

Your Turn To Be The Wife



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YOUR TURN TO BE THE WIFE!

by **Gabrielle Johnson**

1. A new roommate

When Marsha left me to live with her one and only true love in Southern California, I wasn't really shook up at all. I'd already met Anita Black. Mmm, the way she stood in that denim miniskirt and black top burned her womanly figure in my mind!

Anita smiled at me, at the way that I was staring at her with my tongue hanging out! The difference between her kind, considerate, affectionate manner towards me, when I moved in on her, as she coyly accepted a drink and then dinner with me, and the attitude of the snarling bitch who'd called herself

'Mrs Jim Banks', only when it suited her, really eased the pain of my wife's leaving me.

My ego was hurt of course. Whose wouldn't be? I'd come into the garden court in the Chelsea Arms pub, though, to console myself. And there was Anita, all long, tanned legs, parted blonde hair, pageboy in style, very little makeup on her lovely face, her brown eyes sparkling as she looked me over as I looked her over.

With Marsha, I always felt like a failure. It was worse now as everyone that we knew, well, that wasn't more than ten people really, knew that she'd left me. At the Trust, I couldn't even say that I'd left her. My bosses wouldn't have liked that. They believed in happy marriages and 'secure' family men.

So, though Marsha had been gone a week, I kept up the fiction at work that Marsha was still with me. Then, the absolutely, deliciously, feminine Anita Black looked up at me and I was smitten. But when she saw the ring on my finger, she told me that she wouldn't go out with me.

I impulsively took it off and threw it down the middle of the street. It astounded Anita. "That was real gold!" she said to me, standing up from our outside, restaurant table.

"Let some homeless person have it," I said to her. "When we get married, I'll buy us both something better than that one."

"How much did it set you back?" asked a bemused Anita, hesitantly sweeping her blonde hair behind her ears in a feminine gesture she made so often. I could have watched her doing that forever, it was so cute and girlie. She was so cute and girlie.

Anita did relent and go out with me. I tried to talk her into bed but she wasn't having any of that. Not until I was an unmarried man, she told me with a giggle. But, when she'd had a drink too many, we fooled around a little too much at a party with some of her friends in Upper Sandwich.



“Come and live with me,” I begged her but she only laughed at me, her gorgeous brown eyes telling me ‘No’. Anita wouldn’t even consider getting engaged to me or marrying me, not while I was still married to Marsha.

“And,” Anita whispered to me as we kind of cuddled while the house party went on all about us, “we have to get to know each other so much more than we do now.”

It was so marvellous to kiss Anita goodnight on her doorstep. However, she never let me up to her apartment. “When you’re a free man,” she said to me, stroking my face with her soft hands, her long, unpolished fingernails so endearing. Then in a rustle of skirts, she loved petticoats, Anita would blow me a kiss from her door and be gone.

When Mr Dynes or Miss Fotheringham, my immediate supervisors at the Trust, asked me about my wife and family, I told them all about Anita, though I called her ‘Marsha’.

I continued to live in the old, riverside apartment building I’d shared with Marsha, after she’d gone. I knew that Anita didn’t like to visit me there. I can’t blame her. Can you? But then the landlords doubled the rent when the first year lease was up. I angrily told the landlords that I’d move. They shrugged and told me that if that was the way I felt about it I should get out of their building.

It was much harder than I’d expected to find a new place. I tried but it was soon obvious to me that if I wanted to move into any place that was pretty good, I’d better find someone to share with me.

Barry Davies was introduced to me at a club somewhere down on Whiteside Avenue. I was a little

drunk; I've forgotten who actually introduced us. I do remember that he was with this stunning, blonde girl, Cicely, who had breasts, well, that I would have been willing to climb. She must have been a model as she was tall. She made herself even taller than Barry by the high heels she wore.

"I think that Cicely was poured into that dress," I said to Anita as we danced. I had a good view of the low-cut, slinky dress the platinum blonde wore.

"Be nice!" said Anita, leading me to Cicely, trading partners so that she danced with Barry and I danced with Cicely. Yeah, I dreamed of mountain climbing. The girls got along famously. Cicely was a pretty shrewd girl, not at all the stereotype of the dumb blonde.

Anita had blonde hair but you could see her dark roots down the center. Once, when she had leaned back in her chair, and I saw her thin, white panties exposed, I confirmed by the darkness at the vee of her thighs that she was not a natural blonde. Cicely was, seeing where I'd been looking at Anita. Cicely smiled as she said that to me, flicking her hair over her shoulders. If I hadn't been with Anita, I know I could've taken her away from Barry.

Barry was an ordinary kind of guy, short, brown hair and regular features, a pencil pusher, I thought, like me. If anything, he was thinner than I was. He mentioned he was having trouble finding the right apartment in the city. I don't know who suggested we share. I think it was Anita. I'd had far too much to drink by then (I hardly drink at all now). I saw Barry shake his head as if to say 'No' when I asked him for his phone number to see a place at the Sunrise that Cicely, I think, said Barry had his eye on.

Well, we moved into the Sunrise a week later. We each had our own bedrooms, naturally, though everything else was shared. The Sunrise was a very modern building. There were stores, offices and things like a sauna and a games room on the first two floors. There was underground parking and private elevators to the twelve floors of private apartments.

The apartments were very private, even isolated. It took me six months to find out who was in the apartment next to ours. Barry didn't get in the way at all so that Anita would have had the run of the place if she'd wanted it. But Marsha wasn't answering any of my lawyer's calls while Anita made it clear to me that, if I wanted more than the occasional petting session, when she was in the mood, on the sofa with her, I'd better show her, at the least, that Marsha and I were legally separated.

I went to house parties with Anita and got to hold her. I let her hold me a lot as we chattered and hung out with her friends mainly. I was asked by several of the girls who knew Anita what it was like living with Barry Davies. Anita always kept a blank expression when I was asked about that.

It was easy to answer. In fact, living with Barry Davies was rather like living alone. Anita felt sorry for him, staying in to read or watch television while we went out and partied, sometimes with Cicely and whoever she was dating. That girl had a hundred boy friends, it seemed. No wonder that Barry hadn't a chance with her.

Anita did invite Barry, knocking on his door and going in where I rarely went, keeping the door closed as she talked to him. Barry always refused, how-

ever, with one of his tight, little smiles if he saw me beyond my prettily dressed girl friend.

I'm telling you all this so that you can get some measure of how I felt on that late June evening when I found out, more than I wanted to find out, about Barry Davies.

To start at the beginning of the evening, it began with Anita, in a summery dress and masses of petticoats, going out to the theater for the first time in a month. I wanted to see *Quantum of Solace* but Anita wrinkled her nose at macho men. She wanted the Anne Hathaway film, *Rachel Getting Married*, a chick flick.

Anita and I don't fight over movies. We take turns in choosing what we go to see. It was my turn but Anita said it wasn't as I'd dragged her to the stage performance of *Cats* in an umpteenth revival. I got the tickets free from a guy at the Trust who couldn't use them. I didn't tell Anita that as I wanted to impress her with my good taste. I didn't count a stage show as seeing a movie.

"It was a show," said Anita. "It was your choice. Now it's mine."

"It's my choice," I told her. We argued like a couple of kids. I think she was just set on seeing the Rachel thing while I was trying to prove a point.

"Well, we might as well go home," I said as she wouldn't come to the Bond movie that I'd already bought tickets for.

"You're absolutely right, as usual," snapped Anita, sashaying off, her high heels clacking down the sidewalk, a real sway in her walk, leaving me standing there with tickets in my hand and a bunch

of people grinning at me. It only took me a minute to sell the tickets and take off after Anita.

But in that one minute, she was gone. I walked up and down Whiteside Avenue but I couldn't find her, anywhere. It finally dawned on me that I'd been dumped. All through this account, you're going to find out just how slow I am on the uptake. After a hundred curses, I finally went home, back to the apartment.

It was only eight-thirty and no sign of Barry when I went in. I trudged over to the fridge and got a beer, thinking it a little strange he wasn't watching television or in the computer room. Barry had said there was a baseball game he was going to watch but he wasn't there, in 'his' chair, a recliner. I found it quite odd.

I'd have thought nothing of it but then I heard a sound, a definite creak, from Barry's bedroom. He must be lying down, trying to keep quiet when I walked in, I thought. I went strolling over to his room, practising my wry smile, ready to tell Barry all about Anita and me. I was thinking of inviting him out for a beer; you know, to console me as one guy does another after a tiff with the girl friend.

Well, Barry wasn't in his bedroom. Another person was. A dark-haired girl, really attractive and a little familiar, pretty, heavily made up, was sitting rigidly on his bed. She was wearing what I'd have called a cocktail dress. It had wide skirts, thin shoulder straps, a tight bodice and narrow waist, lots of dark, lacy material over orange. She must have been wearing several petticoats because the dress rustled as she uncrossed her legs, wobbled shakily to her high heels, moving from the bed towards the chair in the corner of Barry's room.

She was wearing dark stockings, I noted as well, as her legs, as far as I could see, were nice and shapely. Her heels were high. She was taller than me but even so, she looked frightened of me; so, I stopped glowering at her.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” I said, forcing a smile her way. “I was looking for Barry. Didn’t think he’d have company.” She was rigid, staring at me wide-eyed and positively scared. “It’s okay,” I went on, enjoying the faint smell of flowers that seemed to emanate from her. I put on one of my good smiles, ones I reserve for pretty girls, particularly any that I have a chance to get friendly with and possibly lay. Oh, Barry wasn’t in the room at all.

“I’m Barry’s roommate,” I told the fearful woman. “You can call me Jim. Did Barry go out for something?”

She couldn’t get past the fright with which she watched me enter further into Barry’s room. She looked wildly at the door as if she was going to run for it. Well, I didn’t blame her. It must be pretty grim when a guy suddenly walks in on you in someone else’s bedroom. If this was the first time she’d been there, she might be thinking something really awful about Barry for leaving her.

“It’s really all right,” I said to her. “I don’t care what you kids get up to in here. I’m not broadcasting it to anyone; I promise you. Live and let live, I always say.” I smiled again, using my sincere smile, showing a few of my teeth. “I won’t tell anyone anything about you, really. Cross my heart and hope to die.”

If the woman hadn’t turned in profile, showing me her thick, false eyelashes and her black-painted,

eyelids, I'd have got out of the place fast. I'd have been joshing Barry later about the girl in his room as I tried to recover from the hangover that drinking alone would have produced.

I'd have gone right out of the apartment and left them, thinking of them as 'she' and 'he', Barry and the unknown woman. Barry could have dreamed up any lie to explain the girl in his room afterwards. But the woman did turn and showed me her profile. I'd have recognized that funny, little upturn on the end of her powdered nose anywhere. After all, I'd been looking at it every morning when Barry lounged sideways on his chair, the newspaper spread across his lap. He never folded it and read it on the table.

Yes, that upturned nose belonged to Barry Davies. It hit me like a sledgehammer! Like a sledgehammer to the stomach. No wonder 'she' looked so frightened. Wouldn't you if your roommate suddenly found out that you were queer? Oh, but it was worse than that. I'd found out that my roommate was a drag queen!

"Barry!" I croaked.

"Please!" It was Barry's voice all right. "Please," was all 'she' could say.

So what do you do when you find your roomie dressed up like a pretty girl, and it ain't anywhere near Halloween? I got out of 'her' room fast, leaving a whole bunch of nasty words behind me. 'Drag queen' was about the mildest of them. I even got to wondering if he might fancy me!

You can see how dumb I am. I wasn't aware that Barry could be a transvestite, a guy who liked women's clothing, and dressing in women's clothing,

but still being turned on by a good-looking woman anyway. It took Anita to straighten me out on that one much later. Anyway, I was using words about Barry I wouldn't want to put in print when the door to his room opened slowly.

Barry had changed back into being Barry Davies, his shirt collar all ruffled by the hurry he must have been in to catch me and convince me he was a regular guy. He'd wiped off the makeup but there was enough left on him about his eyes that my stomach turned a little. I felt really sick again. I must have been giving him a pretty murderous look because, the moment he caught my eye, he went reeling off into the living room area. Wow, I thought in astonishment, Barry looked as if he was going to cry.

"Frigging heck, Barry!" I snarled at him; well, it was a little stronger than that. "How can you do such an effing thing? You like dressing up like a woman? You effing pervert! In my apartment as well!"

Barry swayed as he sat down, head in his hands, hiding his eyes from me. Oh, the little gay boy could cry his eyes out now, I saw, as he sat in 'his' chair, in front of the blank television screen.

"If I'd known you were queer," I told him angrily, "I'd never have shared this place with you. Now, which one of us is going to be effing off out of here and it's not going to be me." No, not after how long it took me to find an apartment even if he'd been the one to find it first and offer his open space to me.

"I, I'm not queer," Barry said then in a muffled voice. "N-N-Not gay, either." I hooted with laughter as he tried to tell me all about transvestites.

I couldn't have cared less. I had a fair reputation in my social circle with the ladies. There was Marsha, of course, and now Anita, wherever she'd got to. Neither of them were skanks, not like some of the girls the single guys at the Trust seemed to hang with. Of course, whenever I'd seen Barry out, he was always out with a really attractive girl, someone like Cicely.

Come to think of it, Barry always looked guilty when I caught him chatting with some really pretty girl. Funny how he never went out with them very often. Now I knew why. The girls must have sussed out that my roommate was gay. I wonder if that was why I was having a hard time connecting with other girls beside Anita. In fact, she'd known Barry before me. I bristled at what she might have thought about me to recommend me to Barry as a roommate. I didn't want that kind of whisper about me.

"You'll have to go," I told him pointedly. "I know the apartment is in both our names but you're the one who's leaving. I'm not living with a queer."

Barry stopped talking about married men living happy lives with women who understood and helped them to dress like women. I guess he realized I hadn't been listening to him. He kind of sagged in his chair. "When?" was all he asked very quietly, his hands quivering, his face haggard.

"Tonight," I said. "Pack and leave or I'll be throwing your stuff down the hallway." I was pretty brutal. I just wanted him out of my sight.

"I'm paid to the end of the month," Barry said. I guess he couldn't find a place to disappear to, with one of his queer friends, as I suggested, not someone as mild as he was. The word 'milksop' came

contemptuously to my mind as I listened to him sort of begging with me to let him stay.

I could have driven Barry out, punched him up a bit or something, to get him to go but I've never been a thug. I'm often criticized, in a friendly way, in the Trust's 'Leadership Seminars', for my compassion. I'm not tough-minded enough, Miss Fotheringham, the old bat, said to me in her kindly, old woman style. She used that to hide the fact that she was a dictator who made Stalin look like a wimp in her own department.

"All right," I said begrudgingly, "the end of the month. But," Barry had looked too relieved, "you keep out of my way, my girl." That made him flush and look away. "When I'm using the kitchen or this place with Anita, you scarper into your own room. Got it?"

Barry got it all right. I think he bit his lower lip to keep himself from crying. It's funny how I hadn't seen before how much like a girl he was.

*******2. *You need a wife********

I made up with Anita the following day. She was very good to me at the crowded party we went to just a block away from my place. There were a lot of couples there, necking and getting it on, after the dancing petered out. She let me touch her quite a bit. That excited me enough to invite her back to my place but Anita just smiled. She took my hand and led me out on the balcony where I resumed my kissing of her delectable, shiny pink lips.

I was still trying to talk to her about marriage and let slip that she could move in with me now any

time. Marsha had never lived there with me. I, of course, was looking for a new roommate.

“Oh, what’s happening with Barry?” Anita asked me right away, kissing my ear and tickling me, turning me on with the way she pressed her shapely, little chest to me.

I made a face but Anita pressed me. So, I told her all about my fairy roommate. Her reaction floored me.

