn't one of the really popular guys; I wasn't into sports. I was skinny, with long mousey hair, and a lot of the girls were taller than me.

Gillian was always kind but I knew my place. She had limits and a rigid idea of what I should do and how I should behave. I'm not saying that she was a harridan or a wicked stepmother, but I knew my place. There didn't seem to be anything wrong.

So there's my background. There's nothing remarkable there, probably nothing to interest you, so I'll skip over a few years again.

Gillian got a job with a casting agency. Much to her surprise she loved the job, despite her grumbles about the erratic behaviour of some of their clients. I could tell she loved it all, even though she could cheerfully end the careers of one or two clients.

Once I left High School, I got sucked in when they were short staffed. I worked at the weekends and over the vacations. I answered the telephones, took messages and sorted the mail. I went to fetch the coffee and lunches. I ordered cabs and generally chased up everything that needed chasing.

I loved it all too, even though I was the office go-pher; go for this, go for that.

The agency was owned by Jeff Chambers. He was the sort of guy who should be in a movie rather than doing the casting. He was affable and seemed easygoing, but it was all a front. What really paid off was that he worked hard on his connections.

The same couldn't be said for his succession of girlfriends. They came in all shapes and sizes, provided that they were slim, young, pretty, and looked like they flattered his ego. None of them lasted more than a few months, but mostly these affairs ended happily.

"Excuse me interrupting, Mr Chambers, but I thought you should know about this."

Gillian walked into his office and stood by his desk. With trepidation, she handed over a glossy magazine, folded to a photo spread. She knew he wasn't going to like it.

He looked and turned the page, absorbing the full impact of the photos. His date for the last award ceremony was there and she was wrapped around her tennis coach in a way that left little to the imagination.

The hatching over the pictures showed that they were both naked and stopped a little short of showing what they were likely to have been doing.

"I should pick them more carefully." He slapped the magazine down on the desk. "I should learn too. The girl I took to the industry showcase last spring did something the same."

"Your press statement was exemplary," Gillian said.

"You should know; you wrote it."

"Don't take it so hard." Gillian knew she wasn't going to soothe him easily. "It's not as if any of them had moved in with you."

"This is going to make me look like a fool again." He banged the desk and then put his head in his hands. "I don't know what it's going to look like to our clients."

"They get themselves into all kinds of scrapes without any help from us," Gillian replied. "We've always been good at getting them out of trouble and keeping their misdemeanours out of the press."

"I know, but she should have been more careful." He sighed. "I could use someone like me to save me from all this."

"It doesn't actually say that she's sleeping with him."

"I think the photos tell their own story," he replied. "I don't know why I don't learn from my mistakes."

"You're too kind to them." Gillian took the magazine from him. "I take it that your statement to the press will be the same as usual?"

"Yes, please say that we wish them well; we're pleased that they found each other and I bear no ill will to her." He sighed. "You'd better look in my diary for the next occasion when I need someone to be my plus one."

"I'd strongly advise against another aspiring young lady actress or television star," Gillian said. "I know that you like being seen with an attractive girl but at your age, these embarrassments should be avoided."

"Only you could put it so bluntly." Jeff Chambers laughed. "If you weren't such a great assistant, I'm sure I'd have fired you for being so blunt."

"I'm not blunt, I'm honest," she replied.

"Maybe I should take you?"

"No thanks, I like my job too much to be your date," Gillian replied.

"Can you find someone for me?"

"I'll try," Gillian replied. "I suggest that you should think about it carefully though. You've been in the press for this sort of happening too often."

“You know that I can’t turn up alone; not in this industry,” he replied. “That would look like I’m really sad and defeated.”

“Leave it with me,” Gillian said. “Your next engagement is the anniversary party for Dawn and Rick.”

“Do I know Dawn and Rick?”

“You should, you’ve been representing them for years.” Gillian shook her head. “You negotiated their last network contract. They’re good earners for you and you have to be there. It’s about six weeks away.”

“Who have you found to go to that party?” Jeff asked a couple of weeks later. “I need a plus one.”

“I haven’t decided yet,” Gillian prevaricated; she hadn’t thought of anyone who she could be sure wouldn’t broadcast the scent of desperation around Jeff.

He was a lovely guy, half a generation older and ever so much of the old-fashioned gentleman type. He was never a predator and Gillian guessed that his relationships were chaste and slow. Dating a succession of would-be stars wasn’t conveying the right image for the agency, good as they were at representing their clients.

As Gillian turned into the drive of her house, something struck her. She remembered me being dressed up and Halloween; at least that’s what she told me later. It sounded crazy but this is where it started.

“Remember when Carrie and Shona dressed you up as a girl?” she asked innocently as we sat after dinner. “I think you were Gwen something-or-other?”

“That was fun,” I replied, not realising the hole I was digging for myself. “They paraded me around everywhere, convincing everyone that I was their cousin from Kansas.”

“Shona said that she had to rescue you from the Collins boy.”

“I remember,” I laughed. “His hands were everywhere; well, almost everywhere. I slapped him. I don’t know what he’d have done if he’d found out.”

I didn’t tell her about Phil and obviously Shona hadn’t said anything either.

“You let them dress you up for a few years,” Gillian remembered. “You only stopped when Shona moved away.”

“Well, I wasn’t going to do it myself,” I replied.

“I was thinking about that.” Gillian sounded so innocent back then. “Would you do it again if I asked you? I could get you into a really swish place and you’d be mixing with some of the people you see in the movies and television.”

“I’m not sure...”

“I think you could try it.” She ignored the beginning of my objection. “With a bit of practice and the right coaching, you’d probably be quite convincing again.”

“I don’t think...” I tried again.

“I’ll call Shona tomorrow,” Gillian continued. “I’m sure she’ll be ready to help. She’s majoring in something to do with theatre.”

“But I don’t want...”

“Nonsense, you’ll enjoy every minute of it.” Gillian was in full assertive mode. “Last time you were a young teen. This time, I need you to be about twenty or twenty-two.”

“You need me to be twenty-two?” I asked.

“I need you to look something about that age,” she replied. “I need you to be quite glamorous too. That should be fun for you.”

"I'm not a girl." I tried to be assertive too even though I liked the idea of trying again. "I'd have no idea how to act or what to say."

"Don't worry about that." Gillian's face lit up. "All you have to do is be there, look good and say as little as possible. Mr Chambers will look after you."

"Where does he come in?"

"You're his plus one."

"Doesn't he usually take one of his starlets?"

"Not this time. He's had a few bad experiences and bad publicity so this time he's taking someone non-threatening."

"Have you thought that through?" I asked. "What if they find out that his date is a boy in a dress?"

"You'd better make sure that no one finds out."

She'd made her mind up and I had no chance to deflect her. I was quite terrified.

"Shona's coming to help us get you ready," Gillian announced the next evening.

"I don't need getting ready," I objected. "I don't think it's a good idea. It's not a Halloween party."

"It's far more important," Gillian said. "I promised Mr Chambers that I'd find a beautiful girl that no one knew to be his date."

"And don't say it; you thought of me?"

"I did and you're going to be so willing to please," Gillian said.

"You think," I scoffed.

"Remember that part of your father's legacy you were expecting to get when you're twenty-one?" she said menacingly. "If you don't learn how to co-operate, I may not release it."

"It's mine, you have to," I gasped.

"You may have to take me to court to get it." Gillian's smile never wavered.

"I'll win," I said.

"Of course you'll win." Gillian still smiled. "It may take you ten years to get it into court and then I'll appeal."

"I'm sure I'll win that," I replied as she looked at me coldly.

"After that there'll be court again to enforce the judgement. I expect you'd win again,"

"Of course I'd win." I watched her face; something told me that it wasn't so simple.

Gillian smiled. "By the time it's all resolved you'll be thirty-six at least and all the court costs and fees will have reduced your inheritance to very little."

"I still don't want to do this." I think I knew I'd lost the argument right then.

"Don't be silly; of course you do," Gillian said sternly. "You're going to a party with Mr. Chambers and you know his standards."

"I can't do that," I gasped in horror.

"Yes you can," Gillian replied. "Remember, stand there. Look pretty and say as little as possible. He'll love you."

"That's something else for me to be afraid of," I said.

"He's not going to molest you." Gillian ignored me as usual and carried on as if I was agreeing. "He might kiss you goodnight, but there's nothing wrong with that."

"Not if you're really a girl."

"Oh, come on; this is the Twenty-First Century. You shouldn't have such an old-fashioned view of the world."

Little did she know about how little she knew. I loved the idea of being a real girl again but I wasn't going to show it. I guess I was as confused and conflicted as ever.

I threw up my hands in disbelief. I didn't argue any more. That was a mistake too. I should have shouted and argued, but I didn't. Somewhere deep inside I was wondering. What sort of girl could I be now? I didn't have to wait too long before I started to get the idea.

"I've started to collect your lingerie," Gillian announced next day. "I've thrown out all your old washed-out stuff. You'll love it; everything's new and I've put them in your drawers."

"I can't wear these," I came back quickly after one look. "They're girls' panties; they're frilly and silky and flimsy."

"That's what they're supposed to be." Gillian smiled at me. "They're meant to look good and feel good. Perfect lingerie can make you feel so sexy."

"I didn't sign up for sexy," I protested.

"Don't be silly." Gillian shook her head. "Every girl likes sexy. Did you see that the garter belts and bras all match?"

"I didn't look." My mouth hung open in amazement. "Did you really buy bras for me?"

"Of course I did." Gilliam smiled. "I keep telling you; good lingerie can make you feel so sexy. Give me the last of your old shorts and I'll throw them away. You can start with the panties from now on."

I didn't like this at all. I could see that I was on a one way journey.

So it got worse. Next week I was in panties; I hadn't anything else and to make things worse, Gillian

checked on me each day. They were tight against my stuff but the feel was so different...and exciting.

I was beginning to understand what Gillian meant about good lingerie. I shouldn't have liked it at all. I should have objected again, but I didn't. Silk can be so seductive, especially when you've repressed the memory of last time.

It got better when she presented me with a strong elastic undergarment to keep my stuff hidden. I didn't tell her but I liked the secret of it all.

"That's a lovely smooth front." Gillian ran her hand over the front of my jeans in a way that I found disturbing.

"What do I do if Mr Chambers does that?" I asked and looked at her for an answer.

"He won't do that," Gillian replied, then looked at me carefully and saw me blush. "At least I don't think he'll do that."

"So what do I do if he does?"

She looked at me as if I'd asked a stupid question. "Does that mean you've decided to let me make you into his date?"

"You can't make me into a girl in a few weeks." I prevaricated there; I was having disturbing thoughts about what might be possible.

"I know, and I don't want to change you into a girl," Gillian said. "But I've been talking to Shona and we've decided that we're going to change you into something that looks like a girl. After all, we did it once and you were very convincing from what Shona told me."

"You can't make me do it again."

"You're saying that but your eyes are telling me a different story." Gillian looked at me and dismissed my objections. "You might as well admit it. You're quite fascinated to see what Shona and I can do."

"That's not fair." I blushed and turned away.

I knew I'd lost.

"Who do you want to look like this time?" Shona asked when she came home the next weekend.

"What makes you ask that I've someone in mind?" I tried to feign surprise at the question.

"There's been something about you for ages," Shona said. "You're not telling me but I think there's a girlish schemer lurking somewhere in you."

"I'll admit that I liked being Gwen," I said cautiously. But I wasn't excited with the last couple of Halloween dress-ups. I was too ordinary and it didn't do anything for me."

I didn't say that I was so looking forward to being glamorous, perhaps irresponsible, that being so plain didn't give me the chance. On the other hand, I should have been pleased to have suppressed those urges. I tried to tell myself that, but I failed to convince myself, even though I knew I should.

Confused? Heck, so was I.

"Mother's told me what she's planned and she says you've agreed." Shona gave a secret smile. "And Phil keeps asking me about my cousin from Kansas."

"I don't get the connection."

I really understood too much but I didn't want to remember too much in case I didn't get another chance, possibly not with Phil, but you can guess what I was thinking.

"I get it and Mom's got you into panties anyway."

I didn't want to discuss it with her, otherwise my tumbling thoughts might come out of confusion and admit things. I didn't know if I wanted to admit anything to myself anyway.

It was awful back then.

We didn't talk anymore until after dinner when Shona cornered me.

"I think you got too far into your role that night," Shona replied. "I think it put you off, but now you want to try again. Am I right?"

"It did feel good for a while." My blushing gave me away.

"That means you want to do it," she said, clapping her hands. "I promise you'll love it more this time. I've learned so much more about how to do it as well."

"I don't want you to make me into the same girl again." I guessed she knew more that she was admitting. "Can we try for Penelope Cruz this time?"

"That's a challenge; she's really beautiful." Shona smiled. "You're aiming high."

"I told you that I don't want to be frumpy."

"So tell me your fantasy about how you should look."