“Oh, the poor darling,” Anita said, pushing me off her. “Oh, he must have been horribly upset when you discovered him. How terrible for him to be outed like that!” I couldn’t believe it. She was actually sorry for Barry, the new ‘Miss Sunrise Apartments’!

“What about me?” I asked, peeved at her. “How do you think I felt? How’d you like a fairy for a roommate?”

“Oh, I wouldn’t mind,” Anita said, as calmly as anything. “I think transvestites are rather cute, especially the smaller ones like Barry.” Hey, I thought, I was only an inch or so taller than him! “I’d really love to see him dressed up!”

I was pretty shocked by the way Anita was talking. “Next you’ll be trying to get me into drag!” I spluttered at her.

“Don’t be silly, darling,” said Anita, kissing my nose, which I hate. “It’s a lovely thought, though. I’d really love you to lose some of that hair you have all over you. Sometimes, when you’re holding me, it’s as if I was being hugged by a bear!”

She cut off any indignant reply I could make by laughing and hugging and kissing me. Soon, I melted into what she was doing to me. Anita seemed

really aroused, raising her leg against me as I pressed her against the patio door frame. She sure knew my intentions for her very clearly. She let me walk her home. We stopped and cuddled or kissed by every bush or street corner. I should have been warned by the conversation that turned her on, but, as I said before, about some things, I was, I am, pretty dumb.

One thing I'm not dumb about is figures and accounts. I was only twenty-one when I got my CPA, the blue-eyed boy, literally and figuratively, of the firm I'd worked for off and on since I was fifteen. I got a permanent job at the Bentham State Trust and settled back for rapid promotions.

Only, advancement didn't come. My marital troubles with Marsha – she married me, I think, because I'd moved up so fast at the start – were quite well known. I didn't think much of how they'd affect me at first until Mr Dynes clued me in on the family nature of the Bentham State Trust. I could only expect promotion to the upper echelons of the firm if I was in a happy and stable marriage.

I saw other guys, Frank Mueller and Stuart Gray, nowhere near as smart as me, but happily married, pushed on ahead. When I was fighting with Marsha, of course, I really didn't care about promotions. But when Harry Klynski had a heart attack and the comptroller's job came up for grabs, I wanted it. I was the most qualified by far. I told Mitchell Dynes, the VP supposed to mentor me, that I wanted to be considered for it. Mr Dynes looked pretty sad, he always does when he's thinking, but he did promise me an early reply.

I got the reply in writing in my mail at the apartment at the same time I got the notification of Mar-

sha's divorce from me, from some lawyer in Los Angeles. I'd opened the bulky envelope with the divorce papers first. No way was I going to oppose that, I chortled to myself, and opened the other letter.

Only it wasn't a letter. It was an invitation. Only it really wasn't that, either. It was a command performance, cloaked as an invitation. 'Jim and Marsha' were invited to attend a weekend house party at Sam Grainger's the following week. 'Bring tennis outfits and swimsuits, but, please, no shorts for women and no bikinis,' was hand-written on the note.

Senator Samuel F Grainger is President of Bentham State Trust. My hand shook as I read the simple invitation. Here was Mitch Dynes's reply, I knew. Sam Grainger and his wife, Vicki, wanted to look me over. Heck, I was up for the job that I wanted. I was so pleased that I wanted to dance about the silent apartment.

Then, I realized what the letter really meant. It wasn't just me the Graingers wanted to look over. It was I and my wife, the one who'd just served me with my freedom from her. I sat down heavily and thought. How I could possibly get the job I wanted so much without a wife?

When Anita came round to meet me before we went out to another party, she sashayed in through the door I'd left open and found me still sitting at the kitchen table, staring at the two separate documents.

Anita read them, smiled at me and shook her short, blonde hair. "Well," she said. "Do you really

want this job? There are other companies, you know.”

“Yeah,” I agreed. “But not for me right now. If I was Comptroller for a year at Bentham, I could write my ticket anywhere else. But, if I’m passed over again, well, questions are going to be raised about why.”

Anita shrugged. “Well, Jimmy boy,” she said to me. “You need a wife.” But before I could get my soaring, ecstatic feelings out, she shook her head and deflated me completely. “Not me, lover boy. I know Mitchell Dynes and he knows me well.” Oh, yes, that was true. He’d seen me having lunch with Anita and had waved at us with a big smile on his face. Anita had waved back.

“I didn’t know you worked for Mitch,” Anita had said with her usual sweet smile. I’d had to admit I did, and for Fotheringham as well. That had made her giggle. She seemed to know all the office gossip, I realized, and always understood what I was saying when I talked about Bentham State.

“So, I can’t be Marsha for you for a weekend,” Anita said with a smile. She put her hand over mine and stroked it sympathetically as the front door creaked open again. Barry came in.

I looked at him, stunned. I hadn’t seen him for days. What stunned me was that Anita rose to her high-heeled feet, so lovely and leggy in her mini-skirt. She went right over to Barry, put her arms about him, and hugged him as firmly as she’d hugged me.

Barry looked at her very hesitantly. “Anita, Jim,” he murmured in his quiet voice. He couldn’t look at me. I hadn’t seen him in a week; yet, he still seemed

frightened of me. I dare say he was wondering if I'd told Anita all about him. I think that I saw a pleading look in his eyes as he glanced at me.

I had, of course, but I just stared at him, stony-faced, doing nothing to reassure him. The queen didn't deserve it or so I thought.

Well, after that, the rest of the evening was just dreadful. I'd have thought Anita had enough sensitivity not to say right out, "So, Barry, you're a cross-dresser. Do you dress every time Jim is out with me? Do you belong to a drag club? There are a lot in this city, aren't there?"

Of course, Barry wouldn't answer her questions. I actually felt sorry for him, the way she badgered him. She'd brought in the paper and taken out the fashion section. When Barry tried to take it to his room, he did pay for it after all, Anita wanted to know how he liked this dress and that one. She asked him if he used the makeup in the ad on another page and told him of problems with the mascara of that make. She asked him if he'd ever thought of having his hair permed at a real hair-dresser's.

Barry fled to his room, red-faced and humiliated, when Anita asked him quite seriously if he'd dress up for her and show her how he looked. It took my breath away when she said that. Poor Barry looked really embarrassed.

"What's wrong?" Anita asked me. "I can help Barry."

I felt sorry for Barry. It was the first time I felt that way since I'd found him dressed like a girl.

“Anita,” I said to her as his door closed with a slam. “How could you be so, so ...” I couldn’t find the exact word to express what I wanted to say.

“What did I do?” Anita asked in surprise. “If Barry really wants to be accepted by others for what he is, he’s got to accept that we include it in our conversation, hasn’t he?”

“Sure,” I said. “But still. Try putting yourself in his shoes.”

“Mmm,” smiled Anita at me. “We are about the same size. Perhaps we could swap.” There was a glimmer in her eye. That remark, at least, wasn’t made seriously.

“Forget about Barry,” I said. “What can I do about this?” I waved the invitation at her.

“Tell you what,” said Anita. “I’ll talk to Daddy and find out who’s going to the Graingers. If I can, I’ll wangle an invitation for myself.”

Anita’s father was Donald Black, she’d said to me once, of Black and Irwin, the stockbrokers. He’d only just recognized her as his daughter, I gathered. Relations between the two were strained as Anita’s mother had been Donald’s wife three marriages before.

“He sends me money,” Anita told me. “I go round and sit on his office desk in my mini-skirt until he comes running out to sweep me away before his other partners see me and realize who I am. So don’t go thinking I’m in his will for a big inheritance, Jimmy Boy. I have four half-brothers and two half-sisters whom he’s raised who’re ahead of me in the pecking order, never mind three living wives or ex-wives.”

“What good would it be asking Donald ...” I began. Anita shook her head and sighed again as if I was an idiot. I was.

“Oh, Jim,” she said. “Sometimes you are so dumb. I do love you for it, though.” I got up with my most lascivious smile but she put a hand against my chest, her dark red nails so long and lovely, but dangerous as well. “Down, Tiger,” she laughed. “I should have said ‘like’ not ‘love!’”

“I liked it just the way you said it,” I said, leaning over her and stealing a kiss which she did return so nicely. “Now explain it all to me in simple, one-syllable words.”

“If we know who’s going to be there,” Anita said patiently, “we check to see who knew Marsha. We check who knows Marsha’s left you. We see who knows me as Daddy’s daughter as well. If no-one knows me at all, well, I might be able to be Marsha for you over the weekend.”

I was flabbergasted. Anita was grinning as she suggested how we could flimflam my bosses. But, I shuddered, if they ever found out ...

*****3. *Marsha lives!******

It was rather lonely the next couple of nights as Anita was visiting and pumping her father for information. Barry, of course, kept to his room. He wouldn’t even look at me when we passed on the way across the room to the kitchen, the bathroom or our main living area. I did feel a bit sorry for the guy. It was his own fault, though, wasn’t it? He should have controlled his urges and not been discovered, right? There, I still thought of him as a guy, using the proper word for him. When I spoke to

Anita, I tried out all kinds of other words that made her laugh.

“I think you’ll live to regret what you’ve been saying,” she said cryptically to me. She wouldn’t explain, only laughing and hanging up.

Mitchell Dynes asked me, right out of the blue, if Marsha and I were going to the Graingers. I had to be noncommittal, not having heard definitely from Anita. Mitch went on about how Sam and Vicki liked to have good family men at the top of the firm. Mitch hoped that Marsha would get along with Vicki since Sam valued his wife’s opinions.

Mitch had delivered his message as a good mentor should. I thanked him sincerely for it. I was grateful to him for his advice and said so. He actually didn’t know Marsha but he’d heard me talking to other guys about her. He looked quite sad when he was leaving the office, as he said “Good night!” to me.

I got held up on Thursday when the stupid computer started fouling up the quarterlies. It was nine o’clock before I found out we’d been hacked and had to shut down until the next day. I was in a foul mood when I got back to the apartment. I spotted Anita’s coat and purse on the sofa right away.

Now, there’s not really any place to hide in the apartment. I looked everywhere for her, in the most unlikely places such as my bed and under it, before the only place left was Barry’s room. I thought about that for a while before, finally, I knocked on Barry’s door.

There was definitely a scrambling going on in Barry’s room as apprehension rose inside me. Finally, Anita opened the door, her hair and makeup

quite a mess. She fastened her little mini-skirt about her. She squeezed out of the doorway that she barely opened at all. I could hear the rustling of clothes and the creaking of the bed behind her.

“Hi!” Anita said brightly, flinging herself at me to give me a big hug and a welcoming kiss. The door was barely open behind her, she blocking my view of the room.

I hugged Anita, loving the feel of her female body against mine. She smelled of a musky perfume quite different, and very intoxicating, from anything she’d worn with me before. I found it arousing as I held her to me. She wasn’t in her high heels and so wasn’t taller than me, in my oxfords, any more.

“Hi yourself,” I said cautiously. “What are you doing, Anita, in Barry’s room?”

Anita smiled and dropped her arms from my neck to take my hands. Hers were so soft. She moved to one side and pushed the door open, though someone inside definitely squeaked, “No!” trying to stop her.

Anita had a real look of triumph on her face. Again, I wouldn’t have recognized Barry Davies. The woman who looked up fearfully at me from the bed was absolutely gorgeous! She was struggling to fasten a revealing, silver lame evening dress about her. It was backless and strapless as far as I could tell. She had a mane of blonde hair like Brigitte Bardot. She couldn’t help but pout at me, the way she was made up, exotically, for a woman. But because I’d seen this woman once before, I recognized right away that she wasn’t Brigitte Bardot but my roommate, Barry Davies.

Anita helped her creation to her high heels and fastened her dress for her. Was it my imagination or was her makeup mussed, particularly her pink lipstick? The woman, that is Barry, smiled nervously at me as Anita fastened 'her' into her dress. 'She' was tightly constricted and yet so female in it. I couldn't believe the mounds on her chest that showed her as a woman with very nice breasts. Even so nervous, she was indeed Barry, really dolled up this time as a woman.

Barry minced into the living room, glancing nervously at me as huge earrings swung from his ears. He had to toss his head femininely several times to get his blonde hair to stay behind his head. Barry teetered as he walked, Anita's hand taking his. She smiled at her creation as if she actually loved seeing my roommate as a French movie actress.

"Isn't she lovely, Jim?" asked Anita, positively cooing at the blonde-maned Barry. "We've had such fun waiting for you to come home! You'd never know your roomie now, would you?"

Anita was right. I could hardly take my eyes off 'her'. Her gown was revealing things about Barry that couldn't be in the possession of any man, not a real man. Anita followed my eyes and started to laugh.

Barry tried to smile at me. I knew it was Barry but it was only a passing, facial resemblance. I wouldn't have known 'her' if I'd met 'her' on the street, for the first time, not with the smooth makeup Anita had put on my roomie. At least, I think it was her who'd made Barry into such a desirable female.

“Padding and tight strapping,” said Anita while Barry blushed, the rouge on his cheeks making it a little hard to tell. Anita bounced over to the sofa and beckoned the other feminine figure to come and sit beside her, instructing ‘her’ on how to sit. Barry need her advice, however, as he hitched up his skirts gracefully and sat like a woman, his elbows in, releasing his skirts and then crossing his legs with a definite sound of nylon on nylon. He, she, actually sat with a lot more grace than Anita did.

“She’s not going to sit around here dressed like that all night, is she?” I asked, my throat dry as I just stared at ‘her’ female high-heeled shoe, silvery and shiny.

“Of course not,” said Anita sweetly. “I’ve brought a few things over I never wear.” How did she know to do that, I thought? Had she planned to be here with Barry like this? We were supposed to be going out. “I want her to try them all out before she wears them in public. This should be a lot of fun. We can go out to Candy’s,” that was a bar just two blocks from us, “for a night cap. I really want to show off my new creation to Guy the bartender there. He says he’s never fooled but I have another girl to fool him with!”

“Another girl?” I asked her as Anita smiled at Barry and took his hand, the painted fingernails so vivid against the dress he was wearing. “You do this with other guys?” I had the distinct feeling that I didn’t really know Anita Black at all.

“Once,” she laughed at me. “And Guy wasn’t fooled.”

Barry wouldn’t look at me but I studied him. His eyelids were completely painted with shades of white

and light grey. His lips were a glossy pink and were smiling nervously all the time that Anita and I chatted. I got the distinct impression that he was actually happy with all Anita's carrying on and with what had been done to him.

I stomped over to the kitchen, uttered a few choice swear words at my tranny roommate, and took a beer out of the fridge. Anita very sweetly asked me for two sherries for the 'girls' and waited for me, as I stood seething and drinking, to get them for the pair of them. Finally, I smiled with clenched teeth and got them. If what Barry had told me was the truth when we moved in, he hated sherry and drank only beer, light beer.

Anita chattered on, as I prepared two glasses, about sherry being a ladylike drink. Barry didn't look up at my smirking face as I approached and offered him, her, a glass. He had his legs crossed and so had to lean forward, his female chest exposed, taping and padding, my ass, to take the wineglass from me. The action and the sound of his dress as he moved were so totally feminine that I was shaken. I almost forgot to serve Anita as I stared at this other woman in my apartment. I couldn't believe it. Barry Davies was actually being a woman, not just doing some dumb charade for Halloween.

Each girl only had a little sip, enough to mark their glasses with lipstick, and then Anita wanted Barry to show me some more of her 'surprises'. She helped Barry to his high-heeled feet, help I don't think he needed, and went with him as Barry wiggled provocatively to his room to change. I couldn't believe what I was seeing from the back as the blonde-haired woman sashayed away from me like a fashion model on the runway into Barry's room. Her

rounded posterior, her walk and her figure didn't give a thing away about who she really was.

Anita came back, grinning broadly, and sat opposite me.