"Promise you won't think I'm silly."

"I can't promise that, but I can promise that with the money Mom's allowed me, I'll do my best to create your fantasy," she said. "You'll be going with Jeff, so anything less than perfect isn't going to be good enough."

"Okay, you asked; are you ready for this?"

"I'll make a note," She replied, grabbing her sketch pad and a pencil.

"I want a white dress, well, not really white, a warmer shade than pure white," I said. "She wore a strapless one in a picture I saw, but I know I couldn't get away with strapless but something like that with lace above the bust."

"I'll look it up." Shona smiled, then put her head down to make a note. "Lace should hide that your breasts are all padding."

"I wish we could do something about that," I sighed.

"Surgery is off the list of allowable expenses." Shona pulled a face; she knew that I was joking. Well, half-joking,

"I'd like Tudor sleeves; sleeves that are tight on the upper arms and then have lots of material hanging down from my wrists." I closed my eyes to picture the perfect dress. "I want it tightly fitted down to my thighs and the hemline should be just above my knees."

"Won't the sleeves get in the way?" Shona asked.

"I hope so," I replied. "I'm sure they'll make people notice the dress."

"Is there anything else?" Shona asked.

"I need really tall heels to match, maybe a matching wrap and purse," I replied.

"Diet and exercise all you can," Shona said. "White always looks better the slimmer you are. Have you thought about your hair?" She paused. "I'm asking a silly question; of course you've thought about your hair."

"You can see that she has dark tumbling hair, lots of it. I don't want to be that dark but a light chestnut shade would be lovely."

"You were blonde last time," Shona reminded me. "You adapted to that so well, are you sure you don't want that again?"

"I'm quite sure," I replied. "This is a different occasion."

"I guess we can do most of that," Shona replied. "There's days to go, although you'll have to take a week off work to give me time."

“Her makeup is always good; dark eyes, wonderfully shaped brows, and generous pouting lips.” I’d asked so much already, I thought I might as well go for all I could.

“That seems to be everything.”

“I haven’t finished,” I said. “I’d like to have heavy gold earrings, big statement ones that no one can miss.”

“I was thinking maybe another set of earrings too,” Shona suggested. “Maybe a pair of sparkling studs as well? Girls wear two or more sets these days.”

“That sounds good,” I replied; I was happy that she was joining in with my designs.

“Is that everything?” Shona laughed. “You seem to have it all planned and there I was wondering if I could really persuade you to do this.”

“Gillian made it clear that I didn’t have a choice,” I replied. “She didn’t make threats but she was so determined. I daren’t refuse anything.”

“Is that why you can be so specific?”

“If I have to do this, I have to have some control,” I replied. “I have to be confident in my appearance.”

“I think you should be if this looks as good as it sounds.”

“I do hope so,” I replied. “I intend to enjoy myself too.”

“I heard how you enjoyed yourself last time,” Shona admitted. “I was shocked. I never did that until I was much older, and I’m the real girl here.”

“So was I then,” I said and she looked at me as if thinking what to ask to follow that, but she didn’t ask the obvious questions.

“Is my list complete now?” Shona looked up and waited for me to think.

“I’ll need a ring for each hand, a couple of bangles to jingle when I move. I always think that sounds

sexy; I don't know why... and a plain chain around my neck; just one, but it must be long enough to hang down there." I indicated where I meant.

"Shona's told me about all the things you want for when you go out with Jeff," Gillian said. "Don't you think it's a little excessive?"

"No, I don't," I replied. "If you want me to do these things as well as I think you want me to, then I'm going to need more."

"What more could you want?" she asked, looking a little shocked.

"I'm not a trained actor, or actress, but I know that I have to prepare," I said. "I have to get my mind into this character if I'm going to play her to the full."

"Shona says you did it before, quite successfully." Gillian looked as if she knew about things I hadn't really explained to Shona. "She wouldn't tell me how successfully but I believe you managed to get away from a difficult situation without being discovered."

"That may be, but that was then and this is now," I replied. "I've been thinking hard about my role. You want me to be able to go into a room full of beautiful industry people and convince them that I'm Jeff's date. That's not the same thing and it's not going to be easy."

"Does this mean that you're having second thoughts?"

"They weren't my thoughts in the first place," I reminded her. "There are going to be women there who'll dissect my dress, my heels, my jewellery and everything, looking for clues as to where I fit in."

"I guess you're right, but how much do you need to get ready?"

"You volunteered me for this so I think you should be as supportive as possible."

"I can tell you how to deal with men," she replied weakly.

"That's not the problem," I snapped back. "Instinct could probably help me there if I have time to prepare."

"What do you need?"

"I need a couple of weeks to re-construct myself as this girl you want me to be," I replied. "I've thought it out. I want a week to be left alone. I want to get into a girl mindset on my own."

"And that means what exactly?"

"I don't really know," I replied. "I want to dress and try things out for myself. I want to teach myself about makeup and how to act in a dress and heels. I want to get used to it all like it's not second nature to me, but first nature."

"Are you telling me that you really want to be a girl?"

"No.., yes.., maybe; I don't know. You've got me all confused with this. I really want to do it but I want to do it my way."

The question was taking me a little further than I cared to admit. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted this transformation. Did I want it for more than this date? That was something I didn't dare to think about.

"Surely you can to rely on Shona and on me for all guidance you'll need?"

"You won't be with me and neither will Shona."

"We can give you all the pointers you need."

"I don't doubt that you'll do your best but I want to be my own woman too," I said. "I want to develop my own character and tastes. I want to wear jeans and tight leather jackets, heels, and low-cut tops. I want to get used to people looking at me."

“They’ll always do that.” Gillian looked as if she was beginning to understand.

“And they’ll spot anything awkward; anything that might give me away.

“My idea is to get used to acting like a girl; being a girl, so that on the night, I can act like a girl dressed up for a special occasion,” I tried to explain more.

“You can try the dress the night before.”

“That’s not enough. Don’t you see that if I’m not easy with myself, I won’t be easy as Jeff’s date? If that happened, how do you think Jeff would take it?”

“He wouldn’t be happy,” she admitted.

“I’d guess that would be his reaction if he was embarrassed,” I said, then paused. “I want to feel feminine and then I’ll be able to act feminine under pressure when I go out with Jeff.”

“I can see how you’d regard that as being under pressure.”

“Gee, thanks; I think it’s a lot to prepare for so will you back me? It means that I’m not going to be at work until that night.”

“Yes, I’ll back you,” Gillian said slowly after a moment’s thought. “Don’t dare to let me down.”

“I won’t,” I replied, looking at her very intensely. “From now on I am Gabriella Maroni. That’s the name you and Shona must use all the time from now on.”

“You *have* thought about it.” Gillian gave a half smile. “It’s a bit of a mouthful though.”

“It’s deliberately feminine,” I said. “And you may call me Ella or even Ellie, but never Gabby.”

“Ella it is.” She smiled for the first time.

“Now I’m going to change into Ella properly,” I said. “I’m going to raid your wardrobe. Tell Shona that I’m going to raid hers too.”

“Mom says you’ve decided to change your name for this charade,” Shona said when I appeared downstairs, trying my best to be in girl mode.

“I am Gabriella Maroni and you may call me Ella from now on,” I said, running my fingers through my hair.

I’d borrowed Shona’s skinny jeans and one of her loose tops with the big neckline. I liked the way it kept slipping off one shoulder and I had to lift it back. I thought it could be a sexy move if I had breasts to conceal instead of just a bra with a breast form.

“Why choose a name like that?” she asked.

I tried to look coy. I think I succeeded. My eyes were simply made up with black eyeliner and mascara. I pouted a little with my nude glossy lips.

“I think it’s a good idea,” I replied. “I have to be called something and someone’s bound to ask me about my past. It wouldn’t do to tell them you’re my step-sister.”

“But why choose something so exotic?”

I walked round the room as if I was thinking. My heels clicked on the floor. I turned and perched on the arm of an easy chair.

“I don’t think it’s exotic at all but it’s not common anywhere round here,” I replied. “I can always make up my background, or be as vague as I want to be.”

“I don’t see how that could help.”

“It’s who I’ve decided to be. I can construct Ella in my mind,” I said. “If I get asked awkward questions, I can always pretend that English isn’t my first language and I don’t understand.”

“That could be a good get out,” Shona agreed. “I can tell you’ve given this more thought than I imagined.”

“Hey, it’s my butt that’s going to get kicked if this goes wrong.”

“Don’t joke about it,” Shona cautioned. “Other things could happen to your butt if it all goes right.”

“I don’t think that’s going to happen.” I blushed at the thought. “Jeff seems too much like a gentleman and I’m probably too young for him anyway.”

“There’s no such thing as too young when the opportunity arises.”

“Then I’d better make sure that the opportunity doesn’t arise... or that other things don’t arise either.” We both grinned at that. I think we both knew what I was talking about.

“When do we start?” Shona asked.

“I’ve started already,” I said. “I’m Ella and in a very old-fashioned sense, I need you to help me prepare for my debut in society.”

“That sounds very Jane Austen, like in those old novels they had us read in school.”

“But you get the message?” I asked. “I want you to help me get this right.”

“It sounds as if you’ve decided to change your whole life.”

“I’m not thinking beyond this one date that Mom’s arranged.” I didn’t want to say how much I was enjoying the idea of entering into a girl’s world. “I want to be perfect, whatever it takes.”

“There’s not time to get your breasts done.” Shona thought she was joking but in my fantasy world I imagined having my own breasts.

“I don’t want surgery.” It was the truth back then. “I’ll do anything it takes but no surgery.”

“Does that include anything that the beauty salon can do?”

"I guess so," I replied. "I already told you how I want my hair doing and you said another pair of earrings would be good."

"I'm sure we can add to that list; just don't line me up for anything that can't be undone."

"I can think of a few more things." Shona had a wicked look in her eye just then. "I'll put you in for a full body wax. They won't leave a hair anywhere below your eyebrows."

"Okay," I agreed. I think she was expecting me to object because of my boy bits.

"Acrylic nails are easy to take off." She seemed to be thinking out loud. "You could have your lips done so that you get a nice pout."

"Isn't that rather permanent?"

"It wears off after a week or two."

"I've read some horror stories where it goes wrong," I said.

The girly half of me wanted to agree, but the more cautious half was a little doubtful.

"How about if I make sure that the salon has a good record in doing it properly?"

"Okay, fix it up." That half of me won.

"I think I'm going to enjoy this," Shona said. "Are you sure you can cope with me bossing you around?"

"As long as you're helping Ella to be herself, I'll put up with anything."

I had a slight doubt then but only a slight one. I asked myself if I wasn't letting myself into something more than I could handle but I didn't think I was. The doubt vanished and a little chill of excitement, purely sexual excitement, rippled through me.

I was on my journey, with no detours allowed.

"I am Ella from now on," I announced as a final statement.

“I hope we’re not creating a monster.” Shona laughed again, then came to give me a hug.

When I went to my bedroom that night, there were some pyjamas waiting for me on the bottom of the bed. They were pink with a pattern of small pink flowers in the weave, long trousers with really wide legs, and a soft collar on the jacket which fastened down the front with pearl button.

Someone; Gillian or Shona, was looking after me. If they weren’t looking after me, they were making sure I didn’t change my mind.

They need not have bothered. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea of being a girl. I didn’t want it to be forever but I really liked the idea for the short term.

I liked everything about it; the forbidden nature of the deception was part of it, but the sensation of the clothes and the makeup, the heels and the perfume; all were intoxicating and masked any other thought I might have had.

I cleaned off my makeup carefully, then smoothed a night cream over my face and neck. The sight of my reflection in the bathroom mirror was good and affirming.

Next morning, I woke later than usual and hurried down to the kitchen, still dressed in my pyjamas and some matching mules which I found at the foot of the bed.

“I was going to come and wake you.” Shona greeted me. “You’re going for your first body wax this afternoon.”

“Do they know about...” I pointed; I don’t think I wanted to remind myself that I had my boy bits.

“I’ve made sure that they do,” she replied. “I looked them up on the net and their page says that they wel-

come crossdressers and ladies in private treatment rooms.”

“That’s good,” I said, not really understanding what was to happen. “What do I wear?”

“I think your usual lingerie and then put something really casual over it, like a zip hoodie and some trousers, trainer socks and some pretty flats or better, some matching lace-up trainers.”

“I’ll go and get dressed.” I knew I’d seen something like that in Shona’s wardrobe.

“Brush your hair back, fasten it with a scrunchie; no makeup and we’ll set off. It’s on the other side of town.

I didn’t quite manage the no-makeup bit. I couldn’t go out without at least some eyeliner and mascara, and that’s what I did.

The salon was in a small mall. I hesitated a little before going in but didn’t want to show anything that might be thought of as second thoughts. I followed Shona and stood, trying to look relaxed as she spoke to the receptionist.