"I'm going out," I snarled at her. "I can't sit here and watch you making a fool of my roommate like this."

"Oh, I think you should stay," Anita said mildly. "Why we're doing this concerns you a great deal. I've had to do a lot of fast talking to get Barry to agree to this presentation. Well, the thing is, Jimmy Boy, we have a lot of talking to do, particularly about the Graingers' party the weekend after next. We have to talk about Barry's special problem as well."

I snorted at that. Anita opened her eyes very wide. "No, I don't mean Barry being a cross-dresser," she said, making my jaw drop in surprise. "That's not his problem but let's talk about that later. First of all, I finally got the guest list for the Graingers and, barring any last minute cancellations by ten people, you'll have to count me out as Marsha. Sorry, my man."

Anita took a typed list from her purse and handed it to me. I knew many of the people on it, of course. The Arnolds had been invited, too. Frank Arnold was one of the guys who was likely to be upped if I wasn't. Mitchell Dynes was on the list and Jocelyn Fotheringham. Jocelyn! I didn't even know she had another first name but 'Miss'.

"I know the Kennedys, Mike and Melissa," said Anita, pulling a face, "and there's my Daddy as well, Donald Black. He says he he'll be there to see I don't disgrace him in front of the top brass from Bentham Trust. Sam Grainger's trying to get Daddy to do

something for him but I don't know what it is yet. I'm sure I'll know after this weekend, which is why I've wangled an invitation to keep an eye on my boy friend and his wife."

"You don't need to," I told her dully. "I won't be there. After all, it's to meet my wife I'm invited in the first place. It looks like Frank Arnold will be the next Comptroller. As you said, there are other companies."

"My boy friend, the quitter," Anita laughed at me. "I suppose you've given up asking me to marry you as well? Funny! Now you're actually free to ask me, you haven't at all. You haven't even asked me to go to bed with you for a week at least."

I'd have asked her right then for both those things but she shook her head, her blonde hair swirling and settling back beautifully about her lovely face.

"I didn't give up," Anita said, swinging a beautiful, bare-looking leg in front of me as she sipped her sherry again. "I checked all of my friends to see if they'd do a special impersonation for me next weekend. But everyone, even Sissy, that's Cicely and she's too tall for you, was either tied up or wouldn't do it if they had to pretend to be someone else. I did get you two offers of marriage, though, my pet, from girls who would have married you just for your future prospects. It took me all yesterday and today but I finally did get someone at last who'll be your Marsha, but you have to do a favor for her in return."

Two offers of marriage! Well, that made me feel a little better. I perked up. It had been a dumb idea in the first place to think of Anita passing herself off as

Marsha. She was so outgoing which is why I liked Anita so much. Marsha had always been quiet, moody and not very talkative.

I was just on the point of asking Anita who the girl was who was going to do me such a big favor. If you've guessed it already, you were way ahead of me. I took a swig of beer, feeling very pleased, as Mitchell Dynes rang my doorbell.

Not that I knew who it was when I answered the buzzing. There he was, my boss, Mitch, with an older, plump lady, grey-haired, a little over-dressed and overly madeup, diamonds glittering brightly in her ears and at her wrists. I knew there was no Mrs Dynes as I stared at the woman.

"So glad that you're in, Jim," said Mitch in a most friendly fashion, so unlike the way that he behaved at work. I gawked at him as much as I eyeballed the amused woman with him.

"Mrs Grainger," said an actually smiling Mitchell Dynes, "couldn't wait till next week to meet you and Marsha, Jim. So, as we were just at the Arnolds, she suggested we could drop in on you as well."

I stared open-mouthed at my boss. I got the drift. Mrs Grainger must have heard some rumor about Marsha and me. Yes, Vicki Grainger was checking up on us. She confirmed she was in charge by barging right in, taking in the neat, slightly sophisticated but comfortable look of the place in a glance. (Thank you, Barry, I thought, and then remembered wildly what he was doing in his room and prayed to all the gods in their heavens to keep him there while Mrs Grainger did her inspection.) Vicki, though, was looking pointedly at the glass of sherry in Anita's hand.

Well, what could I do but splutter out an introduction and offer the pair of them sherry or perhaps something stronger. Sherry was fine for them both as they took off their coats. I played doorman for a while, hustling Anita's coat away as well.

Mrs Grainger frowned as she looked at Anita. "You're Anita Black, Donald's newly found daughter, aren't you?" she said, her face brightening. "You're one of the people I'm so looking forward to meeting over the weekend at the cottage." Some cottage! It had rooms for over twenty couples in the main house itself, Mitch had told me. There were guest houses on the estate as well.

Mrs Grainger smiled at the sherry I brought her, took a sip and told me it was delicious and cold, the way she liked it. She turned back to Anita and smiled sweetly to her, the way older people do when they're about to zing one at you.

"Don Black's daughter by his first marriage, I think?" she asked. She said it as if she was discussing something disagreeable and slightly soiled. I kept my head down as I poured a sherry for Mitch.

Anita, however, was not one to be cowed. "Mrs Grainger," she said with a brilliant smile of her own. "I can't tell you how much Marsha and I are looking forward to your party next week. Why, we're just here tonight, trying on some new, and some old, clothes we girl friends share and here you are!"

At that point, I should have fallen to the floor and feigned a heart attack. My heart was beating so rapidly I thought I was going to explode! Marsha! Barry was the friend Anita had found to impersonate my wife for a weekend. My wife was going to be a man, a drag queen, a female impersonator, a tranny!

I couldn't get any words out as my brain and throat seized up. I should have thrown Mitch and Vicki out of the apartment and gone on with the rest of my life.

"Oh, Jimmy darling," said Anita in her most affected drawl. "Please, I'd like a little more sherry and Marsha would as well." She indicated the other lipsticked glass on the side table beside the sofa. "I should tell her that you have more company besides me tonight."

Anita stood up but, at that very moment, Barry chose to make his second appearance. He'd taken off the lame dress but had kept on the blonde wig. His makeup was unchanged. He was wearing a bikini with a slightly transparent coat of blue, lacy material that came three-quarters of the way down his long, lovely, bare legs. He was wearing high, platform heels and big, blue, dangling earrings.

"Anita," Barry said, even laughing a little, looking down at the belt he was trying to close with his long, beautiful, pink fingernails. "I need your help!"

The first ribbon fastened before Barry realized there was something more going on in the apartment. "Oh, I'm sorry," he gasped, a look of pure horror on his very pretty face. Yes! I thought crookedly. Shades of when I'd walked in on him and been so utterly shocked. Now, he would feel it, too!

Mrs Grainger was up to such an occasion. "Oh, how lovely your wife is, James," she gushed to me. "Come in, Mrs Banks. I hope you'll let me call you, Marsha!" She wanted Marsha to call her 'Vicki' now that we all knew one another. As if! "Now we did say no bikinis on our invitation, Marsha, but seeing how lovely you look in that outfit, my dear, I think that

you must wear that next week when we have the pool open. Seeing you like that will make Sam's pacemaker start overloading," she finished girlishly. "But don't worry about that, Marsha; the side benefits of that will all be mine!"

Barry looked wildly from side to side, earrings bouncing, long hair flowing all about his face and shoulders. I stood there like an idiot, too stunned to say anything. Anita thought much faster than I did.

"Marsha!" Anita said merrily, bouncing over to take Barry's arm in hers. "Look who just dropped in on us. Mrs Grainger and Mr Dynes. You'll get to know them really well at the party next weekend."

"It is Vicki, please," said Mrs Grainger, beaming at my 'wife'!

"M-Vicki," murmured 'Marsha', in a voice unlike any I'd heard from Barry. This was a woman's voice, soft and lilting. Barry must have practised for years to sound like that. I only wished the real Marsha had sounded so sweet and feminine.

"You should call me Mitch," Mr Dynes said gallantly, standing, to take my so-called wife's hand in a gentle hand shake. He looked for all the world as if he was about to hug her, my bikini-clad wife.

"We shouldn't have dropped in unannounced on you," Mrs Grainger said, turning on the charm as she looked at Marsha. "But it's all Mitchell's fault. He did so want me to meet you, dear. I can see now why he did! I'm afraid we're all going to be eclipsed by your beauty next weekend. Oh, do come down early on Friday! You must come early. Mitchell, you can arrange that, can't you? We can have a formal dinner on the Friday and a ball on Saturday. Yes, a

ball! We haven't had dancing at the Cottage in two years!"

Vicki gushed that the announcement of Senator Samuel Grainger's new appointment to Paris as American Ambassador was a week away. Yes, Vicki needed to practice attending balls if she and her husband accepted the posting.

Marsha nervously wanted to change but Vicki wouldn't hear of it. "Bring your darling wife over, James," Mrs Grainger said to 'her', indicating to me, Marsha's sick 'husband', to bring my 'wife' to sit beside her. "And we can talk more comfortably."

So, I took Marsha's hand as she looked at me, beseeching me silently, I think, to do nothing to humiliate her. I led my 'wife' back to the sofa and sat beside her. I held her hand as she sat and crossed her bare legs, Mitch watching avidly. Anita and Vicki kept the conversation going with little help from me. Marsha managed a strangled monosyllable and a fearful smile now and then. Finally, after ostentatiously looking at his watch a number of times, Mitch was able to persuade Vicki to carry on her 'little talk' with Marsha, the following weekend.

Of course, there were hugs and compliments on makeup and perfume that had to be endured but Marsha carried it off surprisingly well, smiling nicely at Mitch when he took her hand and kissed it gallantly. I think he was staring down the front of her bikini. I only hoped he saw what he thought he saw.

"I'm going to get drunk!" I announced when the door closed at last, dropping Marsha's hand and heading to the fridge for another beer.

"No, you're not!" exulted Anita, flinging her arms about Marsha, I mean Barry, and hugging her, I

mean him, while she, he, looked at Anita with a fearfulness I understood. "I told you you'd pass," Anita went on, "anywhere! And you can, Marsha! While you," she turned to me, "you wanted a wife, didn't you? Now you've got one!"

"Him!" I almost screamed out the word.

"No!" said Anita vehemently, pointing to Barry in his bikini and blonde hair. "Her!"

I was flabbergasted. Barry released himself from Anita and came wobbling to the kitchen counter where I was pouring myself a stiffer drink. "Please," he murmured in that same husky woman's voice he'd been using all the time with Vicki Grainger. "May I have a rye? I really need it."

I couldn't believe how sexy and womanish he sounded. Right up close to me and I couldn't see anything to tip me off to his real sex. Rather it was the opposite. His waist was narrow, but he filled out the top and bottom of his bikini just like a real girl. I had no idea how he could do that.

I couldn't speak to 'her' as she glanced at me, her high heels making her level with me. In a daze, I poured us both stiff drinks. She put her hands about the glass like a real girl, her fingernails gleaming, as she took a sip.

Anita came over and put an arm about 'Marsha', kissing her ear and earring which she reacted to as if it was her due.

"You don't have any choice, Jimmy, if you want that promotion," said Anita, beaming at me. "Mrs G thinks that Barry is Marsha. So, he is Marsha for you next weekend."

After what had just gone on in my apartment, it really was that simple. Barry Davies would be my 'wife' for a weekend. It had to be that way! My insides were ready to revolt.

"This is your idea of a joke, isn't it?" I asked Anita hoarsely. She beamed again at me.

"There's more," she said, looking at the blonde girl in the black bikini, holding onto her drink as if it was for dear life. Her thin robe was quite open, showing off her thin, female, hairless body to anyone who looked at her. "But first we should ask Marsha if she wants to be your wife for the weekend? Will you be Jim's wife at the Graingers' cottage for the weekend, Marsha? If he agrees to do the little favor at the end of the month that you need from him as well?"

Barry, Marsha, seemed to be suffering from a nervous reaction as bad as mine. "Oh, I can't!" she asked. "I, I can't ask him to do that as well!"

"Look," said Anita. "You'll be doing him a tremendous favor. You'll be sleeping in the same bed as him, making up in front of him, having to put up with all his black looks and snide comments. He can do something for you in return."

"Maybe if I could just stay here for a little while until I find somewhere else," Marsha began huskily.

"He'll do that anyway. And you can dress any way you want when you're here," said Anita. "But if he does the other thing for you, will you be his Marsha for him over the next weekend?"

"I, I couldn't be a woman in a place like that," Marsha began again with a shudder. "They'd find me out." She sounded desperate but the more she spoke and twisted in anguish the more I saw that

'she' could indeed pull it off. She could be my wife for a weekend. I'd no doubt about it.

"No-one will find out," said Anita stoutly. "I'll be there to help you, Marsha. We'll call you that, all the next week as you cross-dress as well. Don't worry! Put on that white and red flowered, summer dress and the white stockings and shoes. Oh, the white panties as well while I talk to Jim about his part of the deal."

Wow, the way Marsha looked as she walked away from us and to the bedroom! If I took her along as my wife, and she dressed like that, I could see myself beating off the guys from work, married or not, with a stick.

"The other part of the deal?" I asked, watching my 'wife' turn and sashay delicately into 'her' bedroom.

"Barry is in a pickle just like you, Jim," said Anita with a smile at me. "He has to find a girl as well to go to a party with him. But it's a fancy dress ball. It's only one night; so it's much easier to accommodate him than it is for him to accommodate you."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. "You want me to dress up like a woman and be Barry's date?" I asked the girl I was trying to get to marry me. This time, my jaw really must have hit the floor in the amazement and incredulity I felt at such a request.

"It's an Artists' and Models' ball," said Anita. "So, I can't help him or I would. So would Sissy or Janette or Alanna, girls you've met at clubs with me. But everyone knows us and know he isn't our boy friend. All you'll have to do is wear a ring and say you're Barry's wife and Countess, dance a few

dances and you're done. You don't have to be in drag for days and have to fool women, not men, that you're a wife."

"And who thought up such a stupid, cockamamie idea as this?" I asked Anita furiously.

"I did," she said, coming around the kitchen bar to put her arm about me. Anita put her face right on mine and began to kiss me. "I want to see how much of a man you are, lover," she said to me. "If you and Barry pull off both ends of this deal, I'll marry you. I'll go to bed with you! Deal?"

I should have taken more time to think about it. I thought about the order of the events she was talking about. Yes, Barry could be my sweet wifey, Marsha, for a weekend in hell for the pair of us. I'd be all nice to Anita and get her to wear my ring since we were engaged.

I still had the engagement and wedding rings that Marsha, the real one, had thrown at me, way back when. I'd renege on the deal with Barry if Anita didn't put out with me, a lot. Yeah, take that, you conniving witch, I thought. It was manipulation like that which killed my marriage to Marsha. I wasn't going to make that mistake again.

"Okay, deal," I said. Anita fell into my arms. We kissed as we hadn't really done before. She parted her glossy lips and let me take possession of her mouth until we heard the door click again. A beautiful, blonde girl came out of Barry's room, her madeup eyes opening wider as she saw Anita pressed against the kitchen counter by me, her mini-skirt hitched up a little so I could fondle her sweet tush a little.

“It’s a deal,” Anita said to Marsha. “It’s your turn to be the wife, girl. With my help, Marsha next weekend will make us proud!”

*******4. *The first part of the deal********

We got to the Graingers early on Friday afternoon, Mitch obliging us with an afternoon off. By ‘we’, I mean Anita, Marsha and me. I wanted Anita around to help me in protecting my wife from instant exposure of what she was. No, I didn’t really think that it was going to happen but who could say for sure. Someone whom we didn’t know might have known any one of us and known my wife previously. It could have been as simple as, “You’re not the Marsha I saw Jim Banks marrying,” and it would be all over. One career down the drain. Mine.

Anita, by the way, had moved in with Marsha and me for the previous ten days. Guess who got to sleep on a sofa in the living room? She wouldn’t let Marsha go to work. Marsha was a twenty-four-seven woman, as they say. She was out every day with Anita, shopping or just walking around town. I got to meet them for lunch a few times where Anita got me.