There was no waiting and I was shown into a small room where a gown was waiting. If they wondered what a boy like me was doing there, they made no sign.

“You take off everything but your panties,” the receptionist said in response to the question I was about to ask. “Zelda will be with you in a minute.”

Zelda was with me almost at once, even before I got to put on the gown. I did as she asked and lay on my back. The first strip after she applied the hot wax surprised me. I cried out in shock. She smiled at that and shook her head, then went on with more strips. I was prepared now and didn’t shriek again.

She did my legs and my arms, my torso, then went around my face with smaller strips. I was lucky there because I didn't have a beard; just a few stray hairs here and there on my chin.

"I'm going to do your eyebrows," Zelda announced, showing me some smaller strips. "You'll still need to pluck them into the final shape you want but I'll get rid of the really untidy hairs."

It wasn't comfortable and neither was it comfortable afterwards when she introduced me to the last areas to have hair removed.

"Don't flinch," she cautioned. "I need the panties off now so that I can do your back and front underneath them." I must have looked shocked. "Don't think about it," she said. "I've seen it all before and done so many boys that I don't even remember them after they've gone."

I wasn't sure if I found this reassuring, but did as I was asked. The pain when she did my cheeks was a surprise, but more so as she groped into the crack there to make sure nothing was missed. She told me to turn over.

"Do I strip it all off, or would you like something left over your little man?" she asked. "I could leave a little strip or maybe a heart shape."

"What do you usually do?" I asked, feeling gauche and awkward.

"I do whatever the client wants," Zelda replied. "It's up to you. What do you think your boyfriend would like to see there?"

I didn't know how to answer. Should I tell her the truth or should I pretend?

"How about you leave a tiny tuft, up there?" I indicated an area above my penis and was very conscious of the tremble in my voice.

"The customer is always right," she said, preparing her wax strips again.

I can't describe how that hurt. It wasn't that it was worse than anywhere else, or that I wasn't prepared, but the way she worked around my ball sack, making sure that it was hairless, gave sensations I shall never forget. I've had it done since but that first time stays in my memory very strongly.

Then it was over. Zelda rubbed something soothing all over me. It was a different feeling this time. I hadn't realised how much my sensations had been moderated by the hair that I no longer had... and I never thought I had much to begin with.

Zelda left me to get dressed. Again the hairless feeling was to the fore. My clothes seemed to slip over my arms and legs and I was really aware of it as I walked from the room into the salon where Shona and Zelda were talking.

They stopped when I came up to them and exchanged a knowing look as if they'd guessed what I was feeling. We said our goodbyes with a hug from Zelda, and we were on our way.

"I think I can guess what you're feeling," Shona said when I slipped into the passenger seat. "I remember my first time. It made every move feel different. Just wait until you wear stockings again."

Once that idea was in my head, I couldn't wait to try it out.

"I can't believe how different everything feels," I said as I arrived in the kitchen next morning. "Clothes feel like they're sliding across my body; everything fits so much better."

"If that's true, why didn't you get dressed?" Shona asked. "You're still in your pyjamas and we're due at the hair salon."

"I'd forgotten... or did you forget to tell me," I replied, looking at the clock.

"Get dressed and I'll take you."

“I should learn to drive,” I replied.

“So whose picture are you going to use on the licence?” Gillian interrupted. “You have to prove identity.”

“That’s easy, I’m Gabriella Maroni,” I said.

I’d been calling myself that name; really trying to get her into my head. I didn’t even think when I said it.

“Have you got Gabriella’s birth certificate?”

“Well... no, But are you sure I’d need it?”

“I’m absolutely sure,” Gillian replied. “And the way you’re behaving makes me glad you can’t go out on your own. Gabriella seems to have taken you over. Goodness knows what kind of trouble you’d get yourself into.”

“I thought you were changing me into this... girl person especially so that I could get into trouble with Jeff?”

“Not *that* kind of trouble,” she snapped. “You’re his date for one night; that’s all.”

“How do you know he won’t be bowled over when he meets me and whisk me off to some tropical paradise to have his wicked way with me?”

“You’re forgetting what’s padding and what you really are,” Gillian said. “I expect you to behave properly with him.”

“And what do you expect me to do afterwards?” I snapped back. “Have you a nunnery lined up to take me? How about sending me to Sister Agatha’s Home for Wayward Transvestites?”

“Hey, calm down you two.” Shona stepped between us. “Gillian, don’t wind him up any more....”

“I’m not him, I’m Gabriella,” I interrupted. “I’m a she.”

“Please don’t,” Shona said to me, then to Gillian. “He may be a bit of a diva, but we created her.”

"That's a fine mixture of pronouns," I muttered to a stern look from Shona which said very clearly that I should leave it.

"We're getting carried away," Shona said. "We have to accept that this has been hard for... Ella and she's working hard to accept it all."

"Okay, I'm sorry," Gillian said. "I get worried when... she seems to be getting carried away with it. I don't want her to get into something she can't handle."

"You got me into this," I snapped again.

"But I intended that you should treat it like an acting job, not a change of... well, everything."

"Let's not argue about possibilities; they may never happen," Shona said, then looked at me. "Go and get ready, its hair extensions today."

"I like your makeup," Shona said when we finally got into her car.

"Thanks, I feel naked without doing my eyes," I replied. "I never thought I'd ever be saying something like that."

"I bet you never thought you'd be doing something like that." Shona glanced across the seats. "You're getting to me much more of a girly girl than I ever have been."

"That's because you were born to it," I replied. "You have nothing to prove. I have everything to prove, every day. Don't you understand that there's a lot of pressure on me?"

"I didn't think of it that way."

"Look at it like this. Your mother, my stepmother, has decided that I'm going to do this," I said. "If I don't, I know she has a temper like no other and we'll all suffer; me more than you." I stopped as Shona looked across at me.

“I’m going along with it all,” I said. “I’ll admit that I didn’t think about it at the start. I wasn’t excited then. Now I’m getting really excited about everything. I didn’t know that I would like being a girl as much as this.”

“I think we have created something of a monster. Is Gabriella going to lose control?” Shona glanced at me again, this time with a real smile. “I’ve seen you watching the boys who check you out.”

“I’m trying not to do that,” I replied. “But it’s difficult sometimes not to catch their eye.”

“As long as that’s all you catch.”

“I don’t think I dare do anything else,” I replied.

“No more Phil situations,” she said.

“None,” I replied but I crossed my fingers; thank goodness she couldn’t read the way my mind was going.

The way she looked left me wondering how much she’d guessed about that encounter with Phil, or how much she knew. She was always friends with him. I hated the thought that he might have told her.

But surely he wouldn’t have told her, would he?

“I’ve picked out these shades of hair extensions,” Cheryl the hairdresser said, holding them out for me to inspect. “I know you said chestnut, but there are several shades of chestnut.”

“I can see that.” I held the swatches of hair. “This light one is more hazel than russet.”

“I thought you’d like a mixture, really modern shades with highlights and lowlights.”

“You’ll have to explain that,” I said, pleased that Shona had taken the hint and left me alone in the salon.

"I'll show you some pictures," she said and together we flipped through several pages of her style book.

"How about doing that shade?" I asked. "I like the colours." I flipped back a few pages to a girl with much longer and more luxuriant hair. "And can you do it in that style?"

I'd chosen the lightest one, more like hazel than chestnut. As I looked at the swatches, the thought of being so dark frightened me. I don't know why. Staying lighter seemed more sensible and it was a colour that no boy would ever have naturally. That thought thrilled me too.

"I guess I could." She looked at the notes under the picture. "There's a lot of hair there. I think that there are three layers of sewn in wefts. It's thick and really long and the longer you have it, the more attention you'll have to give it."

"I'm going to have time," I said. "And if I get in a mess, I've got you to help me out."

She made a few notes on her pad. "I'll check we have everything." She walked towards the rear door. "The first step is to dye your own hair so that it's going to blend seamlessly with the extensions."

It was a long, slow day from there on. My hair was washed and the dye applied. I had to wait for it to develop, then it was rinsed and conditioned, and finally dried. The comparison with the extensions was uncanny; it was exactly what I wanted.

"You have choices," my stylist said. "If we use clip-in extensions, you can take them out and replace them quickly and easily."

"Are they really secured?" I asked. "I'm going to a special party with a new man and I'd hate my hair to come adrift in the middle of it all."

"I used to do extensions secured by glue. It almost welded a section of extensions to a small lock of hair.

I don't do that anymore. I think it was too damaging to your own hair."

"But there must be something more secure than clips?"

"If you want something more secure, you'll have to choose sewn in extensions." She reached for a booklet on the table and opened it. "There are two ways we can do it. The first is to section your hair and attach little metal clips to tiny sections underneath, then we sew the extensions to that."

"Is that the most secure?"

"Look at me." She said. "My hair is shoulder-length. Watch as I let down my pleat."

I watched as he reached behind her head and removed a big black clip. Her white blonde hair tumbled down over her shoulders. I watched as she turned round with her back towards me. The hair reached almost to her waist.

It was thick and moved as she turned to make it move. She reached behind her neck and lifted the hair and then let it fall. It was as perfect a vision as I've ever seen. It seemed to fall in slow motion, like a waterfall of beautiful hair.

If there was a join to be seen, I failed to spot it.

"Mine are done without the clips," she said, feeling through her hair and parting it for me to look. "I have a tiny braid of my own hair, then the strip of the extensions is sewn in. I think it's the most secure and all I have to do to remove it is get someone to cut the stitching."

I looked carefully and could see what she meant.

"I'm wearing several layers of extensions all sewn in this way," she said. "I like this way the best."

"Do you ever take them out?"

"Only when I have to; I feel quite naked without them." She piled her hair into a bun again and fastened it with the big clip.

"You'll have to teach me how to do that," I said in admiration.

"Does that mean you've decided?"

"You've convinced me," I replied, touching the lock of the extension that she held out to me. "This feels like really perfect hair; it's so silky."

"When is this hot date?" she asked.

"It's a couple of day away," I said, suddenly feeling more nervous than I had as I realised it was so near.

"I'll book you in for the very day," she said. Then you'll feel your absolute best."

"Is that it for today?" I asked, surprised that I wasn't going to be beautified there and then.

"You've still to decide how long you want your extension to be. You can have anything you want, even so long that you can sit on the end."

"Can I have them as long as yours? I'd like my hair to be as full as yours too."

"I'll order them specially," she said. "I'll do them a bit longer. If you want waves, that's going to take some length."

"I guess it's better to go longer because if it's too long it can be cut shorter."

"You've learned the secret already." She reached for a towel. "Now if you step over to the sink, I'll dye your hair."

"Don't you have to dye the extensions at the same time?"

"I don't want to do that." She started to help me into a gown and tucked the towel around my neck. "The hair will have different absorption rates and you always look better with several shades in the finished look."

"That's unless I want to be as blonde as you," I laughed.

“Remember, I’m the stylist. I get it all at cost and it’s tax deductible too. It’s advertising.”

“I’ll remember that,” I said, looking at her hair again. “I might decide that I want to be your twin, but not right now.”

I lost track of time as she worked, layering some smelly gunge onto each strand of my hair with a brush; actually three brushes from three bowls. My hair was wrapped in something like a plastic bag and a magazine was shoved into my hands.

“It needs some developing time,” she said, leaving me with a wave of her hand.

I looked round the salon. I saw all the other women; ladies and girls, all having their hair done. Until that moment, I’d not really registered the scents in the air, the noise of the driers and the background music. I’d never known how many stylists there were in a place like this.

To tell the truth, I was still afraid when I walked in. This was such a female sanctuary. I wanted to fit in but I wasn’t sure that I was doing it right.

I wondered if there were any more like me. If my stylist knew, she gave no sign, but then Shona was the one who’d made the appointment.

I looked at my magazine, trying to distract myself with the pictures of fashion and hair. I looked round again and saw the ordinariness of it all. Here I was and here I was fitting in. Those things made me sit up straighter and feel a lot better.

Then I was being rinsed out. In the mirror, my hair looked ever so dark as it hung, flat and wet against my head. That old feeling of unease came back. Had I made a mistake? Was it too dark?

“That’s amazing.” I watched as the drier changed my hair from dark to light hazel. “It’s so glossy.”

“And tomorrow, it’s still going to look long and glossy.” I think my stylist was enjoying my enthusiasm as she teased my hair to hang loose and straight to my shoulders.

“I’m going to hand you over to the nail station,” she said, holding a mirror behind me so that I could see the back of my head.

I thanked her and scabbled in my purse for a decent tip. “I’m looking forward to it.”

“I’m to give you acrylics.” The nail technician looked at my appointment card and at her computer. “It says here that I’m not to allow you to choose anything shorter than too long.” She looked up at me and smiled. “I guess the appointment was made for you.”

“My stepsister arranged it all,” I said. “I think she wants to make a lady out of me.”