“There’s something you have to do that every man does when he meets his wife,” Anita told me. I frowned at her as we sat under the umbrella in an outside bar on Figueroa. “You have to kiss your wife, dodo,” said Anita with a smile.

Marsha looked as uneasy as me. “You don’t have to,” ‘she’ began.

“Of course he does,” snapped Anita. “You’re his wife, Marsha. He treats you as if you are, all this week, not just on the weekend. Now, do it, the pair

of you, on the lips and with a little squeeze as well, Jimmy Boy. Your wife hasn't seen you all day. You haven't seen her looking so pretty, have you?"

So, I stood and bent over Marsha, who looked up at me uncertainly. I bent beside her and kissed her, on the lips. The world didn't come to an end. It was just like kissing any woman, actually. Her lips were soft and sticky. She closed her eyes as women do. Her makeup was flawlessly feminine as well.

I sat down, feeling great at how easily I'd pulled that off but Anita had to remind me. "We'll be practising that the other way round at the end of the month when you go to Barry's ball," she smiled at me. "Then, you'll be the wife, my darling."

Each night, I got to meet Marsha as she was out with Anita. I had to greet Marsha with a kiss each time. Several times Anita left us to go off with someone else. I had to take my wife then to dinner and entertain her so that she was used to being out in public as a woman.

Actually, Marsha was really less nervous than I was about speaking to waiters and hostesses in restaurants. She was shy, of course, particularly in talking at length about anything with me, such as fashions and chick flicks, but her shyness and reluctance were actually quite appealing.

Each time we met, I had to give her compliments, as men should get used to doing, Anita dryly told me. It was fairly easy as Anita changed Marsha's wigs and hair styles on a daily basis. I liked how she looked with a kind of blonde chignon, her makeup more subdued than when she was giving her Bardot impersonation.

Marsha looked at her coolest and most attractive when we arrived at the Graingers, I thought. She was wearing a woman's, grey suit with a straight skirt, a pink silk blouse, and sheer stockings that showed off her pretty, shapely legs. I'd become quite an admirer of those in the last week. She'd backed off from the wild beauty she'd been in the apartment and whom Mrs Grainger had admired.

But Vicki had told everyone about it. Half the guys were kidding me about them coming to the weekend specifically to seduce my wife. Wouldn't that have been a sensation if any of them could have?

"Marsha! Darling!" gushed Vicki Grainger as we tentatively went into the massive, four-storey 'Cottage'. "Oh, how beautiful you look!" she exclaimed, hugging my wife-for-the-weekend while Marsha looked a little abashed.

"Sam!" urged a beaming Vicki as her husband came out of the study with a bunch of older men, including Donald Black, Anita's father. "Come and meet James' beautiful wife. Oh, my darling, your hair is so beautiful!"

Vicki Grainger took us over to introduce us to the brain trust. I barely got to shake hands with Senator Samuel Grainger before Vicki led us on to meet everyone else, including Frank and Beth Arnold, and several older ladies like Vicki herself. Marsha had to pirouette so that the older women could see how beautiful was her suit. Just wait, I thought, until they saw the other treasures that Anita had 'forced' a willing Marsha to bring with her, including different evening dresses for the parties we had to go to.

I looked back. Anita was on the edge of a group of men, including her father, all talking heatedly about something. She winked at me and smiled broadly as Marsha was shown off by my boss's wife to everyone.

“And since everyone is here so promptly,” said Vicki. “Let's all retire for a while and assemble again in the antechamber to the dining room at six for an aperitif before dinner. Any gentlemen without a tux can borrow one from Sam's collection. We have every size there is, I think.”

Vicki made it her personal duty to escort Marsha and me to our room at the back of the house on the second floor. Anita pulled a face when a housekeeper or maid asked her if she could show her to her room on the fourth.

Marsha only had to mention how tired she was and Vicki was all abject apologies. She told us to come down whenever we were ready. It was going to be such a lovely night. Everyone there wanted to meet and talk with Marsha. Vicki was almost like a schoolgirl with a crush on a movie star as she talked to my wife.

Marsha's voice was so much more natural than the first time of my seeing 'her' with Anita. When we were alone, though, we didn't have to talk. Maids had unpacked our bags already. Marsha's dresses were hanging in the closet with my rented tux. I lay on the bed as Marsha looked at me uncertainly and began to nibble at her knuckle the way that Barry did when he was very nervous. It was then I realized that there was no couch or chair in the room that one of us could sleep on. There was only this huge double bed to sit on.

Despite all that Marsha and Anita had been up to in the previous week, Anita had insisted that Marsha wear very flimsy and feminine nightdresses and negligees. Marsha had been requested each night as well, when her makeup was removed, her face and skin covered with scented lotions, to come to me and kiss me good-night. The short peck we tried to get away with wasn't enough for Anita. She was really out to get me, I thought cynically, knowing that she wasn't going to get her way and have me in a dress like my roomie.

So, I took Marsha in my arms each night and kissed her as I'd have kissed a woman I was going to marry. I kissed her as I did Anita. Marsha's lips were much softer and more yielding than Anita's. There was no contest in kissing Marsha. She surrendered to me, her eyes closed before I met her lips. She tremblingly hung on to me as long as I wanted to kiss her. I let it go a little while just to aggravate Anita but it didn't. Anita only laughed which made Marsha blush furiously when I finally let her warm body get away from me.

"Oooo, just like husband and wife," Anita mocked us. "You two should really be married." Then came the kicker. "Oh, at the end of the month, you will be again, won't you? Just remember how you're both doing it because we have to reverse what you're doing then!"

I patted the double bed beside me while Marsha looked at me in some distress. "Oh, it's all right," I told her. "I'm just joking. I'll sleep on the floor." Then, I thought about it and could have kicked myself. After all, we were both men, weren't we? So, why should I be the one to sleep on the floor?

“I, I guess it will be all right,” said Marsha, in a very nervous voice. She moved her pillows so that one lay in the middle at the top of the bed, dividing it in two. “We, we shouldn’t have expected anything different to this, should we? Will you help me, please, to change for dinner?”

Helping Marsha out of her travelling suit and into the black and silver evening dress that Anita wanted her to wear for Friday evening was a gut-turning experience for me, again. Of course, I should have expected that Marsha would wear very feminine lingerie. Well, I expected her to but seeing her in her stockings and garter belt, in silk panties and a bra was a real turn on.

I forgot entirely that she was Barry, my roomie, as I undid her bra. She slipped that off and put on another, a black one, without straps. I could barely see the seams of the false breasts she wore across her chest. Marsha looked so real as she held her hair up and I fastened the bra for her.

I almost choked as Marsha turned away and changed her panties to black, lacy things as well. She put on a garter belt and ran her hands over her black stockings. She put them on as if she loved every second of them slipping over her legs. I’d watched real women do that. It always turned me on.

I had to move into the closet and hide from my phoney wife as I was getting stiff from watching her put on her stockings and attach them to her garter belt. The little slip covered up her garters and then she sat on the bed and did her makeup while I put on my white shirt, black pants and tux in the closet.

I don't think that Marsha looked at me as I looked at her. She sprayed herself with cologne and sniffed at her wrists, smiling. Then she noticed me looking at her and flushed. The black and white dress clung to her figure as I zipped her up at the back. I couldn't help it. I kissed her soft shoulder, making her almost jump out of her skin.

Her outlined eyes were horrified as she looked at me. "Well, you are my wife," I told Marsha as she retreated to her suitcase with the black high heels on top.

"But you, you're engaged to Anita," she said huskily. What else could I do? I shrugged.

"Yes, I'm engaged to her," I said, gesturing to the rings on her ring finger. "But for the next three days, I'm married to Marsha."

A tap on the door signalled a smiling maid there to tidy up after us. Marsha shivered with nerves, I guess, as I helped her put the necklace on, kissing her neck again as the maid watched us. Marsha could do nothing about it. Marsha blushed most prettily and took my arm, her long dark earrings swinging at her neck.

"Oh ma'am, you look so beautiful," said the maid as we left the room. I would have given her a tip in any case but I doubled it at the blushes she brought to my wife's face. Marsha clung to me as tightly as her dress clung to her, all the way down the stairs, to the first of the parties of that weekend.

Marsha was an outright sensation among the Trust's top brass. I'd said, "Smile," to her as we went into the drawing room, as Sam called it. She tried. She was sweet, shy, and didn't seem to know how vivacious she was. I don't know how many men told

me how lucky I was to be married to her. And then, they'd tell me they quite understood why I'd been hiding Marsha away.

Donald Black, in his cups before we even got to dinner, proposed a toast to "the most beautiful girl here tonight". We all knew whom he meant. Several of the men were gallant and turned to their grinning wives to toast them. Anita smiled at me down the length of the dining room table and shook her head as I raised my glass. She pointed to the gorgeous blonde woman beside me, my wife.

I really didn't have to do anything to entertain the Graingers, or my wife. It was rather sickening how the old folks fawned over Marsha, the men said such witty things, just to get her to smile at them, which she did almost constantly. The wine she was plied with had its effect, I noticed, by the high color on her cheeks, that she patted every so often, so femininely, showing off her long, lacquered fingernails.

I kept out of the way as Marsha visited different groups but I was on tenterhooks all the same. Sam Grainger took a real interest in her. He had his hands all over her. I became concerned, as she was questioned so much, that her lovely, husky voice would slip and we'd both be caught.

I think I'd have been annoyed if anyone had suddenly challenged one of us. Luckily, as Anita had predicted, the old folks drank too much on the first night. They always did, she had said. Anita smiled across at me, she so gorgeous in a green and black dress. Her makeup was exquisite as well as she came to me and slipped her arm through mine.

"Our girl is doing well," Anita said to me.

“What’s your room number?” I murmured, making Anita giggle.

“Thinking of a midnight ramble?” she whispered into my ear. “No way, lover. You keep to your end of this deal and you won’t ever have to ask again.”

Donald Black came staggering towards us. He pushed right by me, muttering something about Anita’s man, whatever that meant.

“I have to go,” Anita said quickly. “Daddy needs his little girl.” She went after him, put her arm in his and guided Donald up the stairs. He almost flung her off him, staggering by himself. His lovely daughter swayed after him, smiling brilliantly. She turned at the top of the stairs and gave me a little, feminine wave as she swished after her drunken father.

“Lovely girl, Anita Black,” said Vicki, nodding to me as she eased from some other man’s arm, not Sam’s. “I loved meeting her at your place, James. She and Marsha are such good friends, I hear.”

“Really close,” I told the Senator’s wife. “She just went up to look after her father. Donald, well ...”

“Donald is drunk,” said Mrs Grainger forcefully. “But you, young man, have been very restrained; and so has your wife. Breakfast will be a late affair tomorrow, brunch really, from ten, on the patio. But sleep in till twelve if you like. We don’t start organizing the afternoon until then.”

I went in search of my lovely wife. She seemed delighted to see me. Sam was a little disappointed when I said we should retire as the host’s wife had. But Marsha made him a pretty goodnight, promising to be his partner in croquet or whatever other game they were going to play the following afternoon.

I let Marsha have the bathroom first to get undressed without my prying eyes watching 'her'. I unzipped her dress and undid her bra for her. She held them to her as she went on tiptoe into the bathroom to get ready for bed.

All I had to do was dump some clothes, hang up others, and get into the pyjamas, white, with black piping, an emblem of a great house on the pocket with the words 'The Cottage' underneath. Then, as a man, I was ready for bed. I thought about my wife and how she'd behaved. She'd been fantastic as I should have known she would be after seeing her with waiters and so on. As a woman, I thought with a wry smile, Marsha was a million dollars, while Barry, well he was a dime a dozen.

Marsha came back finally in a long, white nightdress that Anita had packed for her. "Don't turn Jim on too much," Anita had joked as she re-packed one of Marsha's suitcases so that the wigs and the wig blocks had room 'to breathe'. Marsha put her main wig away on a closet shelf. She wore the shorter 'sleep wig' which Anita had said she must pin carefully and wear in bed.

"You never know in these places who's going to walk in on you unexpectedly," Anita had said to Marsha as they planned the weekend as I sat, amused, at the kitchen table, reading the sports page. "So, a woman must have some hair."

Marsha had scrubbed her face clean of makeup but the femininity of her face was quite marked by the way that Anita had finally shaped her eyebrows. Golden studs glinted at Marsha's ears as well and her lips were definitely glossy. She was still wearing her false breasts and a white bra, I noticed, as well as panties beneath her long nightie.

Marsha lay down and turned out the light, snuggling down, the pillow between us, she facing away from me.

“Anita would be annoyed with you,” I told her, teasing her. “You know she says we have to kiss when we say goodnight and you, my wife, haven’t said goodnight and haven’t kissed me.”

Marsha was as far across the bed from me as it was possible to go. “Leave it be, Jimmy,” she said huskily. “Anita isn’t here now.”

I took her pillow and tossed it down the bed. Did I know what I was doing? Heck, yes I did. I wanted that soft, clinging kiss from Marsha that I got every night. “I want my kiss,” I whispered to my wife, putting my arms about her silk-encased waist. I thought she’d resist me, call me a pervert, kick me, or do some crazy thing.

I never expected her to turn to me and roll right up in my arms. Then, Marsha was kissing me as a woman should kiss her husband. Oh, I got my soft, clingy kiss, I did, and I got a whole lot more. With those spongy, phoney breast pressed against me as my wife kissed me so lovingly, her arms about my neck, her scent filled my nostrils with the knowledge that this was a woman in my arms. I hugged Marsha to me, feeling her smooth body against mine. Her lips opened and I was able to French kiss her with ease.

We didn’t have to say anything. Our bodies were so tight to each other that my male desire for my lovely, fragrant wife was pretty obvious. She helped me slip out of the pyjamas and kissed my chest, her lips trembling as she did. I lifted the skirts of her nightie and she didn’t stop me. No, she burrowed

closer beneath me. Our kisses were scorching as I caressed her legs. She didn't stop me. My manhood grew immensely as I poked her thighs and panties with the moist tip of my manhood.

Marsha clung to me even as she whipped down her panties frantically and parted her legs, lifting them up about me, her kisses becoming frenzied. I'd never thought about how I'd make love to a girl like her but she showed me, covering her frontage by wrapping what she had in her silk nightie. She brought the only entrance she had to my ready, hard manhood. She wiggled to get me into her, to penetrate her as she rocked me. I've never felt anything so sweet as I made love to Marsha, my lovely wife.

She was kind of funny as Marsha 'came' in her silk wrappings, clutching my hand to her as I tried to help her. She was actually whimpering as I came inside her as well, her mouth pressed onto mine as we were united. Odd, I felt her sobbing under me as I started over again. She frantically kissed me even more as I slowed down and went deeper into her. She dug her nails into me and begged me not to stop.

Well, I couldn't stop. Heck, it had been a long time for me with a woman. And Marsha, what a woman she turned out to be! It wasn't like making love to my divorced wife, Marsha, at all. That Marsha had been so controlling from the start. I was always hurting her, from her hair to her legs. This Marsha just wriggled and writhed beneath me and pleased me with her frantic kisses and her soft hands stroking me as much as I was stroking her.

This Marsha moved and got excited when I kissed and manipulated her phoney breasts. Well, I

caressed them as if they were real. I don't know how she felt about what I was doing but I wasn't going to stop to ask. The scent on her breasts was just so marvellous and they were kind of real. I seemed to arouse her enough by doing that. It made her lift her legs higher and tighter about me.



That was the first time she was leading me, initiating me into her, her smooth, lovely tush again, urging me to grow into her and take her as we locked up once more. She whimpered in pleasure. I'd figured that out and loved her doing it. I eased over and let her gyrate against me until she jerked up, groaning and moaning. She clutched at her nightie against me as we did it together again.