“There’s nothing wrong with that.” She took my hand and examined it. “Your nails are in good condition and I can see that you’ve no signs of having a manicure recently.”

“I’ve never had a manicure before.”

“You must be the only one.” She looked at my other hand. “I thought all girls did it at school.”

“I didn’t go to that kind of school.”

I didn’t say that the boys in my year were a rough lot who’d have pounced on anyone pretending to take care of their nails. I’m sure she didn’t think that I’d gone to an all-boy school anyway.

“I guess I should ask you how long you would call too long.”

“I don’t know,” I replied honestly. “I never had nails longer than you can see now.”

“You’re going to be amazed when you see what I can do. Your hands won’t look anything like they do now.”

“I’m going to a special party; that’s why she booked me in for all this.” I touched my hair to show her.

“I love that colour.” She smiled at me and touched my hair. “It’s such a feminine one. I’d better make sure your nails don’t let you down.”

“I’m sure they won’t but I’ll have to take your advice about the length. Between you and me, let’s not take Shona’s instructions too literally.”

“I’ll do them long, then I can file them to something you’re comfortable with.”

“Shona’s expecting me to be uncomfortable.”

“You will feel it’s strange whatever I do if you’ve never had long nails before, but you’ll have to decide.”

“I guess it’s a compromise between what Shona wants and what I can manage.”

“I think you should try longer than you thought,” the nail tech said. “You’ll be acting like you’ve always had them long in a matter of days.”

“I’ll take your word for it.” I looked at her nails; long, jewelled, and sharply pointed. “I love the way yours look but for my first time, I think I’d want a bit plainer.”

“The computer says classy style. That usually means a classic colour, and a reasonably natural shape.”

“If they’re so long, how can they be natural?”

“Natural means they’re not stiletto nails, or some funky shape,” she said. “Trust me and I’ll make them so lovely, you’ll cry if you break one.”

It was fascinating to watch, despite being distracted by the constant flow of conversation about horoscopes and tarot readings, movie stars blogs, and other nail artists. I sat and watched, entranced by how skilled she was; so many processes coming together just for me.

“How did you ever get so skilful?” I asked.

I wanted her to tell me about what she was doing rather than babble on about other things.

“In class, we all started with plastic fingers,” she said. “They were these funny little things; they looked quite rude, but they had a sucker on the bottom so that they fixed firmly to the desk.”

“I bet that’s easier than real people who move about all the time.”

“Sure, they didn’t talk to distract me.” She laughed at that. “First I’m going to clean your nail to make sure it’s free of everything, from grease to old nail varnish.” She looked. “You never painted your nails.”

“I haven’t,” I admitted.

She worked on the cuticle and then the surface, cleaning and preparing so carefully. The scent of the products was all new to me, as she worked on each one. Once she was satisfied, she attached nail form to each of my fingers. They looked like rounded graphs, with marks measuring the distance from nail bed to... wherever.

“Now it’s all down to brush technique,” she said. “Watch how I dip the brush into this liquid, then gatherer some powder. It’s a clump on my brush.” She showed me. “Then I put it onto your nail and start to smooth it out and make it flow over the form.”

I saw how a shapeless blob of the acrylic started to be shaped as she used the brush to tease the shape from a lump on my nail, into something which ex-

tended it. I remember thinking that I was too far in to stop now. It was too late for that.

One blob of acrylic followed the first and so on, stretching the shape far beyond my natural nail.

“Now it needs some strength in the arch,” she explained. “If it’s too weak, it’s going to break away easily and you wouldn’t want that.”

I agreed and watched some more. I saw how she pursed her lips in concentration. I hoped that she thought that I was worth the effort, not some stupid boy acting out a fantasy. I was that in a way, but I didn’t want her to think that.

“Usually, my clients chatter away about anything,” she said. “You’re the first who’s really watched what I’m doing. I want it to be really well structured; whatever the finished nail looks like, it’s not good unless the basics are sound.”

“It’s like building a cabin,” I suggested.

“I suppose so,” she replied, adding another blob of acrylic compound to the centre of my nail and spreading and shaping it all over the other layers.

“Now it’s time to remove the form, and see what we have,” she said. “It’s your nail but it needs filing and shaping. The cuticle has to be clear as well.”

She filed away and I watched as the shape emerged more defined, much more like a nail should look.

“It’s very long,” I said cautiously.

“We’re not finished; wait until I’ve done them all, then we can talk about the length and final shape.”

“As long as you remember that I’m the client, not Shona.”

“That doesn’t matter; Shona’s already given me a bit tip.” I thought she was serious but then I saw that she was trying not to laugh.

She took a file and started to scrub away at the acrylic she had formed. "The cuticle has to be right. Otherwise as the nail grows, the join shows up something awful. After that, I'll buff it smooth and all ready for a primer coat of nail varnish when we've got the shape and length right."

"There's such a lot of powdery stuff around it all." I could see it.

"Don't worry, that's going to be wiped off. Some nail oil's going to smooth the look." She worked some more and I saw the clear shape emerge.

"I'm never going to be able to do this myself," I said.

"I hope not or I'll be out of business." She filed them a little more. "You're at the wrong angle to do it anyway."

"I know, but you're such an artist." I watched as she worked her magic on my other fingers and thumbs.

The shape was gently rounded but far beyond the normal length of my finger. I decided to say nothing and let it be that length.

"The final colour is dark signal red, unless you have other ideas."

"Is that what Shona said?"

"It's her exact command."

"Is it very red and very glossy?"

"Of course it is; it's the classic vamp red nails."

"She can be very commanding, so let's do it."

She did it and I loved it at once.

"There's a note on my computer." She broke my reverie, looking at my new nails. "It says that I have to ask you if you'd like some lip filler."

"Would I like it?" I threw the question back to her.

"I can't say," she replied.



"If you were me and knowing what you know, what would you advise?" I knew it sounded lumpy but the meaning was clear.

"I can't decide for you." She looked at me intently. "But if you're feeling brave, why not try a small enhancement?"

"What would it look like?"

"I could fill out your upper lip a little, probably about three-quarters of the width, and about half the width underneath," she stated hard. "I wouldn't do much."

"I should hope not," I said. "I don't want to look like a trout out of water."

"I promise nothing like that, only a little enhancement; a subtle pout, more kissable and tempting."

Kissable. That word had me sold. I have no idea why but a few moments later I was leaning back in a chair as she rubbed a numbing compound on my lips. I waited a few moments until she returned and tested the numbness.

We were both satisfied and then a syringe appeared. I think I went a little queasy at that moment.

"Does this last forever?" I said weakly.

"Only about six weeks. I'm not going to use much filler. You only want a subtle difference."

"Okay," I sighed and settled back. "Do your worst."

It wasn't nice but it wasn't that uncomfortable either. I remembered some saying about it being necessary to suffer for beauty. I kept my eyes closed as I felt the needle go in and in again in several places.

It wasn't painful but I could feel the needle and then the strange feeling of something going inside my skin. I hoped I hadn't made a mistake.

Then it was over; she wiped my lips with some cream and gently wiped it off.

“It’s going to feel a little tender for a day or so, especially when the numbness wears off. Keep it clean and don’t do anything stupid. You’ll know that I’ve done this but I’d guess that people who don’t know won’t be able to see anything different.”

“They will when the bill appears on their credit card.” I smiled.

“I doubt it; we don’t usually itemise things unless we have to.”

That was reassuring.

“Give it a few minutes and you can do your lipstick,” she said. “And don’t be surprised when you start to use bolder colours.”

It was as if we had a small conspiracy between us. I looked carefully at my new lips. Were they a little more kissable? I thought I could detect a more prominent pout when I pulled a face but I couldn’t be sure. I decided to take her word then.

Later that night, I could tell. It was subtle but I really liked it. I was getting further and further away from that boy I used to be.

I got moments of doubt now and then. Sometimes I still wonder about things but back then I was glad that the change was subtle and hoped no one would call me out so I’d have to go back to Boys World.

I called Shona to pick me up. As I waited and watched the bustle in the salon, I thought I appreciated what girls go through as a routine. To me it was an experience. I went from being scared, to being fascinated, to being convinced that I could be as good a girl as any of them.

And I couldn’t stop looking at my long red nails as I clutched my purse. How on earth could I do anything with these on the ends of my fingers? But they looked good and I couldn’t stop smiling, even though there was that bit of tension in my new lips.

I guess I was a bit self-delusional. There were bigger tests to come.

I think Gillian was avoiding me at home but I didn't know why. I saw her looking at me and I pretended I was really cool with everything. I was determined that she wouldn't think she'd gotten to me.

Of course she had. I was nothing like the boy I'd been a few days... or was it weeks? before. I was feminine as much as I could be. I'd watched the women and the girls obsessively and learned to mimic them in all my movements.

I'd moderated my voice and tried to use the words and inflections that I heard from the girls and women around me.

I copied their body language and tried hard to use their language. My voice raised an octave, but was huskier than before. I hoped it sounded sexier but who was I to judge? I think Shona noticed that she wasn't in control as much as she'd expected to be.

I was getting to like this whole girl thing. I liked it that my hair was going to be so long and I loved using makeup and perfumes. That was one thing that surprised me very much. I liked to smell so good all the time.

I enjoyed being a girl. There, I've said it; it's a confession I'm surprised to be making but true nonetheless.

It wasn't the most comfortable night at home and I retreated to my room. I tried out a couple of makeup looks with my new hair colour. I knew what I was going to do for the party; well, pretty much what I was going to do but I wanted to see what it looked like when I had really long hair.

Morning came and I dressed in blue jeans and a light blue cotton top with a boat neck. My makeup was light, except for my eyes. I think I'd lost the concept of minimal eye makeup by then. I felt naked without it. Of course, I wore stiletto sandals.

I was really excited when I got to the salon again. I was tingling with anticipation as I sat in the chair.

“This is going to take a lot of patience,” I was told. “I can’t rush it and the better you are at keeping still, the easier it will be.”

“I’ll be like a statue,” I promised, hoping that I could contain myself.

I sat still as they used huge clips to section my hair. I had two stylists working on me. One seemed to be doping the clever stuff, with the second to hold things, pass things, and generally do what she was told.

They talked between themselves as they worked. I watched in the mirror but as they were dealing with the back of my head, I couldn’t see much. I could feel things.

“I’d better explain,” my stylist said. “We’re pleating small sections of your hair. It’s a bit like horizontal ones. These create a layer and then when each one is done, I’ll sew in a weft of extension to it.”

“Is that all?” I asked.

“That’s it; there’s no secret except the skill we use,” she said. “We’ll probably be doing five layers round the back and two or three on each side, so it takes nimble fingers and concentration.”

She turned and pulled up a small trolley with hair pieces laid out.

“These are the ones we’ll be using. They’re twenty-four inches long but I’ll be trimming an inch or two from them when they’re all sewn in.”

“Why not use shorter ones then?” I asked.

“I like to trim the ends to make them look more natural and more even.”

“I can understand.” It dawned on me. “Some are going to be fixed higher on my head than others.”

“That’s right. Most are the colour we dyed your hair yesterday but some are slightly darker and more are two or three shades lighter.”

“That’s to create the natural colour variation effect you talked about.”

“Well, yes, if anyone could ever mistake your hair as being a really natural colour.”

“I like it,” I said. “It makes me feel really feminine, knowing that it’s natural looking, but something which never could actually be natural.”

“I’ll pretend that I know what you’re talking about.” She smiled and nodded at the second stylist. “We’re so used to all colours, we don’t notice. I don’t think my hair’s been natural for years.”

“It was when you went to Hawaii for a month,” the second girl interrupted. “At least, half an inch of the roots were natural.”

“Thank you; that observation was really tactful. Are you sure you don’t want to become a senior stylist?”

They laughed together at that. I joined in as I could tell that none of it was malicious. Then I sat there as they worked. I could feel the added weight of each weft as it was added. The progress from the nape of my neck up to the top of my head was slow but steady.

In the mirror, I could see long hair at the back of my head. The top looked ridiculously short in comparison but they eventually came to the sides and soon the increased weight increased even more.

I knew they were done when she started brushing my hair; first it went one way, then the opposite way. Then it was all brushed back from my forehead.

“Close your eyes,” I was told. “I’m going to spray something to make it softer.”

A scant of lavender wafted through the air as I heard the hiss of the spray. This time when she

brushed it, there seemed to be no friction against the brush.

“Now I need to do a little shaping.”

She stood behind me and leaned over, measuring with her hands how far the hair fell to my left and to my right.

“You’ll have to stand up; I can’t reach,” she said.

I stood and she snipped. She took a few hairs from the sides and then the ends, cutting in with something like a cross cut. Immediately there was a difference in the way it looked. She stood away and I swung my head, delighting in the weight and the way it swayed. I was delighted.

“It may be hard work to manage it,” she cautioned. “The easiest way when you don’t want to impress everyone around is with a scrunchie.”