I held her against me as Marsha rolled to one side, not letting her get away as I kissed her wet face. I kept her lower body tight against me, stroking her wonderful, soft thighs. "Anita is going to be so mad with me," Marsha whispered as she kissed me. I hung onto her lips with mine.

That was when I thought, for the first time, that this sexy, totally feminine woman beside me, clinging so lovingly to me was Barry Davies. It was a jarring note on a perfect evening but it flew away as she moved. Her breasts caressed my chest and I slipped the straps of her nightie over her shoulders. Marsha giggled and sighed as she held me.

"Again?" she murmured, tickling me with her soft hand. And so I did Marsha, my wife, again, loving her as if she was the woman she clearly wanted to be. And as I made love to her, pressing her down, making her completely submit to me, I was admiring her so much, I was admiring Barry so much, that is, that he could be such a wonderful girl.

*******5. *The best part of the deal********

Morning was a little stiff. Marsha looked so lovely, getting out of bed, her nightie cascading about her bare legs, all embarrassed as she hurried to the bathroom. We were sort of reserved as we

switched places, she swathed in towels, sitting immediately with crossed legs, one bare as she tried to keep her robe closed. I touched her shoulder as I passed her. She jumped as if an electric shock had passed through her.

When I was clean at last, I came out and Marsha was in one of her summer dresses and long, blonde, curly hair. Her makeup was flawless as she stood nervously at our bedroom door, waiting to go out and face the day.

“Just a moment,” I said to her. Marsha looked at me in puzzlement as I reached behind her hair as if to remove something caught there. What I did, of course was gently pull her head into mine and kiss her on her lips as lovingly as I could. She stiffened against me but when I kept it going she finally stopped resisting, which I found so great. She accepted that her husband was kissing her as a husband should. I did have conjugal rights in this marriage after all.

“I have to do my lipstick again,” Marsha whispered huskily to me, a lacquered finger tapping on my chest. She didn’t move away, of course; so I ruined her lipstick even more. I even stroked her lovely tush as she moved to the mirror to re-do her lips in the end.

I opened the door at the knock, expecting a maid. It was Anita, looking past me, smiling at Marsha and what she was doing. “Hope you two lovebirds had a good night,” she laughed, a mischievous smile on her lips.

I acted as if I was haggard while Marsha came over nervously, blushing furiously. “It was just great, really,” I said as Anita looked at Marsha’s

makeup and accessories critically, suggesting different earrings, bolder and more dangly, at my wife's ears.

After lunch, at the pool, I knew I had the Comptroller's job sewn up. Sam couldn't get enough of ogling both Marsha and Anita in their black bikinis and see-through wraps. I think that, of the two, my wife actually had the nicer body. She sure had long, smooth legs, just like Anita's. The two of them showed them off shamelessly even though they didn't appear ready to go into the water at any time.

The Arnolds took it well. Beth even tried to be genuinely friendly to Marsha. Marsha smiled and looked to be enjoying herself even as Anita flirted outrageously with other men. Marsha's obvious reticence at doing that was so charming. I could see Sam was halfway into being in love with her. Vicki was looking at him most thoughtfully. Only now did she seem to realize what a bombshell she'd introduced into her marriage. No wonder that, in a week, Senator Sam, who'd been reluctant to leave the Senate the papers said, had made up his mind and was the new Ambassador.

The sort of funny thing was that Donald Black made a serious bid as well as Sam to move in on Marsha. Anita encouraged her father for all it was worth even though my wife seemed a little discomfited by the whole procedure, letting Sam rescue her from Donald's attempts to monopolize her. I was getting a funny feeling then; about time, right? It was a funny feeling about Anita and the way this weekend was working out.

Anita and Marsha went for a float in the water, putting lotion on each other, each giggling as they did it, knowing how we were all watching them av-

idly and wishing we could do it for them. I hoped that Anita, her quick intelligence so obvious, wasn't deliberately setting me up with Barry, my roommate, for some perverse reason of her own.

I saw Anita whisper to Marsha as they both looked at me. Marsha nodded and they both giggled again. I think I could guess what they were talking about. I didn't think that Marsha, Barry, yes, my former roomie, I must start thinking of my wife that way, could keep anything secret from her girl friend.

We played tennis in the afternoon, Marsha again looking great in a short, white dress, everyone trying to be her partner. She played mostly with Sam, smiling prettily and getting a hug every time she made a poor shot. Occasionally she played with Donald Black, who played very well and protectively took all the difficult shots. They won easily over Anita and a glowering Sam Grainger.

For dinner that night, Marsha wore the lamé dress. You could almost hear Don Black, we were to call him that, panting out loud as we joined him. Anita, also lovely in a white, fringed gown, claimed me as a dinner partner, leaving Marsha to her grinning, overjoyed father.

I was really wondering about Anita. I did wonder what kind of girl she was. See how slow that I am? It never occurred to me to wonder if she was a lesbian or even a girl at all, as Marsha, that is Barry, wasn't. I was more concerned that Anita was setting up revenge on her father, something Marsha was going to be involved in, in the future.

I began to wonder when the rumors would start that Marsha had been 'unfaithful' to me. I still hadn't figured out what Anita was doing, as you can

guess. She was nice to me over dinner, though, a little flirtatious but always referring back to Marsha.

“Marsha is so lucky to have a husband like you,” Anita gushed when we were with the Arnolds, really nice people, I decided. They said nice things about my wife.

“I was telling Beth you should be moving up in this firm,” said Frank earnestly. I think he meant every word. “You’ve been passed over when you were clearly the better man.”

“His wife will make the difference for him this time,” said Anita while Beth laughed and poked her husband.

“See,” she said in what appeared to me to be delight. “You should have married Conchita after all.”

Frank had the grace to blush. “Beth has to remind me of a show we went to in Mexico when we were kids,” he said. “I fell in love with the main performer. Well, I was so naïve I didn’t know what a female impersonator was!”

“I bet you still don’t!” said a laughing Anita as his wife agreed wholeheartedly.

Marsha couldn’t be unfaithful to me on that weekend, of course. She reminded me, in bed, that Anita was my girl friend. I was being unfaithful to her. I said I’d only take one night-time kiss from her. Well, you can guess how that worked out. I got to strip her from her lovely dress, remove her stockings and garter belt and kiss her lovely legs from her toes all the way to her abdomen.

I really was haggard the next day after all the contortions my wife put me through. Oh, Marsha was definitely more experienced in lovemaking than

me. She was used to being a woman and pleasing her man, I thought, unable to think of her as anything but Marsha as I pleased her intensely, leaving her quivering beneath me after each time that one of us finally came.

I'd quite forgotten that Barry Davies even existed as I made love to Marsha and she made love to me. Her lovely tush vibrated so sensuously against me, rousing me to efforts I'd no idea were in me. With the real Marsha, it had just been one try, one climax, and then to sleep. The first was just an appetizer to this Marsha. She had all kinds of tricks to keep me going, with her hands, her tush, her mouth, even her sponge breasts.

I didn't want to let her out of the bed on Sunday. In fact, I kept her there until she satisfied me again, not just the once, being cuddled up and from the rear. I had to have more than that. After a little hesitation, Marsha supplied me with much more womanly loving.

Don Black was furious that he had to leave on the Sunday to attend to the affairs of a very large client. That left the field clear to Sam Grainger who neglected his wife shamelessly at the dance in the ballroom on the Sunday night. I was the one, of course, who filled in for Sam and danced with his influential wife.

"Your wife is a real asset to you, Mr Banks," Vicki told me a little frostily as I danced a third waltz with her.

"Sort of," I agreed with her. "But she is painfully shy, you know. She's really trying so hard to be outgoing this weekend. Anita is a big help. But for future Bentham Trust affairs, I think you'll find my

wife will be ill a lot. She really doesn't like the way men like Don Black flock around her." I didn't say Sam Grainger at all but Vicki got the message.

"Maybe she'll be pregnant by our next get-together," said Vicki with a smile. "You're quite a man, James Banks, or so I hear from the maids who change the sheets in your room."

Wow! What could I say to that? Vicki was really checking up on me and the state of my 'happy' marriage. I think that she must know then that it was a very, very, very happy marriage.

"Well," I said, flushing a little as I thought of the women of the house checking all the emissions on our bedsheets. "I can assure you, Vicki, one way or another, my darling wife won't be at the next executive function."

"Good," said Vicki Grainger.

Marsha didn't mention Anita for our third night together. I tried to think, 'Barry, Barry, Barry, this is Barry, Barry, Barry,' but it was no use. I was aroused by her snuggling up to me, by her perfumes and fragrances. I could no more have not made love to Marsha that third night than eat, drink, and sleep.

Well, there was precious little sleep as she unveiled some more tricks that her slim, agile body could do. I think we went for nearly two hours before I stripped away the last of her clothing. She wiggled her tush onto me as we cuddled together. As I took her, I reached for her phoney breasts and her little manhood as she reached back, contorting her lovely neck to kiss me. It was so weird. It was as if I was bringing myself to a climax even as I worked

her sweet tush into a wriggling symphony against me.

That was how we went to sleep and how Anita found us together, lifting the bedclothes to awaken us Monday morning for the journey back to town. “Well, well, Jimmy boy,” she said to me as Marsha fled to the bathroom, her panties and nightie clutched to her, not disguising her naked figure at all. “How could you fool around on me? And with a girl’s best friend forever, as well?”

“It isn’t what you think,” I told her testily. “It was just a good night kiss. We shifted positions a little in the night. Marsha, Barry, will tell you the same. Hey, if you want to check me out, how about you come to bed with me right now.”

“After you’ve just had sex with another woman,” laughed Anita. “It was with another woman, wasn’t it, Jimmy? You’ve never play around with another man. You’re not gay, are you?”

Anita laughed and flounced off, blowing me a kiss from the door as I called to her to wait. She was gone when Marsha and I arrived at our car, being very polite to one another, hugging and kissing Sam and Vicki goodbye, thanking them for a wonderful weekend. Well, it had been, in many respects.

“Are you going to change out of drag?” I asked my wife as we parked my car and I helped her to get her suitcases and garment bag back to the apartment.

“I, I guess so,” Marsha said huskily.

“I have to pop into the office,” I told her as she entered our apartment, going straight to her room with her makeup bag and dresses. At least one

would have to go to the cleaners right away with how I'd messed it up.

On my office desk was the letter I'd been waiting for. I was appointed Comptroller of the Bentham State Trust, effective immediately. Naturally, there was a little party in the office with the secretaries, Frank Arnold and a lot of other guys. I actually wished that my wife could have been present to be part of it all. It was through her after all that I had got where I was.

*******6. *The second part of the deal********

So, I was late getting back to the apartment. I wasn't as sober as I should have been, either. Anita's coat and purse were thrown on the sofa as usual but she was nowhere to be seen. I knew where she was. She and Marsha would be in Barry's room, I still thought of it that way, playing makeup games again. I hammered on the door but I couldn't get in. Something was blocking the door.

"In a minute," a girlish voice said but I couldn't tell which of them it was. I put my ear against the door. I could hear a lot of scurrying and a lot of dresses being moved. There was a low murmur as well as they talked, my name said a few times.

Finally, the chair under the handle was removed and the ladies came out. And they were ladies. They had high, white-haired wigs as they strutted out in their long dresses as if they were courtesans at King Louis XIV's court in France.

"How do you like us?" asked Anita, pirouetting in the soft pink silk dress that she was wearing.

“Pretty,” I said but I was looking at Marsha in her golden dress, her breasts bulging over the straight neckline that dresses of that era showed off. I couldn’t believe how narrow her waist was as the crinolines swayed and the dress billowed out on whatever frame she was wearing inside it. “Are you girls,” I said it quite deliberately, “going to a fancy dress ball?”

“Of course we are,” Anita said with a smile. “And so are you, Jimmy. How do you like my dress? It’s the one that we got for you, of course.”

I reeled at that as both girls were smiling at me. “I’m not doing that,” I said, recalling the deal with Anita that I’d made. “There’s no way I’m dressing up like a girl.” Anita smiled and shook her fan in front of her face.

“Just like a man, Marsha,” she said. “Why don’t you go and change into something more comfortable, girl, while I have a little talk about the facts of life with my fiancé.”

Yes, I’d forgotten for a moment that I was ‘engaged to be married’ to Anita. My affair with my wife, Marsha, had quite blown it out of my mind.

“You intended to renege on our deal from the very start, didn’t you?” Anita said, swaying into the living room of the apartment, a heavy scent of musk preceding her. “You like this scent? It’s what women in the seventeenth and eighteenth century wore, what you should wear for your debut at the Artists’ and Models’ Ball.”

“I don’t have to do that any more,” I said, waving the letter from my desk in front of her. “You didn’t think a man like me, not someone like Barry, was going to go in drag to some ball with him.”

“I did have hopes that my fiancé would turn out to be a man of his word,” said Anita, looking quite lovely with the ringlets twisted and flowing over one of her shoulders. “But that paper you have in your hand is actually quite worthless.”

“Worthless?” I sneered and that was when she dropped the bomb on me.

“In a day or so, the Graingers are leaving Bentham Trust,” Anita said with a smile. “Guess who the new chairman and president will be for the next two years at least. Yes, you look like the penny just dropped. My daddy is going to be both for a while. Now, when he finds your divorce papers on his desk, well ... You really should look after your personal stuff more consistently, Jimmy boy.

“The divorce papers will tell him that Marsha wasn’t real. He’ll remember Marsha, my best friend. We told him so enough times. I’ll remind him anyway. He’ll find out from me what sort of girl Marsha is. How do you think Daddy will feel about that, Jimmy? Well, enjoy your few days as Comptroller at Bentham. With a wife like Marsha enchanting Daddy, you could have gone up the corporate ladder so fast. Pity you wouldn’t do her the one favor she desperately needed you to do.”

So there it was. Anita had played me for a fool. I felt like strangling her in her lovely gown and putting an end to the choices I didn’t really have.

“You want me to reverse roles with Barry and be his wife at some fancy dress party?” I began thickly.

“That was the original plan,” said Anita seriously. “But all plans change, don’t they? What with cancellations and stuff, Marsha,” she stressed Barry’s feminine name to me, “will be able to go to the ball as

herself with the Count of Anjou. Your date will be the Count of Bordeaux.”

I reeled again. “You expect me,” I began hoarsely again, thinking of myself in a dress with a man escorting me to a dance as if I was a woman.

“The Count of Bordeaux is me, silly,” said Anita with a smile. “The Countess is you. It’s the way it’s done at the Artists’ and Models’ ball if you’d only asked. It’s always a role reversal ball. Barry’s won the women’s prize so many times he was supposed to go this time as a man. But some silly woman won’t let her husband go in drag, in case he likes it or is nicer-looking than her. So, Barry is in as the Countess of Anjou.

“Now, it’s not a three or four day thing that Barry had to endure with you as his husband,” said Anita quite equably. “This is just a one night ball. Do this, Jimmy boy, and your future will be set at the new Bentham Trust. My father has plans for your lovely wife, Marsha. They don’t include you! I make him do what I want, too.”

Poor Donald was my first thought. I looked at the gorgeous woman who stood, she couldn’t sit down in that dress, opposite me. She smiled at me. I couldn’t think, for the life of me, why I wanted to marry her.

“After your post-dated divorce, Jimmy Boy,” Anita said with a grin, “Daddy will pay for the society wedding of the year for his favorite daughter. Are you man enough to be the groom or should I marry Barry instead?”

I snorted, thinking of Marsha and me in bed, how wonderful a woman she’d been. No, it was more

likely Barry would marry Donald than he'd marry the daughter, I thought.