“I’ve worn a scrunchie for years,” I said.

“Remember, your hair is almost to your waist now. The scrunchie will hold it back but there’s still a lot of length there to blow in the wind, or swing awkwardly when you bend over.”

“I’ll have to be careful,” I replied, fingering my new hair. “I’m sure I’ll learn what to do. I remember I used to use a little scarf to tie it sometimes.”

“And now you can wear the biggest ones too.” She flicked my hair and looked critically at something. “Keeping it secure is a good idea, then the extensions don’t get caught in anything.”

“I’d hate that,” I replied. “It’s too beautiful to spoil.”

“I’d better let you on a secret,” she said. “This is the best way to stop fly away pieces.” She picked up an aerosol and a small brush, spraying it liberally and then shaking it to get rid of the excess.

“It’s a toothbrush,” she said. “If you gently brush over the bits that stray, the bits we all have the hairspray with blend them in, leaving the hair smooth and finished.”

“So that’s it; you’re finished for today,” she said. “You’re booked back in on the day of this party. It’s for a wash and dry and we’re going to add a gloss finish. I see you’re booked for eyelash extensions too.”

“I figured that this party is so important, I’d better try everything,” I replied. You were right about the nails too. I think I’ve adapted to most things. I don’t think about them now but I know to be careful.”

I didn’t know if the party was going to be important beyond the day, but I really wanted to try everything.

And I did have a feeling that something exciting was going to happen.

When I got home, I was still so excited. I changed from one dress to another and flounced around the house, letting my hair flow behind me. When I bent down, it fell over my shoulders and I had to flick it back. I loved doing that.

“Are you practising hair signals?” Shona asked after she’d watched me do it for the tenth time.

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“You’d better learn fast if you’re going to do that all the time,” she replied. “Girls play with their hair when they’re with a man if they want to show they’re interested, or if they want his attention.”

“You’re saying that I shouldn’t send out the wrong signals,” I asked.

“Please be careful; you’ve a lot to learn. You may look like a girl, but you haven’t a girl’s experiences and instincts.”

“I think I’m acquiring some.”

“It takes a lifetime,” Shona replied. “Be careful with the hair signals is all I’m saying. There’s something primeval about them that makes the guys watch.”

“And that can be bad?” I didn’t understand.

“It could lead to unwanted attention.” Shona shook her head. “And they may not be easy to shake off.”

“You’re right,” I admitted. “I think I’ve a lot to learn but between now and this party where Gillian’s going to throw me at Jeff, I don’t have a lot of time.”

“I don’t think Jeff’s going to be dangerous,” Shona said. “I’ve met him a few times and he’s really nice.”

“I don’t understand why it’s me and not you this time.”

“Don’t you?” Shona smiled. “You’re model skinny and smaller than I am. People know me. I’d never hold his attention and no one would believe that I was anything other than a stand-in. On the other hand, you’re someone that his friends won’t know at all.”

“That’s right; I’m Gabriella Maroni,” I replied. “If things get awkward, I can always pretend that English isn’t my first language.”

“Be careful with that. Someone may speak to you in the language of your home country.”

“Where should I say I’m from?” I asked. “I hadn’t thought of that.”

“It’s a pity you didn’t stay blonde, then you could have played dumb.”

The next couple of days went slowly. I went shopping with Gillian one afternoon; makeup for me, shoes for her. I tried a few pairs too just to be companionable.

“You’re doing well,” Gillian complimented me as we sat in a coffee shop. “No one could ever tell.”

I went out on my own too. I browsed and, taking all my courage, I went to try a dress on in a really up-

scale boutique. I don't think they thought I could afford it, but it was black and clung in all the right places.

"I'll take it," I said, stepping out of the changing room still wearing it. "But I need some heels to go with it."

It was Gillian's money I was spending. She'd given me her card and after my having spent on the dress, they couldn't have been kinder in helping me to find the exactly perfect, super expensive, shoes to go with it.

I walked out like I was walking on air. My hair was swinging and I could feel eyes turning to look at me. I ignored them; no hair signals today. I tried a coffee shop too and fell into conversation with some girls there.

"That's an amazing dress. I wish I had your figure." That was the sort of conversation.

I got pretty good at recognising accents. When they asked where I was from, I said the furthest place away that I could think of to be credible, like Kansas or South Dakota; places that I guessed they'd never been to and they wouldn't dream of asking about.

If they knew about the place, and usually they didn't, I'd tell them that Father worked for the government. We got posted abroad. I didn't know exactly what he did, but we were never in one place for long.

I gave my name as Gabriella, "But you can call me Ella," I said.

I kept telling myself that I was Gabriella. It was as if I was getting into the character or maybe she was getting into me. Let's not analyse this too deeply here.

I was challenging myself really. I wanted to be secure in my new character. I wanted to feel comfortable and easy and, above all, I didn't want anyone to spot me as an impostor.



And then that day arrived. I showered and dressed quickly; a yellow sundress, seeing that the day was warm and bright. I had some yellow heels to match. I didn't want breakfast really, but I nibbled a bagel and sipped a coffee.

I was in the salon quite early. I'm not going to go through all the treatments. Suffice it to say that my roots were retouched, my nails filled and re-painted in that same dark red classic colour and the security of my extensions was checked and found to be perfect.

The new thing was eyelash extensions. That took a lot of time, but boy, was it worth it. I'd tried false lashes before but these were different again. I lay back for ages as individual lashes were glued to my own, top and bottom.

Maybe I shouldn't have opted for the longest, but I couldn't resist the chance. It may never come again, I told myself. Gillian's credit card must have a limit somewhere but she hadn't said anything yet so I went ahead. I had to buy special mascara; a type that wouldn't react with the glue.

I was home in the early afternoon. Now all I had to do was to hold on to my impatience, calm my nerves and stop thinking of myself as a sacrificial offering to Jeff Chambers. So really I had no reason to be anxious as I sat and waited for time to start getting ready.

"Jeff will be picking you up from here," Gillian announced. "I was vague about where you came from. I told him that you were the daughter of an old friend who wanted to see how glamorous a party here could be."

"That means I should be impressed when I see we're pulling into the Ambassador Country Club," I said. "It's been featured in the gossip magazines."

"How do you know that?" she asked.

“It was in the magazines they gave me at the salon as my hair was developing,” I replied, thinking how lucky it was that I hadn’t discarded them.

I could stand the waiting no longer. I went to my room to start getting ready, even though I was probably hours early. Even though I knew that I’d still be rushing at the last minute.

Is it a girl thing?

I laid everything out on the bed. It was all new and all so exciting. My lingerie was a deep red; not a siren deep red, but a gentle shade, a little bit naughty but nice as well.

The bra was a balconette style. It would hold up my breast forms and cover them up enough. The panties were boy boxer style, so that they would cover the tight elastic under garment which I needed to keep my front profile smooth. The garter belt had six tabs and I was going to wear barely nude stockings.

I’d gotten the dress I wanted too. It was a warm white, with a high neckline and tightly fitted. It clung from breast to thigh, with a kick pleat at the rear of the skirt which was almost to knee length. It was sleeveless, and the elastane in the fabric made sure it clung nicely

My stiletto heels were about four and a half inches high. I knew they’d hurt a bit if I had to stand all evening but the extra height was worth it. They were the same off-white as the dress. There wasn’t much of them either; a strap over my foot and a strap round my ankles. I loved them.

“Do you want any help?” Shona leaned in round the door.

“I’m not sure; I’ll call if I do,” I replied, knowing that she’d only make me more nervous, no matter how helpful her intentions.

My hair was going to be loose. I thought about asking her to help me put it up but decided against it. This may be my best chance to show off how long it was. I tied it back gently to start on my face but first I changed my earrings.

I decided on the biggest and heaviest hoops in my main holes, with a small diamond stud in the second ones. I'd toyed with other combinations but this seemed the simplest and the best. I didn't want a messy shape to get tangled in my hair and these wouldn't. A single chain around my neck would be good too.

I set aside a couple of bangles for my left wrist and a ring for the middle finger of each hand. One was a red stone with clear stones supporting it/ The other was very similar, but with a deeper blue stone in the centre. That was larger and so would go on my right hand.

I started on my makeup. I'd been watching so many videos and practising that I knew what to do now. I'd moisturised religiously for days, so when I started on my foundation and contouring, my hands seemed to wield the sponge like an expert.

I had many brushes too. I used powder and different shades of rouge along my cheekbones, and top highlight and thin my nose. I shaded carefully around my chin, grateful that a beard had never troubled me.

The waxing had made my eyebrows easier that the videos suggested. They were a really nice shape, even when I had no makeup on. All I had to do was emphasise the shape with a deeper brown pencil and elongate the outer ends a little.

Next were my eyes. I loved the eyelash extensions and as I looked, I was pleased that I'd chosen the longest ones. I knew it was too late to do anything about it but until I sat there and contemplated my eyes, I wondered if I should have been a little more conservative in my choice. No; this was the right one.

I knew that my eyeliner and mascara were going to be heavy and black as black could be. I had to decide how to do the lids and the under eyes. I looked at my dress and decided on shades of pink. An almost white shade of pink was the highlight under my brow and at the centre. Then darkening shades of pink in graduated shades from that to liner, with a darker emphasis on the outer edge, where the pink almost shaded to brown, then blended in to the black.

I can't tell you how this looked. It's a pity I can't send you a picture but I was pleased with the overall effect. It was heavy eye makeup, but what's a girl to do? Use a pea shooter or bring up the heavy artillery?

All I had to do now was my lips. I had practised these too and what I had been told was right. I was using a more noticeable shade now but I didn't like to use real reds. I preferred the nude and beige apricot shades. That doesn't make sense but use your imagination.

I started with a pencil and drew a lip line, exaggerating the top centre a little, then the bottom centre. I filled it in with a lighter shade, then did the centre in a darker one, blending carefully as I went. Finally I dabbed some shiny clear lipstick in the centre and spread it carefully so that I could really pout when I wanted to.

I pouted and pulled a face at myself in the mirror. Then I sat back and congratulated myself. This was really how I wanted to look; subtle and not blatant, but sexy too.

"Anything you need help with?"

Shona's head came round the door again. I was sure she was curious to see what sort of mess I was in but I wasn't in any sort of mess.

"I might want you to help fasten my dress." I turned to face her and watched as her mouth fell open in surprise when she saw what I'd done. "Make sure your hands are really clean though."

I ignored her look and went into my bathroom with my lingerie. Of course, I fastened the bra at the front and turned it round, adjusting the shoulder straps in a way that had almost become second nature to me.

I did the same with the garter belt, turning it back, then pulled on the elastic piece to hide my boy bits, before my panties. I knew to thread the garter straps under the panties too. I sat to roll up my stockings and pulled the first up. I stood to fasten the garter and repeated it with the second stocking.

I posed in front of the mirror and played with my hair. I put both my hands around the back of my neck and pulled my hair back, watching it fall with a perfectly straight ripple. I was enjoying being a girl getting ready for... for what?

Was it only a party?

Was it a heavy date?

Was it something more altogether?

I felt a tingle of excitement again. Whatever it was, I was on my way and I couldn't wait for it all to start.

I walked out of the bathroom where Shona was waiting.

"This is a lovely dress," she said. "When Mother announced this scheme, I was shocked. I didn't think it was possible."

"And what do you think now?" I stood before her in my lingerie.

"I think you're something else," she said. "You're more feminine than me, that's for certain."

I didn't ask her what she meant by that as she helped me into my dress. I stood as she pulled up the zipper at the back.

"Thanks; I don't think I could have managed that with these nails."

“I don’t know how you’ve managed to live these last few days with those nails,” Shona said. “I’d have snapped them off by now.”

“I really like them,” I replied.

She stuck her tongue out at me. It was a friendly way that she did it. Sisterly, you could say.

I sat in front of my mirror. I was all ready to go, resisting the temptation to do more with my makeup, my dress or my jewellery. I was getting very nervous but I didn’t want to go and wait with Gillian and Shona. I wanted to be left alone.

I tried to think things through. I knew I looked good. I only hoped that I could maintain the illusion; my voice, my body language, my conversation.

One minute, oh how I wished I’d never got into this; a moment later and I was very excited again. I looked in my purse for what must have been the forty-second time.

My perfume was there so I added a little more across my hair and on my wrists. My makeup bag was there too. I checked; lipstick, mascara, eye pencil for my eyeliner. There were tissues; a couple of tampons which Shona insisted were to be found in every girl’s purse and a couple of condoms for the same reason.

I didn’t ask if that was really true, or if it was something she expected me to need.

And then I was being called. Jeff Chambers was at the door. I looked out of my window and saw a big white limousine waiting. I paused; a girl always keeps the man waiting. I think I read that somewhere so it must be true.

I closed my eyes for a second or two, took a deep breath, composed myself, then I walked slowly down the stairs. He was waiting at the bottom and I saw the

way his eyes widened when he saw me. It made me feel good.