"Silence implies consent," said Anita brightly as I glowered at her. "Tomorrow night, Jimmy, you keep to our deal. You prepare to be the Countess in two weeks and I'll prepare to be the Count. As soon as the other stuff about the Graingers and Daddy is announced, I'll start working on Daddy with Marsha. You'll be a VP in a month, Jimmy. You'll have me, in your bed, your wife. That's the deal. Unlike you, I never go back on my word."

Not yet, I thought gloomily. Anita might keep her word. She took off the dress, wig and all the other accessories she said I had to wear. The two dresses stood there in the living room that night and all the next day, impressing upon me as I moved about the apartment that, at some stupid fancy dress ball, I was going to be in a woman's dress, having to behave like a woman, dancing backwards, 'no leading', as Anita said.

And I must learn to curtsy.

"I have to work late," I told Anita when she finally found me at Bentham's at eight o'clock the following night. "You know the kinds of hours I had to work before."

"I know," said Anita. "And I know from Daddy that you have no duties at all at the moment until Glover vacates his acting position at the weekend. So, get home now, Jimmy. Don't drag this out until the wee hours of the morning. We have a lot of work to do!"

A lot of work to do? I went home later, nearer to ten, dragging my feet as I went up the steps to the foyer and the main entrance. I couldn't think of any

real way out of my predicament save changing my name or moving to a foreign country to work, or both.

I got to the apartment and the scrape of my key in the lock led to the door being whipped open. A tall guy, in a white, powdered wig, well, that is how they're described in the books about the French Court before the Revolution, bowed to me. "Le Comte d'Anjou a votre service, madame," he said to me.

I stared at him in disgust. Then, Anita, dressed just like him, stepped around him and put out her hand to draw me into my own apartment. A golden, dressed woman, the Countess of Anjou, was presented to me by the voluble, French-speaking Count, lifting the Countess to her feet so that she, Marsha, could curtsy to me as if she was a French noblewoman.

"You are so late," Anita scolded me. "We wanted to practise the minuet with the ladies tonight but it's going to take you so much time to become my Countess! And Sissy has to go."

That really took me back as the 'man' who opened the door to me giggled. "I did fool him, Anita, I did," he said in a girl's voice.

'He' took the wig from his head and shook 'his' long blonde hair about his face, smiling at me. "This stubble and eyebrow makeup works so well," said the girl I recognized as Cicely, the fashion model. "You put the powder on afterwards, Annie! The stubble shines through. It makes them think you're really a guy. It really works."

I swallowed hard as I looked at the two 'men' in the room who were women and the 'woman' in the

room who was a man. And they all expected me to follow those rules as well.

“Come on, Jimmy,” said Anita, leaning over to kiss my cheek affectionately, sending a strange twinge through me. “It’s the bathroom for you, darling, where your transformation is going to begin.”

“I’m not,” I began angrily as Marsha swirled her dresses and began to do some dance with Sissy, Cicely, whoever. Marsha looked up at the woman swirling her and smiled brilliantly, clearly loving the old-fashioned waltz that Sissy was apparently teaching her.

Anita was already at the bathroom door, pulling on my hands. “You have hair on your legs and chest that we will have to get rid of,” Anita said to me as Sissy put on some music, Marsha, the Countess of Anjou, curtsying to her husband again. I felt a pang looking at her, hearing Sissy say that she must obey her husband in all things. I wanted to say that I was Marsha’s husband. It was me she must obey but I wasn’t Marsha’s husband. Nobody in the apartment was.

I tried to resist again which ticked off Anita. “You come home late when I told you that I’d arranged this, the start of your training,” she snapped at me. “At least, we can get you into the dress and see what we have to do to make it fit you comfortably. You could co-operate a little, you know, Jimmy. You’re the one getting the big rewards when this is all over.”

I had no idea why I was doing this. ‘Marsha’ had been my wife. She wasn’t any more. I was supposed to be paying her back by taking a turn on being the

wife. I didn't know why I should remove all my body hair.

"Ooo," said Sissy, looking at Anita and me in the bathroom doorway. "I just love a man who has depilated. I love feeling a smooth body and leg next to mine."

"So do I," said Anita with a smile. "I really don't know why Jimmy is complaining."

Because it's unmanly not to have chest hair, I thought savagely. I bet Marsha knew that very well. Nevertheless, I knew I was going to go through with this. I had to. I covered my body with the lotions Anita gave me. In fifteen minutes, I was as free of hair on my body and legs as I'd been on the day I was born.

"I'm not wearing that!" I almost screamed as Anita came into the bathroom with a wiggly thing like the chest I'd caressed on Marsha all the time she'd been my wife.

"Oh, come on, Jimmy," said Anita, laying the thing on the bathroom counter. It looked obscene, a spongy breast looked up at me, so lifelike and womanly. "You made a deal! You knew you'd have to be padded in some way to look like a woman. This is the easiest way to do this. Now be a man about this!"

Anita said the last thing as she lifted her hands so femininely and swept her blonde hair back behind her ears. Without the powdered wig, she looked really nice in the sort of velvety coat she was wearing. I stared at her, my insides churning, while she recognized my distress. She sat on my bare legs as I sat on the throne, just a towel across me and kissed me. She kissed me tenderly as Anita had done the

first time I'd been attracted to her. It had been one of the things that made me feel as if I was in love.

Sissy looked in at the door. "Ooo!" she said.

"Clear off, Sissy," said Anita. "Take Debbie with you and go and get a drink or something. Jimmy and I want to be alone for a while."

"Anything you say," said Sissy with a beautiful smile on her repainted, now female, madeup face. "We'll hang up the costumes, change and leave you two lovebirds alone for a while."

Lovebirds? Well, I suppose we were supposed to be, Anita and me. Ye gods, I'd given her a ring! Yet, all the time, in my mind, I kept thinking of Marsha as my wife, how good she'd been to me. Then it hit me again. Well, I am slow on the uptake, aren't I? Anita had said to take 'Debbie' with her to Sissy.

"Who's Debbie?" I croaked at Anita, still kissing me when I came up for air. I hugged her waist, her breasts inches from my face. I buried my face in them as she giggled and held my head to her.

"Debbie is Barry's street name," said Anita. "Walk into any bar along Whiteside. Ask for Debbie and you'll be directed to Barry in drag."

"How do you know that?" I asked her.

"Everybody knows," said Anita with a laugh. "Debbie is well-known in underground theatre. It doesn't pay anything, she says, but she keeps plugging away. She always gets the female lead, the plum role. You should have seen her in the adaptation of *Priscilla*."

"You knew her before she moved in with me?" I asked Anita incredulously, trying to string out what we were doing as she reached for the spongy

breasts. She unfurled the edges that seemed to have stuck together.

“It’s funny. I didn’t know him as a man which Debbie thought was hilarious,” said Anita with a big smile. “She said she was preparing for the male role she had to play at the Artists’ and Models’ Ball this year. She wanted me to go with her as her Countess.”

The spongy thing fitted against me like a breastplate of armor, the thin edges spreading out over my shoulders and around my back as Anita smoothed them against me.

“Why don’t you go with him?” I asked Anita hoarsely as she stood. I looked down at the mounds on my chest, so feminine, so white, the nipples large and pink, stuck on my chest. Anita sorted through a makeup bag that she had with her. A few makeup bottles lay against my skin. She took two of them and mixed them in a small cup, telling me not to move.

Anita painted the white ‘skin’ of the sponge breasts with the mixture she’d made, stopping to add more of the darker color until she had the mixture right. I could see what she was doing in the bath mirrors. The white breastplate disappeared as she spread the final solution all over me, along the fine seams and ripples of the false boobs. Ye gods, it looked like I had real boobs as I sat there, Anita astride me, working away, chattering about ‘Debbie’, my real roommate.

Anita sighed in exasperation when I asked her again why she didn’t just go with Barry. “Everyone knows Barry as Debbie,” she said. “And they know

Sissy, Jenny and me. We can't be girls at a ball like this."

I dreaded having to ask. I think I'd already worked out part of it. "Why not?" I asked Anita. "It's a drag ball, isn't it?"

"Of course it is," said Anita with a huge smile. "You finally worked it out! Kudos, Jimmy boy. So, unless you're gay, you can't go as Debbie's escort. It isn't done. All the women you meet at the ball will really be men. Some of them are really pretty and very catty. Drag queens are like that. They ganged up on Debbie because she's a professional actress and wouldn't let her come as a woman this year. It's most unfair. They just don't want her to win the Queen's crown again.

"Then, they relented a bit. Barry could attend in drag but only if he brought a new girl to the ball. That would be you. You'd have been Debbie's wife for the evening, or rather, Barry's wife. But then there was another little revolt on the organizing committee. Debbie's allowed to attend as the Countess of Anjou, and Sissy and me, and Jennifer, and any of the lesbians who love to attend these things, anyone who's a girl twenty-four seven, can attend as long as we're men for the night. So, now it's me who needs a wife, Jimmy. I need a Countess of Bordeaux since Sissy asked Debbie first to be her wife for the ball."

"Why just let me not attend?" I asked Anita, trying not to get enraged with her, blackmailing me into doing this silly, enervating thing like having these breasts attached to me. I could remind her that this wasn't the deal that I'd agreed to. I shuddered as I recalled that I'd agreed to be Barry's wife

at the ball. I suppose it was marginally better to be Anita's.

"Oh, but darling," said Anita, kissing me and squeezing my spongy breasts that sprang back into shape after she caressed them. I saw her doing that in the mirror and felt as if I really had breasts, being squeezed. "If you aren't my wife for one night, I won't be able to keep up my end of the deal and sleep with you and marry you. Think about what is waiting you at the end of the night, my darling Countess."

Anita got up, laughing at the obvious bulge under my towel. She had a little thing for me to wear then, something she called a gaff. It was like wearing spandex between my legs. I was just gasping and ready to walk out of the bathroom when she had me put on panties, which were padded all around my backside. Oh shoot, I thought, as I looked at myself. I had a woman's body.

*******7. Countess of Bordeaux*******

Anita put a towel across my chest. She sat astride me to do my makeup. What am I doing, I thought in a panic, as Anita leaned forward and kissed me. She put my hands about her waist and then on her boobs, giggling as she put an astringent lotion on my face. She put waxy stuff where I had a few hairs of stubble, adding it as well to some of my eyebrows. She had me close my eyes as she attached these black eyelashes, top and bottom to my eyelids.

"The nice thing for you as a drag queen," said Anita, "is that your disguise doesn't have to be so complete. No-one expects you to be a woman. Well,

they expect someone like Debbie to be. She's not only gorgeous but she's so real as well. All the guys and girls know that if they win as King, she'll sleep with them as well. Debbie is known for swinging both ways. But you won't have that problem."

"Why not?" I asked, quivering as Anita sprayed me with some feminine cologne as she worked at my face, forbidding me to move. She pinned my hair back and put on what looked like the bottom of a stocking, over my head.

"There," Anita said, sitting back on me, the tightness between my legs starting to be a little numbing. "Now I know where your makeup should go. It has to be this kind of white pancake as women wore it in the eighteenth century. Now, why won't you have the problem of sleeping with King Louis? Easy, my darling. You won't be winning this contest.

"The queens, you'll be one of them, fix the scoring. I bet it'll be Queen Charlotte this year. She's a dewy-eyed blonde with a figure like Marilyn. And it's all real. That's why Debbie has beaten her out the last couple of years. Debbie is the darling of those who like a little man in their drag queen."

A little sponging and makeup covered my face and eyelids. I kept them shut then as Anita painted my face like an artist. She got off me and sprayed me again, telling me to keep my eyes closed as she powdered me.

"Dang!" Anita said. "Am I good or am I good?"

"What is it?" I asked in panic, opening my eyes. There were these dark, black fringes right in front of my eyes.

"Don't move!" thundered Anita. "Don't move your head while I fetch your wig, my lady!"

Oh, this was going to be terrible. I just knew it. I couldn't ... I wouldn't ... Who cared about the Trust job ... Anita came flying back with the huge wig I'd seen her wearing before with Barry, Debbie, whoever. She had earrings, a necklace, bracelets and rings as well.

"Hold still," Anita said as she put the huge, white, powdered wig over my head. Little curls immediately fell over my face and neck, tickling me, making me feel so silly for letting Anita get this far in dressing me up like a woman, a man like me.

She attached the earrings to my ears. They were heavy, the clips tight. They swung against my neck, clinking on the long, thick, cold necklace that Anita put about my neck.

"Wow," said Anita, standing back, taking the towel from the window so I could see myself. "I don't know, Michelle, ma belle. I think you do have to worry a little bit about winning this contest."

I whipped around, standing up, as this woman stared at me in surprise, her mouth forming a huge, red 'O'. She gasped in exactly the same way I was doing. "That's not me!" I shouted while a smiling Anita put her arm about my shoulder, sassily pinched my breast with her other hand and nodded at me.

"This is too much!" I screamed in horror as the necklace swung seductively across the breasts I seemed to have.

"I think that I agree," said Anita with a huge smile. "I think I shouldn't make you look so beautiful, Michelle, ma Comtesse. But let's go on for now and try you in the pink dress, shall we? Then we'll know for sure what we have to do."

It wasn't the dress right away, however. I had to have a waist cinch pulled so tightly about my waist. "Ladies in the past had much tinier waists than we do today," said Anita as she pulled the small corset, which pushed up my breasts tightly about me, as I stood flushing and heaving inside. I looked at someone who wasn't me, who was a woman.

"The King and the Queen of the Artists and Models," Anita went on chattily as she attached dangling white garters to the little corset she called a waist cinch. She had white stockings for me to put on my bare legs. I groaned as I saw them in her hands. "The King and Queen are always escorted by the Court to the Bridal Suite, you know.

"You, Lady Michelle, my wife, might be made a Princess. You have to help Queen Charlotte into her nightdress for the King."

I couldn't believe that this was me putting stockings on my hairless legs, attaching them to the garters. It felt so, so, womanly, effeminate, degrading, humiliating. Yet, Anita seemed to see nothing wrong in it.

"If you're as pretty as you are now, you could be Queen," said a smiling Anita, helping me with long underskirts that tied so tightly beneath the breasts I had, covered at last Oh, but I looked like a young girl, standing there in her shift. No, not with my makeup so thickly done. I looked like a woman trying to be girlish and succeeding.

"But nobody knows you, so they won't pick you," said Anita confidently as she ushered me, the underskirt swishing so airily about my stockings to the outer dress itself still on its stand. "No way you win.

But if you're the Queen, go along with it, please, Michelle, won't you?

"Nobody lets the King rape you. He'll probably be too drunk anyway to get it up. Debbie says that's the way most of them are. You just get to sleep in a wonderful bed with a wonderful guy until we come and rescue you in the morning.

"The committee usually takes the King and Queen to lunch. She dolls up again as that is photographs are posed and taken with you, if you were the Queen, in your crown sash and regular day wig instead of this thing. You wear regular makeup as well. Sometimes the pictures get into the national press but often they don't even make the local rag."

The dress was heavy, I found, as I had to stand and have it pulled over me and be laced into it. Well, it could never have passed over the huge wig I was wearing. I had to sit in kitchen chair while Anita lifted the front of my dress and petticoats, how silly that sounds. I came out in goosebumps as she put 'slippers' on my feet. These weren't slippers as I knew them. These were pink and white, women's, high-heeled shoes. Standing, I towered over Anita.

"That's because of your hair," laughed Anita. "And don't worry, men of this time wore high heels as well. I have a blocky pair of four inch heels in my pack I'll wear next time. I have to be able to do this to you, don't I?"

Anita put her arm about my constricted waist then and pulled me to her. With her blonde, straight hair and parting, she might have been a man of the eighteenth century. I certainly looked like a woman of that century. She kissed me, batting my hands

away as I tried to grab her, as I did when I was a man.

“Women don’t do that,” laughed the Count of Bordeaux. “I have so much to teach you, Michelle! I’m going to be calling you at the ball; so I’ll start now. Really, you only have to try to act like a woman, not be one. Now, how does a woman kiss her man?”

Mortified, I had to put my arms about the Count’s neck, my dress and skirt swishing in Anita’s hands; she told me how silly I was, dressed like a dancing girl. I almost toppled in my high heels. The Count held me as if he was the man and kissed me, Anita’s tongue running over my lipsticked mouth as she giggled.

“I’ll get you to open your mouth to me,” Anita said, her hands about my waist, swishing the dress about me more, reminding me all the time how I was dressed as a woman. “It is called French kissing after all!”

“I’m not doing this!” I said. Anita pulled me, the heels of the slippers wobbling all over the place, in front of the long mirror in the bathroom. Oh, I looked so feminine. Anita had curved a ringlet over my shoulder between my neck and the white, lacy, frilled edge of my pink dress. The false boob bulged at that point. Oh, it was so awful! I was definitely a sexy, attractive woman or girl. Anita put my hand on my hip and posed me to look at myself.

“It would be so great if you could just be a princess, Michelle,” Anita whispered to me, her arm about my pinched in waist, hugging me. “There are a lot of ‘After AM’ parties the next night that the Queen and Princesses are invited to and feted in

your dresses. You don't have to wear the white wigs. You'd have so many partners, male and female, lesbians you know, to dance with! All your drinks would be free!

"You could have all the dates you wanted, you know, if you were a Princess," Anita went on, kissing my neck, swinging the earring against me as I quivered and shuddered as I saw the woman I'd been made into so quickly. Yes, another 'dumb' moment. I wasn't that tall, and was slim like Barry. I didn't shave much, having regular, boyish features. Guess what made me the ideal candidate to be 'Michelle', the Countess of Bordeaux.

I didn't want to be 'her' but 'she', as a Countess, certainly looked good. If I had to be a girl, well, a little vanity crept in. I knew that I'd want to be a pretty girl and not some grotesque as we saw on television at times.

"The Queen is invited everywhere, even to straight parties," Anita went on and on as I shivered in the frilly dress and petticoats. She supported me, swirling my skirts about me, making me feel like a woman. "You won't believe the fuss that's made of the Queen. It was in a straight affair that I met Debbie. It was such a giggle when I finally realized who was in the male drag as your roomie. Deb dates straight guys a lot until they twig on or someone tells them about her. They'd call you lucky, she being your wife!"

"You call this being lucky?" I asked her sourly. That made Anita laugh, a lot.

"Oh, don't speak, Michelle," she giggled. "Just whisper if you must. It breaks the illusion when you speak in a man's voice. We need to teach you how to

squeak like a girl, Debbie and me, over the next few days. Now, how we girls walk in our high heels.”

I don't know why I tried but I did. I swished after Anita. She held my hand as she taught me to put one foot in front of the other and take such small steps. She made me keep my arms in as I sat and cross my legs as I sat down. We practised curtseying. I swore several times when I toppled to the floor. Anita had to help me up with all of my skirts.

“You'll get it,” Anita said, putting on the music, walking me backwards through a waltz. I had to hold her like a woman as she firmly took me about the waist. I danced with her as if I was a woman. We were swirling to a more adventurous Viennese waltz, my dress spreading out about my legs when Debbie, whom I knew as my wife, Marsha, and Sissy came in.

“Oh, she's beautiful,” said Sissy, watching Anita twirl me about our small living room. Of course, as soon as she said that, I stepped on my skirt and almost fell. Anita righted me, kissed me, taking hold of me as if she was the man, directing my arms about her neck.

“Oh, my,” said Debbie, tossing her long, red hair over her shoulder. “I guess my husband has divorced me!”

No, I wanted to shout but Anita went on kissing me, my breasts actually heaving in front of me as I responded to her kiss.

“We just came to say we'll be back tomorrow,” said Sissy with a red-lipsticked smile. “We met two guys at the French Bar and they're so cute. They know one of us is a drag queen but they don't know

which. So, it's going to be a fun party with them. You guys have a great night as well!"

Debbie blew us a kiss and went off in her high heels and slim skirt, hanging onto Sissy's hand as the door slowly closed behind them.

"Girls!" said Anita when they were gone. "We should have told them to hook two more of the guys' friends for us! We could tell them the same thing. Only one of us is a drag queen and see who'd we get. I bet your guy would be the cuter one!"

My feet were aching. The Count of Bordeaux let me sit for a while, insisting, however, that I sit like a girl. I had to be the one to snuggle to him like a girl. I had to allow him to treat me just like a girl with his kisses and touches. 'He' even raised my skirts and caressed my stockinged legs. I thought Anita and I would end up in bed, at least, consolation for the evening of excruciating humiliation I'd gone through.

We had a glass of wine to end the evening, my 'husband' insisting I hold my glass in womanly fashion and toast him as my husband. "Soon, you'll be mine, all mine, ma belle Michelle," said Anita softly as I linked my arm through hers and tried to drink the champagne in the way she wanted me to.

I don't know but it must have been the wine. I woke up in the morning with Anita shaking me and telling me I'd better get moving if I wanted to get to work on time. I was stretched out on the couch, fast asleep, lying on the Count's chest.

The Count kissed me gently. "You could, of course, Michelle, stay with me all day," Anita said, cuddling me to her, kissing my breast and then my lips. I was trapped by her body and my dress. My

earrings swung across my face as she snuggled me to her manfully. She finally let me go but not before she helped me undress and shamelessly caressed my stockings and my breasts as I frantically escaped from being a woman and became Jim Banks again.

I shuddered as I left the apartment, touching the wonderful pink dress back upon its support. I'd be wearing it again, I thought bleakly, as Anita, in mini-skirt and top, came to kiss me.

"Mmm," Anita said, "the manufacturer is right. That *Intimate Secrets* perfume doesn't wear off in the shower."

Anita giggled as I left for work, her hand so femininely over her mouth, a gesture she'd been trying to teach me at the end of the night. Oh yes, she'd been 'teaching' it to Barry, Marsha, Debbie, once before. What a laugh the two of them must have had putting me on. I thought Anita was putting me on about the perfume, too, until everyone I ran into that day seemed to notice the female scent about me.

"Anita," I said uncomfortably. "She was spraying herself in the car and dropped it on my coat. I'll have to take it to the cleaners on the way home."

"It's really nice," said Frank Arnold with a frown. "It's like the fragrance Marsha was wearing at the Graingers."

"Well, yes," I agreed, pretending to sniff the sleeve of my coat. "They are best friends and share everything fashionable with each other." Well, it got me a little bit out of a tight corner but gave me another bone to pick with Anita some time, despite how nice she had been to me the night before.

*****8. *Candy Man******

I hated coming home that week but the weekend was even more unbelievable. As soon as I tiptoed in and tried to get to my room, thinking I could lock the door, the three girls were there to pounce on me. Yes, I have to include Debbie among the girls. She was actually the nicest of them all to me as I was beset with dressing like a girl by the girl whom I was supposed, soon, to be taking to bed.

Anita seemed determined that her Countess, Michelle, which the other girls called me as well, be a woman in every way. She not only had me dress up once more in the pink ballroom dress but, for the weekend, I was in a brunette wig of Barry's, that is, Debbie's. Instead of the long, heavy dress that I had to dance in, Sissy smiling down at me and Anita, swishing me about, I was dressed in 'normal' clothes, normal women's clothes.

I had on stockings slightly tan in color that made my legs in the knee-length skirt seem so feminine to me. I think I got turned on just looking at 'Michelle' in a lilac colored top, my breasts so shapely, my makeup so vivid, my hair swirling about my bangle earrings, while I minced on high heels. Oh yes, I was Michelle, shivering each time I thought of that.

Debbie gave me a manicure and stuck properly shaped women's nails over my own. "It's not going to be for long," Debbie whispered to me coyly. "Just humor these girls. They remember how exciting it was for all of us trannies to be initiated by women into their club. They think you'll love it just as much as I do. But I know differently. Just get through this ball. If you like, you and I can be Marsha and

Jimmy again. You know, husband and wife.” She blushed at me. “I really loved that.”

“I’m going to blow up any minute,” I told the man who had been my loving wife so enticingly. I sat at the table with her, having my nails done. I was sitting cross-legged, of course, in high heels I could sort of walk in. I was squeaking in a sort of falsetto that made them all laugh but they wouldn’t let me speak in my normal voice without deriding me, Michelle, for being so butch.

“Oh, don’t do that,” implored Debbie, her lovely face looking so worried. “Anita is a lovely girl but she has a cruel temper if she’s crossed. She’ll be wonderful to you after the ball, you’ll see.”

“She’ll be blackmailing me to get something else,” I whispered to Debbie who shook her lovely, blonde curls.

“No, no,” Debbie said, lowering her voice. “You just have to be a really strong man and put her in her place. She loves that. Once the ball is over, please, please just bring Anita back here and lay the law down. Push her down in bed. Fight her. Make her submit to you. She adores men who do that to her.

“Believe me, Michelle, I’ve seen her with a lot of guys. She doesn’t like wimps. She gets bored with them. Look how she helped you out after you didn’t go to the show she wanted. She became all nice and loving to you, didn’t she? She likes a man like that.”

So, for Debbie’s sake, when a smiling Sissy and Anita joined us, both of them with their makeup freshened and in skirts and jackets, Debbie and I went out as girls with them. I tried to protest but Anita squeezed my arm as some older folks came

out of an apartment ahead of us as we all minced and swayed in our high heels to the elevator.

I was almost hysterical as the old lady hobbling on a walking stick spoke to me. "And where are all you pretty girls going so late at night?" she asked.

Anita took my hand and swung it, dancing me like a young girl. "We're going out looking for men," she said to the old lady, who laughed with her. I was the only gloomy, rigid one as I stood there, a real man, or so I thought, in a skirt and a woman's jacket, my hair, my makeup and my visible breasts telling this older woman, who must be half-blind, that I was a woman.

I hung back in the foyer, meaning to go back to the apartment, but Anita and Sissy had their arms about me right away. I had to pass several older women and a few men, waiting for taxis I supposed, and exit the building. The only way I could have stayed was to cause a fuss.

"Short steps," whispered Anita. "Let your hips swing like Sissy's, Michelle."

Oh, I should be the one called Sissy, I thought as we minced, arm in arm, down the sidewalk towards *Candy's*. I balked as I saw how lit up it was. The music was turned up, a party in the place spilling out into the street.

I felt ridiculous as I minced in the tight skirt, my legs so airy, my hair and earrings moving. I panicked. The girls slowed but held onto me. "I can't go in there," I croaked.

"Of course you can," said Anita brightly. "We'll just test you with Guy the bartender. I bet he won't know what sex you are."

Sissy smiled. "I bet he does," she drawled. "I think he cheats! He sees her with Debbie and us and knows something's up. Michelle should really go in with someone like Teddy." She indicated a man who was terrifying me with the way that he was looking at the four of us approaching him. Oh, I just hoped that he saw four girls crossing the road towards him; gods, I thought sickly, now I was hoping a man would see me as a girl.

A car horn honked. I almost jumped out of my skirt and my skin. A man's voice sounded behind us as Anita turned and laughed.

"Teenaged boys!" she laughed to me. "Hopeless but so good for the ego!"

"Just let me go back!" I pleaded with her as we reached the sidewalk. Teddy moved to the door, grinning to open it for us.

"No way," said Anita. "And, Michelle has laryngitis, everybody, which is why we're not dating. We don't want to pass it on! We answer for Michelle who can only whisper."

"We can't date tonight?" asked Sissy in surprise. "But it's Saturday, Anita. The boys won't mind. We can get Teddy for Michelle. He never has much to say, either!"

So, we clattered into the bar, past a lineup of guys who stared at us. I expected at any moment to declare me to be 'outed'. But nothing was said. A waitress beckoned. We went straight to a table for four where Anita ordered Bellinis for us right away from the obliging waitress.

I'd been in *Candy's* several times, always with Anita. I'd seen Sissy in the bar as well. She was very popular. In fact, as soon as we all sat down,

smoothing our skirts beneath us, a big man at a table behind us, turned around, put his beer on our table and moved in on a delighted Sissy right away. He casually put his arm about her and she didn't push him away.

"Debbie Mills!" he said suddenly. Debbie at the far end of the table gave him a brilliant smile and agreed it was she. "I saw you in *The Best Little Whorehouse* and you were fantastic. I have to ask you."

"We all know what's coming now," said Anita dryly, reaching for my hand beside hers on the table.

"Were you really making it with Ronnie Prior when you were in bed with him?" both Sissy and Anita chanted together while Debbie smiled coyly and looked a little abashed.

"Was that his name?" asked the big guy, his arm about Sissy, helping her out of her jacket. "Well, were you?"

"I'm an actress," said Debbie charmingly. "I'll never tell."

"You told me," said Anita smugly. Debbie smacked her hand lightly and softly. The big man's friend broke out of the huge group he was with to join us, his arm snaking about Debbie, whispering into her ear as she laughed, her golden pendant earrings, just like mine, shivering as she smiled into the guy's face, inches from her.

The Bellinis were cold and sweet. Trevor, the big guy, wanted to buy us all another round. Colin with Debbie paid the bill, slipping the pretty waitress a big tip.

A hand then reached over my shoulder. A glass of champagne and a Cherries Jubilee dessert was placed in front of me. A tall man, in a red bow tie, white shirt and black waistcoat, squatted down between Anita and me.



“Guy!” exclaimed Anita, putting her arm about his neck as people pushed through the bar. The noise was getting louder.

“For the new girl,” Guy said to me with a smile. There was something in the way he said it. I understood immediately that I hadn’t passed the test. He’d read me as a man in women’s clothing. I felt myself for the umpteenth time in the last few days breaking out in goose bumps. “I must have this lovely girl’s name, Anita,” Guy added, smiling at me.

“Michelle,” said Anita. I almost died as Guy looked me over most approvingly. “She has a bad throat and isn’t talking tonight.”

“I understand,” said Guy, staring at me. I could see he was assessing my makeup as a woman. If the bar hadn’t been so crowded, I’d have got up, even in my skirt and wig, and run as quickly as high heels and tight skirt allowed me, away from the acute embarrassment I was suffering.

“When you’re about to leave, Michelle,” Guy said, touching my shivering shoulder. Well, I was shivering all over so that was as well, “please come to the end of the bar. I have something for you to help that. There’s a coupon as well we give to all ladies on their first time here. It’s to get you to come back and bring a boy friend.”

Guy stood up, caressing my shoulder as he did so, smiling and going back to the bar. “He recognized me,” I whispered in Anita’s ear, shuddering.

“He did but he likes your look, anyway,” Anita whispered back as a fit of trembling almost overcame me again. “I told you he was gay but we all love him. He pretends to chase anything in a skirt though he stops with a few kisses. He really kisses

well, does Guy. If you really were a drag queen, Michelle, he'd be one of your favorite people."

I lurched at that. Well, at least, Anita was admitting that all this dressing up I was now doing for her didn't make me queer.

"Hey!" said Anita as Sissy took one of the forks on the plate with the dessert and started to eat it. "That's for Michelle! She's the new girl!" It didn't stop her taking another fork and diving in as well. I had to have a taste. It was delicious, so delicious that I could have eaten it all. But Debbie wanted a taste. She fed her admirer a taste. Sissy took it back and fed Trevor as well and so it was all gone.

"We'll get more later," whispered Anita to me. "Trevor and Colin want to impress their girl friends. They'll think it's going to get them in the girls' panties tonight."

I shuddered again and leaned over to whisper to her, "Guy?"

Anita shook her head. "No," she whispered back. "He'd never scare away a new girl. He'll want to find out all about you first, your likes and dislikes in men, or women, if that's what turns you on."