And I did feel good. The way he looked at me said that he was pleased by what he saw. I was pleased too. He wasn't that old; mid-thirties, with a full head of hair and a gym-proportioned body. His suit was linen casual, and obviously cut and tailored to show off his body.

"This is..." Gillian started but I got in first, holding his gaze with mine as I moved close to him.

"I am Gabriella Maroni," I said. "But you may call me Ella."

"Ella, I'm so pleased to meet you." He moved even closer and we exchanged air-kisses; his scent was woody and citrus and I immediately liked it.

After a few pleasantries with Gillian, which I ignored, we were in his limousine and on our way.

"These people are clients of mine," he said. "I don't know how much Gillian told you about them all, but remember you're here with me."

"How could I forget it?" I tried to sound seductive. "I'm going to cling on to you like glue. I have no idea about any of the people we will meet."

"Some of the guys can be a little predatory, especially when they see someone as pretty as you," he explained. "Some of the girls can be a little that way too."

"Even more reason for me to stick with you." He smiled at that, a bit like the cat that got the cream.

The car turned into a gated estate and after the driver punched in a code, the gates opened. I could see a speed hump ahead. I waited. The car bounced over the hump and I lurched across the seat and literally fell into Jeff.

"Drive a little slower over the next one," Jeff shouted at the driver.

I remained up close, taking my time to disentangle myself from him. His hand slipped up my back to help me, and lingered a little longer than necessary over the clasp of my bra. I told myself not to overthink that touch but I couldn't help it.

We pulled into the drive of a mansion and the car stopped by the door where balloons and a waiter with a tray of glasses was waiting. Jeff was out first and opened my door, offered his hand which I graciously took. Together, we accepted the glass, white with bubbles, and walked inside.

We were greeted by our hosts, Barbara and Gustav, who were well-known and loved by those who watch their televisions in the daytime.

"This is Gabriella Maroni," Jeff remembered. "But she usually likes to be called Ella."

"Gabriella is such a long name." I took the hand of Barbara and accepted another air-kiss from Vladimir. "I think people are happier with Ella."

"You know on the coast here, we shorten everything," Barbara said, leading me towards a group of ladies."

"Surely you don't shorten everything?" I smiled at her and she smiled back, having gotten the idea.

"Let me introduce you around," she said, leading me to the patio and garden at the rear. "I'm sure you won't remember all the names but they're all Jeff's clients or they want to be, so they'll be nice."

I looked around for Jeff, but he'd vanished. I kept my cool and allowed Barbara to lead me wherever she wished. I met so many people. Some of the men scared me. They were too polite to leer, but their eyes said enough.

I may not have been a girl for long but I could recognise that look.

One glass was replaced by another. I began to feel the effect and sipped very slowly.

A soft jazz trio began to play; piano, bass and drums. Gradually some couples began to dance in front of them. A girl in a long dress joined them and began to sing standards.

"They're really good," Barbara confided. "Jeff managed to book them for us. He's sure they're going to be big."

I thought this was another hurdle as I stood and watched them. I'd had some dance lessons ages ago but then I'd been the boy. Maybe I could dance, but I couldn't lead here today.

"There you are." I was never so glad to see Jeff as I was then. "Shall we dance?"

I smiled at Barbara and handed her my glass and purse. Jeff put his hand out to lead me and I accepted.

"I'm not the greatest dancer," I whispered as he held me correctly.

"I don't care," he replied. "Cling on tight and follow my lead."

He was a good lead and as soon as I settled to the beat, I found it easy to follow him. I let myself get closer and as we turned in step, I could have sworn his lips touched my ear. I didn't expect that but I wasn't displeased.

"I'm going to have to circulate," Jeff said after another number. "I'll return you to Barbara and come and rescue you as soon as I can get away."

"The caterers have arrived," Barbara said as she took my arm and led me towards the back of the house. "Come and keep me company; I haven't eaten since breakfast."

We took plates and she filled hers. I didn't want much but took some salads and stayed with her.

“Don’t tell me you’re on a diet.” She looked pointedly at my figure.

“I guess I’m too nervous,” I mumbled. “And this is the first time Jeff’s let me meet any of his friends.”

“Darling, they’ll all want to know you,” she said. “Jeff’s always been a babe magnet and you look the best.”

I started to ask what she meant, but didn’t get a word in.

“I didn’t mean it like that,” She blushed. “I mean he’s always dated but I don’t think he’s found the right girl yet, much as we all wish he would. How long have you known him?”

“Almost a year,” I replied, omitting to say that I’d been the junior office boy for most of that time.

“He’s certainly kept you secret.” She gave me a meaningful look. “That must mean something.”

“Please don’t read too much into it,” I replied. “I’m sure that I’m not that special.”

“I’m sorry but he keeps looking over to catch a glimpse of you,” she said. “I keep catching his eye. I think he’s afraid that you might disappear.”

“I’m not Cinderella,” I said. “I’m an ordinary Ella.”

We laughed together but when I turned, I could see that she was right. Jeff *was* looking.

Was he really checking to see I was still there?

I circulated with Barbara, then she seemed to hand me on to Paula and then I was passed to Megan. It was really easy, despite my initial fears. They chatted politely. I replied and complimented them on their dress or their shoes. I admired the new engagement ring and was invited to try it on. I blushed when she said it was only a matter of time

before I got a bigger one and nodded away to the left. I looked and there was Jeff looking at me still.

I wondered where this was going and was I already in it too deep.

“Excuse me, ladies.” Jeff took my arm. “I’m going to steal Ella for one more dance and then I have to take her home before her coach turns back into a pumpkin.”

I smiled as he took my arm. “Were you listening when I did the Cinderella pun before?”

We both smiled at the group and he took me to the back of the garden. In the shade of some trees, we were shaded from the crowd. Suddenly he stopped pulled me to him and kissed me.

I melted. I could feel every sensation disappearing and only felt his lips on mine. I got his scent in my nostrils again, and the felt slight roughness where he could have had a moustache.

He pulled back a little, then I took the lead and pushed into him for another deeper and longer kiss. He responded. He responded with his tongue and deeper down, I could feel *it* pressing against my waist.

I slid my hand down and touched it so that he knew I was touching it; not a glancing touch, but a squeeze and a feel along its length.

I think at that moment we both knew where this was going, but not then and certainly not there.

We went to the patio and danced very close. I could feel his breath on my ear, on my neck, and the touch of his lips on my ear was certainly deliberate. His hand in my hair was delightful, if momentary. Our minds were taking us elsewhere and with each moment, the need to be elsewhere was more and more important.

I don’t know how we got away. I stood beside Jeff and smiled. I can’t remember what I said as our good-byes. I remember standing close to him with my right



arm through his left and my right hand possessively on his shoulder.

It was as if I was afraid to let go.

I think I *was* afraid to let go.

The limousine was waiting at the door. Somehow the driver must have been alerted but I never thought how. Jeff opened the door for me and went to the other side. He got in and I threw myself across the seat into his arms.

As we kissed, I got a new fear.

Was he going to find out?

How would he react when he found out?

I knew I was as out of control as ever I could be.

I was on autopilot.

I knew what I wanted to do.

Was it enough?

Was it what he wanted me to do?

What a mess.

And the limousine wasn't going towards my house.

“You're coming home with me.”

It wasn't a request or a question. It was a statement of fact and I knew that there was nothing I could do about it. I stopped thinking and let him kiss me again.

When I think back on that ride, I remember how gentle he was. He didn't grope my breasts. He didn't paw up my legs. I wasn't over-served with the wine.

I didn't feel that I had a lot of control then. I wasn't being forced but I knew instinctively that if I'd shouted for him to stop and take me home, he would have. To tell the truth, I rather liked the feeling that

whatever was going to happen, would. I didn't want to control anything.

The limousine stopped. I hadn't been watching where we were going and I was surprised to see the rambling house when we stopped. Jeff came around and held out his hand for me to take. I stood to look at the house for just a second, then he took my hand, pressed a keypad, and the door opened.

Without a word, he led me up a curving stair to a gallery, then into a huge bedroom. There was a full floor-to-ceiling window on one wall and the glittering lights of a town far away were reflected in a pool outside. We stood silently, Jeff so close behind me, and took in the view.

The drapes began to close and soft concealed lights came on. I turned, he pulled me close, and we kissed again. It was a gentle probing kiss, like we were asking each other what our intentions were.

The next kiss was mine and I hoped it answered the question. My tongue sought his and again the roughness of his skin took me by surprise. He'd shaved close, but there was some remainder there. I liked the feeling.

Neither of us said a word. I think we didn't want to break the spell.

It wasn't the only thing I was feeling either. His penis stood hard under his clothes. He didn't press it into me but as I held him tighter, I couldn't miss knowing what was happening. As I lowered one hand to touch it, he knew I'd noticed.

I started to rub it gently; a teasing massage. It responded by getting bigger and harder. I fumbled with his belt. I loved my long nails but right then they were in the way. I pulled needed to use my other hand. He knew exactly what I was doing. He didn't take his arms from around me but loosened his hold.

I got the damn belt loose and pulled the zipper down. I reached in with one hand and touched the penis. I could tell he liked that. There was a tension

and a release in his muscles as I wrapped my fingers around it.

I remember that first touch; how small it made my hand feel as he started to move against my grip. I remember thinking what a power I had to make him react like this so quickly and with so little effort on my part

I was enjoying this, every second. I wanted it imprinted on my memory. I know I was wrong; I shouldn't but right then there was only one thing I wanted. I wanted *him*.

I pulled his penis free from his clothes and sank slowly to my knees. I touched it with my lips as soon as I got that far down and let him feel my tongue there. He remained still. He couldn't do much else as his trousers fell down his legs, trapping then in a tangle of cloth.

I cupped his ball sack in one hand and held the penis in the other. I lifted the penis to lick the underside. I nibbled gently, kissed, then licked my way around the sack, massaging his penis as I did so.

Then I took him in my mouth. It was long and fat. It filled my mouth. I could feel it touching the back of my throat which reacted and made me pull back and cough. I took it in again, prepared this time and forced as much of the length into my throat as I could.

I knew I wanted him to come; I was determined to take him. I wanted him to swell and explode right there in my mouth. I wanted him to feel that I'd made him do it.

Did I also want him to want me as a person? I don't know if I was thinking anything like that as I bobbed my lips up and down his shaft, sucking and teasing with my tongue. I could feel the swelling though. He was trying to hold on but I knew I'd got him past the point of stopping, even if he could have thought about it.

Jeff began to work himself in and out of my mouth as I bobbed up and down. It was getting more urgent. I heard him gasp. I've no idea why he gasped but I like to think it was from the effort.

I knew he was going to come when he stood still. I tasted the first salty drop and waited. It seemed I waited ages but it can only have been a second or two. His spasms hit the back of my throat, and then came more, squirt after squirt against the back of my throat again.

I tried to swallow but some dribbled down my chin. Instinctively I wiped it with my hand as he sent more into my throat. I swallowed again and again. It was so messy. It was amazingly lovely.

I wasn't thinking ahead right then.

I was so far away in Girl Heaven.

It ended. I knew it had to end and I sucked to keep him in my mouth as long as I could as he withdrew. Finally, I let him fall out of my lips. I heard him sigh and then I licked his penis again, as if to clean it up.

His hands ran through the hair on the top of my head; I rocked back to get back on my heels to stand slowly, taking the hand he offered as I did so. I leaned into him and he held me against him.

I think we were both a little out of breath with the effort, or maybe it was the shock of such an earth shattering experience. It was for me anyway.

We stood holding on to each other for a long time. It felt comfortable. It felt as if neither of us knew what to say or do next.

"I'll get you a robe," Jeff said as he released his hold.

"I need to clean up." I looked around for my purse, found it, and went into his bathroom.

I looked at myself in the mirror. I looked a bit of a mess. No, I didn't; I looked like I was glowing from good sex. I unzipped my dress and let it fall. Then I

stepped out of it and released the ankle straps on my heels.

I looked at myself in the mirror and started to repair my makeup. I wiped away the smears and re-did my eyes and lipstick. I remember feeling pleased that I'd chosen paler lipstick because it was easy to wipe away. A deeper red would have been more difficult.

My extended eyelashes looked as good as ever and with a swipe of mascara, a quick brush of my hair, I was ready to face him again. I took a final look at myself in the mirror.

I pushed up my bra, making sure that the breast forms were in place. Then after another look in the mirror, I released my garter belt, slipped off my stockings, and left them there on the floor with my dress. I stepped back into the bedroom.

Jeff kissed me quickly and handed me a robe, as he went into the bathroom. The robe was huge and could have swallowed two of me. It smelled deliciously of his scent, so I wrapped myself in it and fastened the belt.

I wasn't thinking ahead then. I know that now. I held the drapes apart and looked out at the darkening sky, still feeling the euphoria of his embrace.

Sensibly, I should have dressed and asked to go home. I didn't and when he came back from the bathroom and held me again, I melted into him. I didn't want to speak, I only wanted to feel his arms around me and maybe to kiss me again.

Suddenly he picked me up and carried me over to his big bed. He dropped me gently and I giggled when I bounced. I felt something then too. I reached up and hoped he hadn't noticed as I readjusted my breast forms again.

He came to lie beside me and his hand slowly climbed up my thigh towards... well, you know where.

"It's the wrong time," I said.

“It’s not,” he replied, looking me in the eye. “I know what I’m going to find there.”

“It’s a mess.” I tried to lie my way out of a situation that was getting way out of my control.

“Ella, I know you’re not a girl.” There, he said it plainly and there was no escape for me.

“How long have you known?”

“I think I always guessed that there was something going on.”

“But you didn’t say anything.”

“If I’m honest, I was excited. The idea of having my own girl like you was too much to resist.”

“I’m sorry,” I replied lamely. “I don’t know why...”

“I don’t care,” he said and leaned in to kiss me again.

I was overwhelmed. He knew I wasn’t a girl and he still wanted to kiss me. I met his lips hungrily and kissed him back. His hand stroked over my nipple again, sending a tingle down my spine. I didn’t want to stop, even when his hand slipped inside my panties and found that constraining elastic.

Moments later, both had been removed and flung away. His hand fondled my penis which grew as hard and fast as it could. I watched his hand engulf it; a little specimen compared to the one I’d sucked.

I couldn’t explain how it happened but our bodies rolled and tangled together. I think I kissed my way down his chest. When I took his growing penis into my mouth again, I felt his hands and then his lips on mine.

This was a feeling that was out of this world. I didn’t expect it and I’d never dreamed it could happen to me. I loved it at once. I didn’t stop to think that it was Jeff doing it to me, despite all the distance between us in real life.

I prayed not to come too quickly. I prayed that I could make him come quickly too. Much as I loved the feel and the taste, I wanted him to feel that I was giving him something more and something that no one else could give.

My tongue slid over the veins under his skin and probed around the tip. I slurped and sucked. I nibbled and cupped his sack with my hands. I let him slip out of my mouth and sucked each side of his sack before thrusting his penis as far into my throat as I could.

His mouth came away from my penis and a hand massaged it. I couldn't help it. I came all over my stomach, his hand, the sheets and goodness knows where else.

I sucked harder and bobbed up and down, wanting to make him come as my climax was raging through me. I did it. The stiffening went on and he was pulsating again, hitting the back of my throat. I held him in my mouth as long as I could, as he trickled away down my throat. None spilled; I was on my back.

I think we fell asleep immediately after that.

When I woke, I was spooned back against him, with a heavy arm holding me in place. His fingers were casually stroking my nipple. It was such an erotic rush. Even though there was nothing under the nipple, I could imagine things.

I could feel his penis too. It was hard again and between my legs. I put a hand there to check. It was as big as ever and although he was asleep, he pushed forward at the touch of my hand.

I didn't know what to do. I'd read about lubrication, but I didn't have any. I'd read about how sore it could be to force something so big into somewhere that wasn't used to receiving it.

But you can't imagine how much I wanted it to go in there.

I cupped my hand under his penis and held it firmly against me. I started to play along it with my fingers. We started to rock together and sometime he woke and realised what we were doing. We rocked together and then I felt his tip at my opening.

He pushed forwards and instinctively I pushed back. I felt the stretch and it hurt. He pushed again, harder this time and I must have cried with the pain. He pulled back and settled in my hand again. We remained like that and I think we both pretended. He came all over my hand and we dozed together again.

I woke properly when he stood and opened the drapes. I sat up and that's when we both saw one of my breast forms lying on the sheet and one of my bra cups flat against my chest. I was mortified. I don't know why because any secret between us had been blown apart already.

He looked at it and then at me. His face went from stern to amused and then we laughed together. Another hurdle had been overcome.

"Remind me to talk to you about what we should do about that," he said gently as he watched me put it back into my bra cup.

It was different getting dressed in last night's dress with Jeff half-watching me as he dressed at the same time. The way he looked at me, I didn't know whether to feel embarrassed or complimented as he watched this boy dressing like a girl, then putting her makeup to rights.

I remember being self-conscious at first. Then I thought again and decided it didn't matter. He knew and I knew. I wasn't going to revert to being a boy simply because he'd found out.

Heck, I wasn't a boy anymore, I was Ella, and Ella was here to stay.

"You can't go home," Jeff said as we sat in his kitchen with breakfast coffee. "You're moving in with me today."

"Are you sure it isn't too quick?" I asked, hoping that he'd say that it wasn't.

"I've never been so sure of anything," he replied.

"But what about your reputation?" I reminded him. "You're a love 'em and leave 'em guy."

"That's because I never found the right girl, or maybe I never found the right boy," he replied, the words coming slowly. "This is the twenty-first century. People accept things that they never believed in years ago."

"Don't bet on the tolerance of the public."

"And no one knows about Gabriella Maroni, do they?"

"There's Gillian and Shona and the girls in the salon who know."

"Is there anyone else?"

"I don't think so," I replied, trying to think where he was going with these questions.

"The salon's going to be under new ownership next week," Jeff said.

"How do you know?"

"I'm going to make them an offer they can't refuse, with certain confidentiality conditions."

I looked at him and understood that he was really serious. "You'd do that for me?"

"I think you're worth it."

"But Gillian and Shona could say anything."

"They could, but they work for me, and you were Gillian's stepson and Shona's stepbrother." Jeff said.

“And this isn’t a fairy tale where the wicked step-mother gets it in the neck.”

“They were never that bad to me,” I said. “I didn’t like it when Gillian decided to change me into... this. I didn’t like it when Shona joined in.”

“But overall are you going to say they did you a great disfavour.”

“Not anymore,” I said as he took my hand. “But can I be really girly now?”

“Go on.”

“I haven’t got a thing to wear.”

“Are you being serious?”

“I’ve some jeans and a nightdress and the clothes you’ve seen. I haven’t got a proper girl’s wardrobe.”

“We can fix that tomorrow,” he said. “Right now, if you’re feeling brave enough, let’s go and fix Gillian and Shona.”

We rode together to Gillian’s house, with my nerves jangling more and more as we approached. I nearly dipped out of going to the door but when Gillian opened the door to see us hand-in-hand, her look changed from shock to approval in a matter of seconds.

Inside the house, I was still very nervous and wasn’t really taking it all in. Gillian hadn’t been a cruel stepmother but she’d decided that I was to become this girl and never asked me or offered me a choice. Once I resented it but now I didn’t mind at all.

Shona must have been out back and she came in too. If she was surprised to see Jeff holding onto my hand like he was afraid I’d disappear, she didn’t let it show.

"I guess that you probably know more about Ella than I do," he said. "She's coming to live in my house. In fact she's already moved in."

I smiled and nodded at that. I caught their eye too, I was getting bolder.

"She may come into the office. Gillian. I want you to make sure she gets proper respect and no memories of who she used to be."

Gillian nodded and looked at me. There wasn't any resentment there, more a curiosity.

"Of course, I'll look after... her."

"Shona, Ella's going to need you to help her with wardrobe, fashion, and all those other things you can guess," he said. "Can you do that?"

"I'm not sure I'm the right person," Shona said.

"Please, Shona," I asked and she looked at me.

"In that case, I'll be there as long as you need me," she said then and came to hug me, but she didn't disentangle my hand from Jeff's hand; I was holding on so tight.

"Why don't you and Shona go and gather your things while Gillian and I have a little chat."

Jeff's question was a direct order and, after a moment's hesitation, I knew what to do. I grabbed Shona's hand and we went to my old room.

"You don't have a lot to pack," Shona said, pulling my old rucksack from the wardrobe top. "I guess this is going to hold it all."

"I don't want to take much anyway," I said. "I'm a big girl now so I don't want anything from a previous life."

"Do you really want me to help you in your new life?" Shona asked, her voice serious as she stood and looked at me.

"I'd love you to," I replied. "I need a real girlfriend to get me past all the obstacles and all the mistakes

I'm bound to make. I need you to help with clothes and hair, makeup and shoes; what to wear for this, how to dress for that."

"I'll help you then. Can I say I'm your sister?"

"Not when I'm called Gabriella Maroni," I said. "I can be your cousin from Kansas, South Dakota, or somewhere no one can ask me about."

"I guess I'll have to get used to calling you Ella then."

The next few weeks flew by. A driver's licence came through for Gabriella and driving lessons followed until I got my permit. Jeff wanted me to have some fancy car but I asked for an anonymous little Ford; one that I wouldn't be afraid to park anywhere.

I didn't think that he would actually do it but Jeff bought the salon just like he said.

"They're all sworn to secrecy, whether they know anything or not. It's called client confidentiality. You've an anytime pass for everything."

Believe me, I really used that pass for nails, hair; I couldn't get enough of being pampered.

Jeff took me to some small events and we mingled with his closer associates. He was away sometimes for a few days too and Shona would come over. I liked her far more now than when I was her stepbrother.

She and I became closer and shared explorations of our town. We tried on almost everything in the nicest boutiques, sipped coffees in all the little places, and even went to see the galleries.

She chose my lingerie too. It all came from online stores. I daren't go into those sections of the stores and the really fancy ones scared me rigid, much as she tried to persuade me.

I think Jeff was shielding me from the bigger events, perhaps waiting to see how I handled myself

and how convincing I could be. That brought another problem. Jeff was already in bed as I sat in my bra and panties to brush out my hair. I took out my breast forms and put them on the vanity.

"Please don't get mad," he started. "I made you an appointment to see Doctor Scarsdale next week."

"She's the plastic surgeon to the stars." I turned to look at him. "You didn't ask..."

"I know I should have asked but I didn't know what you'd say."

"Darn right," I snapped back. "I don't know what you were thinking."

"I was thinking that real breasts would let you wear prettier dresses."

"One which left these new breasts hanging out, you mean." I was angry but there was something underneath the anger telling me to cool down. "Men always talk to my breasts as it is... and I haven't got any."

"But they don't know and they do it anyway," Jeff replied. "Doesn't that tell you something?"

"It tells me that all men are pigs," I said. "But I'm not including you in that."

"So please say you'll go," Jeff asked. "I'm sorry; I should have talked it through but I do want you to be perfect."

"I'm not having my penis cut off," I snapped.

"Okay, I should have said, perfect with a penis included. Does that suit you?"

I thought for a few moments and then decided. "Okay, I'll go, but no promises. I may decide that it's not for me."

In the end, I decided to take Shona with me to see Doctor Scarsdale but I made her wait for me in the

waiting room and not come with me during the consultation. I was measured and prodded by a very polite nurse. I gave blood samples and had other readings taken.

I was left in the examination room and given coffee. A few moments later, Doctor Scarsdale came in and after a few pleasantries, she got down to business.

“You’re healthy,” she said as if I should have any doubts. “You can have breasts certainly and I take it that by your presence, you’ve thought it through from a social point of view.”

I thought that was a patronising way of putting things.

“My partner is keen for me to consider it,” I said. “I’m here for you to spell out the options, although one of those is to do nothing.”

“That would be a shame in my opinion,” she said. “You present as a confident young lady and I’d guess you want to continue to do so.”

“I think I do,” I said. “At least, I have no thoughts of returning to being a boy.”

“That would be a shame.” She smiled for the first time. “I’m glad that you realise you have choices and they’re yours to make, not choices for other people.”

“If I go ahead, I don’t want breasts that look like two half grapefruits stuck on my chest that are too far apart.”

“I don’t do that kind of work,” she sighed. “I have seen the kind of mess that you mean. Those surgeons should be struck off and not allowed to practise.”

“I don’t want to be some over-endowed sort of freak wither.”

“Let me show you the sort of work I do.” She turned her computer screen towards me. “These are genuine before and after pictures and they’re all boys like you.”

A succession of images appeared, all taken from the front and all clearly the same person in each set of frames.

"These pictures haven't been doctored in any way, if you'll forgive my pun?" As I asked, she smiled again; it was getting disconcerting.

"I'm so pleased that you've asked that." She leaned back in her chair. "Too many clients come with pre-prepared ideas which are unrealistic. I have to turn some away if they won't take advice. I don't want to be known for un-aesthetic results."

"I'll agree you're good." I flipped through the screens. "Tell me more. What could you do if I decided to go ahead?"

"I'd recommend lower profile implants in a new style silicone gel that could never leak." She placed a wobbling blob on her desk and invited me to feel it.

"It would be placed under the muscle so that it's unlikely to ripple your skin at the edges, neither is it likely to slip and show the profile of the implant within your chest wall."

"Why a lower profile?"

"I think a higher profile on someone like you might be too uncomfortable. The breasts would be prominent whatever you did. The lower profile would allow you to dress up with an uplifting bra, while something like a sports bra would be equally comfortable."

"I think I have to accept that you know more than I do." I relaxed for the first time.

"Your surgery would probably be sub-fascial, which I think gives the most pleasing result. I'd need to be sure that your pectoral tissue is robust enough so that the implant won't show and that the implant will hold in position."

"And if it isn't?"

"Then what's called sub-glandular is the alternative." She reached into a drawer and pulled out a leaf-

let. "This could allow the hint of an implant to show, again depending upon your pectoral tissue."

"You're sure they won't be too wide or like grapefruit?"

"If that happens, you can sue me," she said. "With your preliminary examination, I'm sure I can give you the most beautiful breasts your boyfriend has ever seen... provided only that he's not wanting you to have something outrageously big."

"He's not getting that even though he may have fantasies," I replied. "He's not said anything about size at all. He only wants me to look more feminine."

"I don't think I could make you look more feminine," she said in an honest tone of voice. "It would make you more secure in your femininity and you'd never have to worry about breast forms ever again... unless you wanted to use them under these new breasts we're talking about."

"Would the low profile implants give me a B cup?"

"I can certainly try to do that. These measurements aren't an exact science but that's a good choice with your figure."

"Would they look natural?"

"I can only do my best, but you've seen the pictures." She handed me some glossy leaflets with plain covers. "I'll be very disappointed if they don't look good."

"What about scars?"

"They'd fade quite quickly. I'd probably make the insertion through the nipple..."

She saw me shudder with distaste and anticipation of pain.

"Don't worry, you won't feel a thing. There'll be little scarring and it's going to be hidden there."

We chatted a little more, with me asking increasingly repetitive questions and she reassuring me at

every juncture. Eventually she looked at her watch. I took that as a hint to go.

I was very quiet and deep in thought as Shona drove me home.

"I've seen the brochures," Jeff said a couple of days later as we sat on his patio watching the sun going down.

"I must have left them lying around."

I didn't want to start talking about it myself in case he thought I was too keen so I'd left them in the kitchen.

"What did you think of the doctor?" he asked casually.

"She was very kind and very thorough in her explanations," I replied. "She showed me a lot of before and after pictures."

And are you tempted?" he asked directly although this was a question I was hoping to avoid for a while.

"She said I could have natural looking breasts, like a B cup." I blurted it out before I realised what I was saying.

"I think that's what normal women have." He looked over at me.

"You don't want me to look like some over-endowed bimbo do you?" I felt tears coming into my eyes.

"Of course that's not what I want." He came over and held me. "I guess I really wanted to make sure that you wouldn't turn into a boy again."

"So that would be all right if I decided to get normal size breasts?"

Heck, I could hear me talking myself into a decision I hadn't made yet.

"And would you mind if I went blonde again?"

"I never knew you were a blonde."

“Every boy girl has her inner blonde waiting to come out,” I said quickly, hoping to distract him from the subject of breasts. “I was really white blonde but it was before I met you.”

Go ahead, I think I’d like that.” His eyes convinced me. “Just don’t get it cut off or dye it black.”

“Why not black?”

“I got frightened by the Wicked Witch of the West when I was little.”

We sat in silence for a few moments, each with our own thoughts. He got up and came back with a package, a bottle and two glasses. He bowed and held out the package to me and a glass. He turned and the pop of a cork was followed by the fizz of the champagne as it overflowed the first glass which he poured too quickly.

I sipped and then put my glass down. I picked up the package and looked at him for approval. He nodded and I undid the red ribbon, then lifted the box lid.

“It’s beautiful.”

I saw the off-white silk of a dress neatly folded there; my favourite colour. I took it out and held it against me.

“It’s strapless,” I realised once I was holding it up.

“And you’d need some breasts to hold it up,” he replied. “Falsies would never do.”

“Are you trying to bribe me?”

“Of course.”

“Well, you’ll have to do better than that.” I sipped my drink and looked at him.

“What does a man have to do?”

“You could take me to bed and make love to me... after we’ve had our champagne.”

And that’s what we did and of course I agreed to go back to Doctor Scarsdale.

You can guess why.

It all seemed to proceed without pause for breath or, more aptly, reconsideration. A few days later, I was in the recovery ward, thinking that someone had parked a tractor on my chest.

I'm not going into detail about my recovery. It wasn't pleasant for the first few days and the bruising seemed to take forever to fade. Jeff was so careful with me.

Our lovemaking was slow and gentle; I began to think the pain was worth it if only for this. It was as if he feared I was going to pop the implants out again.

I was careful with all the aftercare instructions too. At first these intrusions onto my chest seemed to catch me unawares and alter my posture; my balance was adrift. I creamed the scars and the stretched skin. I avoided doing exercise that I shouldn't.

The day I was able to discard the surgical support bras and put on a really pretty one was a day to remember. I glowed with happiness and put on a low-cut top which I'd bought specially for when Jeff got home.

I think he appreciated it. Our lovemaking was more energetic than it had been for weeks. He even sucked my nipples which brought me a whole host of new sensations.

It was a relief to have my final examination.

"I have to admit that they're beautiful," I said as Doctor Scarsdale felt and measured my new breasts, now a healthy skin colour all round. "There's no pain and I seem to have full sensation, even in my nipples," I said when I came back into her room, dressed again.

"That's what I expect to hear," she replied. "I can sign you off as another satisfied customer."

“May I ask one thing?” I thought I’d better get this in. “If you’ve got my picture for the before and after display, please don’t include my head. It could embarrass my partner.”

“I won’t ask why but I promise not to do so.” She shook my hand, gave me a short hug and then I was on my way. My little Ford chugged home happily.

There was one more thing I wanted to make our relationship more perfect.

“Jeff, You know I love being with you, but I...”

I stopped there in my rehearsal. I didn’t know how to ask him. We’d been together for more than a few months now and while the sex was great and more than frequent enough, I wanted more but I didn’t know what to say.

“I’d like it if you could really come deep inside me,” I said one evening as we lay together after we’d both played penis games. “I want to feel like I’m really your woman.”

“I’d like that too.” Jeff rolled over and kissed me gently. “I tried but I know I hurt you.”

“Other people do it,” I said, pleased that we’d opened the subject. “I think I need to find out how to do it.”

“It’s easy; I get inside you and make you scream.”

“You make me scream already,” I replied. “You make me scream when you try, because I’m not wide enough to let you in and you make me scream because I want it so much and I don’t know what to do.”

“I understand,” Jeff said to my surprise. “I know a few things but I was afraid to talk about them with you.”

“You should never be afraid. I need to know what turns you on and then we can both enjoy these

things,” I said. “I know what my finger can do when I push it up there, but not much more.”

“That’s a good place to start.” Jeff coughed and much to my surprise, I guessed he was embarrassed to talk about it. That was a real surprise.

“Think about it.” I snuggled up against him still warm in the afterglow of the sex we’d had. “Think of it as something to look forward to.”

Next day when he’d gone to the office, I scoured the internet and found a nursing service locally. I called and arranged for a specialist nurse to come and see me. I’ve no idea why or how a nurse got into this game, but there it was.

She arrived in a version of blue scrubs, with a medical bag in her hand, all business-like and determined that this was going to be clinical rather than embarrassing. I told her what I knew.

“You’re on your way then,” she said reassuringly. “You know a little of what it feels like. The next thing you need to know is to keep clean and try to avoid too many unpleasant odours.”

She explained about bowels; more than I ever wanted to know really, then enemas and their uses.

“Next rule is lubrication,” she said. “The rule after that is *more* lubrication. Then use even more lubrication. You can never have too much. I recommend water-based ones because you can use them with any kind of toy.”

“What do you mean by toy?” She must have thought I was really naïve.

“I mean something like a butt plug or a silicone penis; something to help you open up painlessly. It can get you in the mood and by mood I mean both physically and mentally. It may even get you to orgasm before entry. You can do it yourself, or with your partner putting things in.”

It all sounded so clinical but I knew what she meant.

“Another good idea is to get your partner to start with his fingers; one then two or more, always with lubrication. It’s more personal.

“A comfortable plug is a good thing,” she said. “It gets you used to the feeling and you can gradually use bigger ones to help you open up. You can keep them in all day if it helps.”

I could see some sense in that but wondered how it would feel, walking around with something stuck up there.

“Some of them can be controlled through a Bluetooth connection.”

“Like a GPS?”

“Not really.” She laughed. “The plug can be made to vibrate at different strengths and at different speeds. Your partner could control it or even control it from a distance with a mobile phone.”

“Is that a good thing?”

“It’s really about practising and teaching yourself to relax.” She showed me a diagram. “If you can use a toy to go in and out comfortably several times, maybe you’re open enough and ready enough to let your partner in without screaming in pain.”

“It sounds like a lot of preparation.”

“It is, but then practise is always valuable... and you’re allowed to scream in pain if it’s him causing it and it’s enjoyable pain.”

“I get that,” I replied as I looked through some more diagrams in her book. “So is it missionary, doggy or spooning that’s best for first-timers?”

“It’s up to you but remember you can never have too much lubrication. It may be messy, but it’s the only way you’re going to get pleasure from the back door.”

We talked some more. It was good to have this conversation with someone so clinical, so professional. She didn’t make me feel bad or stupid.

When she left, I had an enema kit, something which had the delicious scent of lavender, several tubes of lubricant, and even some suppository lubricant which she assured me could get further inside and leave a warm glow.

I hoped Jeff would be the one giving me the warm glow.

I hadn't told Jeff about the instruction that I'd taken. Shona was sworn to secrecy when I got her to go and buy my first silicone penis. Then I discovered these things could be obtained in plain packaging through the internet.

I was like a kid in a toyshop; that's another pun you'll have to forgive.

I didn't tell Jeff what I was doing and did my best to hide it all. I got used to a butt plug and then a bigger one. I used the Bluetooth one and set it to random some days when I was alone and wanted to be adventurous. You can guess the details.

I thought I was ready. I'd lubricated myself in the day after cleaning myself out with the enema. Jeff and I held each other when we got into bed and slowly we kissed, then harder. It was like we could never get enough.

This time when I licked him to his full size, I surprised him. I turned onto my back. I took a tube of lubricant from under my pillow and slathered a messy handful over his penis. Deliberately so that he could watch, I slathered another over my entrance.

I put a pillow under me and raised my legs to rest them on his shoulders.

His eyes widened in surprise but he took the hint. He positioned himself at my entrance. This time when he pushed, I let out a little moan of pleasure, not a scream of pain. I wriggled down, altering his angle slightly and pushing him further inside me.

I knew he was past the first resistance but that the next obstacle was my sphincter. The plug made it

used to being stretched and I hoped that was enough but I knew I couldn't really control this muscle; he would have to force his way through.

He paused and looked at me; I think my eyes said that he should proceed. He was moving slowly, slightly out and then a slight push in, over and over again.

I could feel the muscle clenching and prayed that I'd trained it to open enough.

He pushed harder. It hurt and I held back a whimper. I pushed to encourage him. It's a bit of a blur but push after push was real; the pain was real also but I wanted this more than ever.

Suddenly he was through. The pain was intense and I screamed for real this time but grabbed his arms and pulled him towards me.

"More," I gasped. "More."

Time faded from my consciousness. It could have been a few minutes or it could have been an hour. He kept pushing. I hoped his stamina would hold and then chided myself for such a silly thought. Then I could feel something extra.

After a moment, I realised that it was his ball sack hitting my cheeks as he thrust in. I pushed and he pushed, working together, then came that feeling I had so longed for.

He stiffened, he gasped and then I could feel him pulsing deeply within me. I squealed for joy. I didn't want it to end. He stayed there for as long as he could before nature made his penis weaken and slip away.

He came out and I could feel a gush of liquid trickle across my bum. I'd done it. I felt complete at last.

I should have used a tampon but I didn't. I let it trickle some more as I spooned into him. I hoped he'd take the hint and do it again in the morning.

He did!

“Shall we get married?” Jeff asked one day, dropping onto one knee and holding out an open ring box to me.

“It’s beautiful,” I said, putting the ring onto the ring finger of my left hand where I saw a princess cut diamond in a simple setting.

“I accept, of course I accept.” I kissed him. “There’s one condition.”

“I accept.” Jeff smiled back but a little mystified.

“We don’t do it for a long time.” I knew this was right. “And we don’t make a big announcement or a big fuss.”

“But I *want* to make a fuss of you.”

“Think about it.” I hugged him. “We don’t want people to think too much. They might wonder where Gabriella Maroni came from and who she really is.”

“But she’s from Kansas or South Dakota,” Jeff replied. “So no one knows where she’s from.”

“But we don’t want them thinking that they need to find out.” I knew I was right. “Think of the business, then think about me and think about us. I don’t want to be an object of curiosity.”

“Are you sure?”

“Darling, I’ll be your mistress or even your concubine. I only want a normal life with you.”

And that’s it. We lived happily ever after.

###