Oh, it did, I thought to myself. I trembled as I looked at the girls I was with. Debbie was nuzzling noses with Colin. She kissed him lightly, smiling. He did the same to her, shifting more against her, his arm about her. A fit of jealousy came over me. I hated someone else holding my wife like that! I didn't want anyone else but me to be kissing Marsha, that is, Debbie, except me.

Another man, an Alan, wanted to move in with us. Debbie gave up her chair and moved off with Colin, his arm about her, pulling her close and kiss-

ing her. She was greeted by the group beyond us as the ‘well-known actress’. She was to the patrons of *Candy’s*.

I endured Alan’s friend, Steve, trying to talk to me and chat me up while I shivered at being thought a girl. Anita didn’t help as Steve put his arm about me casually. He smiled right into my face as if I’d like him touching me. I’d never do it again to any girl I just met, I decided right then, shifting in my skirt as Steve’s leg brushed me. I was sure it was intentional.

“Well, you passed that test,” said Anita gaily after we took our purses to the Ladies’. Steve brushed against my phoney breasts as I stood up on my heels. I went, shivering, humiliated, with my fiancée, only to see how womanly I appeared in the mirror. I repaired the minor damage drinking and eating had done to my makeup.

“I think that we’re going to lose Debbie and Sissy,” said Anita. “I’ll sleep in Debbie’s room tonight, unless she brings Colin back, of course.”

I felt the shakes as I moved femininely, short steps, mince, short steps, smile. I thought about Debbie and how casually everyone accepted a man being attracted to her and her going with him as if she was a girl. She was a man, like I was. I knew that. I’d been her husband over a long weekend, hadn’t I? I was disappointed to see Debbie indeed was gone when we wiggled over to our table, men’s eyes looking at me speculatively as I sat girlishly, crossing my legs as I did so, showing off my stockinged thighs.

Sissy and Trevor were also gone when we got back to the table but Jennifer and Barbara had

joined us. Steve had his arm about Barbara's waist. The brunette had her dark-stockinged leg against his seeming to like it. Jennifer and Anita knew each other and had to hug and kiss, their voices high-pitched and squealing.

We finished our drinks, going to the bar to say goodnight to Guy who hustled down from the waitress' trays that he was filling, the busty girls in heavy eye makeup frowning at the disruption in their service.

Guy reached for my purse and put a coupon into it. "You had something to give her as well, Guy," shouted Anita into the din about the bar.

"Of course," said Guy, stepping out of the bar then. I didn't know what he was doing as he put his hands on my hips. "Something for your cold," he murmured gruffly, staring into my face. Then he kissed me. A man kissed me. Well, I'd kissed Marsha-Debbie a lot, hadn't I? But that was me, kissing 'her', as if she was the girl. I'd been in control. Now, I was bent over a little as Guy the bartender kissed me and wouldn't stop. Then I heard the chinking of glasses all around me. I heard applause and knew I'd been had. I was the new girl, the new drag queen in the place, or so everyone must be thinking. Here I was being initiated, embarrassed, into queenliness as Debbie must have been initiated in her turn.

My ears and cheeks were flaming as Guy steadied me and hugged me but he wouldn't end the kiss that was inflaming every part of me with equal parts of humiliation, distress and breathless anxiety. He hugged me and stopped kissing me at last as everyone about us cheered. I hung onto him, quivering all over, and yes, I had to put my lips on his again and kiss him again. Oh, I had to as Guy swished me

back and forth on my high heels, pressing me to him.

“Oh, gosh, Anita,” Guy said as he released my trembling lips. I felt shame flooding all over my encased, feminized body. “I got this one wrong, didn’t I? You fooled me with that laryngitis trick. She really is a woman, isn’t she, Michelle!”

“Of course she is,” said Anita, putting the purse in my hands, my glittering nails so feminine as I clutched it, almost fainting at what Guy had said. I was a woman! I wasn’t! I couldn’t be! “Bye, bye, Guy. The drinks next time are on you!”

Men propositioned us all the way out of *Candy’s* and across the street to our block of Whiteside.

“Slow down,” Anita insisted. “Get your feet to land directly in front of each other. It’s where our womanish sway comes from. Do it, girl.”

Well, I’d felt so girlish in my skirt and heels, Guy’s kiss still burning my lips and lipstick, I might as well do that as well, I thought, shaking in humiliation. We hadn’t gone fifty feet, our heels beating a tattoo on the sidewalk than we heard a whistling at us from some young men on the other side of the street.

“Don’t look,” said Anita with a chuckle. “It will only encourage them more.”

Well, I didn’t look. It didn’t stop them or stop other men from joining in. We got to the Sunrise and went in. There must have been half a dozen guys whistling at us and saying things I’d never have said to a woman. I’d have thought it but I’d never have said it out loud to a woman. But that was what I was, a woman! Guy had said I was.

*******9. *The Artists' and Models' Ball********

Oh, it was so great that Anita had to go to her father's the next day. I promised to be in drag all day but, as soon as she'd gone, I got out of my dress, the corset and panties, cleaned off my face and went downtown where I stayed in a hotel for five days, creeping into work by the side doors, afraid all the time that Anita would find me.

Then, finally, Anita was there, at the Trust, for the announcement that Senator Samuel Grainger was stepping down and accepting the ambassadorial post to please his wife. The new President and CEO was confirmed as Donald Black who, as Sam said, "is a new broom. He'll clear away old cobwebs I've tolerated for too long in the firm."

I got an inkling of what the new broom was thinking as I was called to his office within two hours of Donald Black taking over. "I'm annoyed with you in one way, Mr Banks, and in another I'm not," Donald said to me from behind the massive desk in the oak-lined office he'd inherited. "It appears that the woman you brought to Sam's house as your wife was in fact your divorced wife.

"She certainly helped you to get your promotion which is why I'm annoyed. On the other hand, I was talking to her this morning. Marsha says it was all her idea. She owed you something, she said, for being a good husband, even in your divorce. Now, I learn that Anita, my daughter, is actually engaged to be married to you. That can't be true, Jim, can it?"

In such a situation, what could I say? I was so confused by the story he believed. I didn't know to say, to keep my job. "You do know what my daugh-

ter is, don't you?" asked Donald Black, strangely angry still. "You've slept with her, have you?"

"Well," I began with a shrug. Donald stared at me, taking my noncommittal answer as 'Yes'.

"In that case, I'll probably have to promote you," said a grim-faced Donald Black, not looking happy at all. "Anita's in the office now to meet you. Something about this ball you're going to. Marsha, your ex-wife," he stressed that very clearly, "wants me to attend some party with her after. You won't make any objection to that, will you, Jim?"

"No," I gasped, going to the outer office where Anita awaited me. She looked ravishing in her grey suit and vivid makeup. She left the man she was talking to and came straight to me, flung her arms about my neck, and kissed me as wonderfully as she ever had before. I knew everyone was watching us and that she knew it as well.

"You've been a naughty boy, Jimmy," she said to me, her brown eyes gleaming with amusement. "All the time we've wasted! You don't have the voice you should. It's tomorrow night, your big night, you know. I've already talked to Daddy. He's agreed we can get married next month. He did tell you that, didn't he?"

"He, he said," I gasped, shivering as I knew what she was going to insist I do, "something about Marsha."

"I know," said Anita, her arm tucked girlishly in mine as we sauntered through the main offices. She let everyone know that the new boss's daughter was my girl friend. "She can't be Countess of Anjou after all. The Count was devastated until a new Countess was found. All is well now. Daddy told you to take

the rest of the day off, didn't he? You're mine now until the ball is over. No slinking off to that hotel you've been hiding in."

My heart sank as I looked at her. I shook all the way back to my apartment with her. She and 'Marsha', no, 'Debbie', took over. What Anita wanted from me was every bit as bad as I'd expected. I had to depilate again. Anita was quite open about how I had to play ball with her or be ruined in business. I thought of standing up to her as Debbie had said as Anita pushed me down, into the bath.

"Now is not the time to confront me, Michelle," Anita told me coldly. "I'm angry enough with you as it is. When this ball is over, things will be different, won't they? Dynes and his battle-axe lady friend are gone. My husband must have a VP spot; so just be nice and go along, all right?"

But it was so awful to go along, to spend all of the next day just being prepared as a woman to go to the ball. There was a steady parade of people to the apartment, beauticians to do our faces, toning down the pancake Anita had first put on me and re-doing me with modern foundation makeup.

I was made up several different ways that day. I got used to having a different wig on my head every hour as a hair stylist visited me. He tried me as a blonde, a redhead and a brunette before finally encasing me the white wig with all the ringlets about my shivering shoulders.

They all knew that I was a man being a woman but it didn't bother the beauticians and stylists at all. They terrified me. The hair stylist was a drag queen 'herself' while several of the makeup artists didn't seem to be wholly women by the way they

spoke or the flamboyant gestures they made. They weren't in the slightest put out by me in my tight corset, my frilly panties, nor by the womanly fragrance I gave off. They all liked it. So feminine, they said, sending shivers through me.

Two of them helped me into my dress as tension rose in me. I just prayed for the day to be over. Another was helping Sissy and Anita into their costumes while I was sprayed with perfume and bejewelled as I'd never seen a woman before. "Oh, heavens," gushed the stylist with eyelashes that stuck out further than mine. "You are so beautiful, Countess Michelle. Oh, isn't she, Randi!"

Miranda, packing away the 'normal' wigs and dresses and stuff that I'd been paraded in earlier, agreed with her. "We have to scoot to get ready ourselves," said 'Brenda'. She and 'darling Miranda' left me, sitting in my pink dress, as glamorous a woman, or so I thought, as there had ever been. I couldn't glance down as my lifelike breasts were heaving in the anxiety I felt.

I expected Sissy and Anita to come out in their Count costumes as men. They didn't. Anita came out, smiling, in Debbie's golden ball dress. She curtseyed beautifully, easily. "La Comtesse d'Anjou a votre service," she said, grinning at me. Sissy was statuesque behind her as La Comtesse de Brionne. She had to duck her head to get her hairpiece, covered in pearls under the door stop as she led us, Anita clutching my pink-dressed body, along the hallway, past surprised, awed tenants. We crushed our dresses into the elevator.

I felt the weirdest sensation in my stomach. It grew and grew as we went on. I took pills from Anita that she said would cure me of the 'heebie-jeebies'. I

felt so numb as I was ushered into the limousine. The three of us had to be assisted in with all of our wide dresses and so many petticoats, never mind our wigs.

“I thought that all the women, the Countesses, at this ball,” I said to Anita, her face a mirror of my own, even to the beauty spot on her cheek, “were drag queens only.” Oh, I stared, shuddering, at the woman I was engaged to as we pulled into the line of limos, disgorging beautiful French ladies, like us, to the Rockford Plaza Hotel, the swankiest hotel in the city.

Doormen and bell hops jumped forward to help us so feminine Countesses. As they helped us with our dresses, we stood there, people gawking at us. I was shivering a little in the cool air as the hotel doors opened. Three guys, in Count uniforms, came grinning towards us.

“We are,” whispered Anita back to me as she smiled brightly at her Count of Anjou. They joined the parade of other arriving drag queens and their ‘husbands’ for the night, mincing past all the watchers towards the ball room.

I could only stand there in my lovely, pink dress, being tantalized and caressed by my stockings and woman’s clothing as Anita’s words sank into me. “Wait!” I tried to call after her but ‘she’ wouldn’t.

“We are,” she’d whispered, revealing the extent to which I’d been fooled. I almost fell onto my dress and screamed. I’ve never been as shocked as I was then. A bunch of drag queens had been playing games with me! I was such a sucker! I’d been suckered by a girl I’d said I’d marry! Who wouldn’t go to bed with me! Oh, what a dim bulb I was. Here I was,

for them to laugh and giggle at, a man in a dress! I was ready to punch the first one who touched me. But it wasn't a drag queen who smiled and took my hand.

The really tall Count of Brionne took Sissy's arm in his, she smiling brilliantly at him. While the third young man smiled at me and took my arm most energetically.

"Michelle," the man greeted me with a bow. Without even thinking, I did the little, womanly curtsy I'd practiced. "We are," pounded through my head as I entered the parade as another car drew up behind us. I was so stunned. I just flounced into the hotel after the other 'Countesses'.

Anita turned and looked over her lovely shoulder and smiled triumphantly at me. She's a queen, I thought hysterically. She's a drag queen! The woman I was engaged to was a drag queen! And it came to me, her father knew as well! He'd asked me, when he met me as Jim, if I'd slept with his daughter! I'd let him think I had!

"Oh, there's a really pretty one," said one of the older women watching us parade into the ballroom.

"Oh, they're all pretty!" said the woman beside her. "My husband wouldn't kick any of them out his bed, he wouldn't!"

The onlookers knew we were men! I clutched the Count of Bordeaux' arm, my cheeks flaming, as we went past hotel staff who watched us with leering interest. I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me, in my makeup, perfume, and swishing, girlish dress. And my boobs, my stockings, panties and garter belt! The busboys came to serve us with

champagne, treating all of us in dresses and perfume as if we were women.

“I have to get out of here!” I whispered to my Count. He shook his head in alarm and held onto me very firmly.

“Take a pill,” the Count whispered to me. I did but the queasiness and nerves afflicting me, a man in a dress, at a ball for drag queens, didn’t abate. I looked for a doorway.

Debbie and a tall man were there at the only entrance, she looking so fantastic in a glittering ball gown, her reddish hair tight to her head and a long swirl of curls down her back. She and the King of the year previous greeted us all. I had to curtsy like the other ‘girls’ to both of them. Debbie’s eyes sparkled at me. “I hope you win,” she said to me, she so flawlessly feminine.

My Count, as quiet as I was, led me as if I was a woman into the ballroom itself where couples were already dancing on the floor, the women all like me, in colorful dresses and curtsying to their partners. All around, women were escorted by men as if they were precious jewels. I was such a woman. No, I was a drag queen!

What had Anita said? All of the women at the ball would really be men! Men like me! Oh gods, I didn’t want to be here any more. Not in a dress and high stiletto heels as I had on my stockinged feet. I could feel my garter belt, my corset and my bra all moving and pulling on me! My long hair swished around my neck. What had I done to Anita to deserve this humiliation I was being put through?

My Count was going through his paces as if I wasn’t a hysterical man in a dress that I knew I was.

He held my arm firmly as if I was a woman, not letting me run off and embarrass him. As if he should be the one to think of embarrassment, I thought, risking a glance at his face. He actually smiled back at me. That only made my insides lurch.

I clutched at my Count so as not to fall as my dress, my dress (!), swished and swayed all around me. Oh, it was so debilitating. I felt like a woman and knew I looked like one. Well, all around me, the drag queens looked as feminine and behaved sweetly and girlishly as I was supposed to.

The Count of Bordeaux set my purse at a table reserved for us, nowhere near Anita or Sissy. "May I have the pleasure, my Countess, of this dance?" my Count asked me with a smile as if he knew I wanted, really, to be treated entirely as a pretty woman. He couldn't have been farther from the truth. I had no opportunity to refuse..

I was to smile and say, "I'd love to." I did, even though I was breaking out in goose bumps, at the overwhelming sense of humiliation encompassing me. I saw Anita smiling at me triumphantly as she looked at the girl just like her across the dance floor. So, with the Count's arms about me, I had the intense, feminizing experience of dancing as a woman with a man, dress skirts flowing out all about me as my Count tried as much as he could to intensify the womanly feelings I should be enjoying in being held, hugged and caressed lightly by him.

My Count had every compliment possible for me as a woman. He'd been well coached. He must have thought me a real block of wood as I didn't, couldn't, react to him in the affectionate, womanly manner as all the 'women' were treating their men. Several were

openly kissing men they danced with, so early in the ball.

The Count of Bordeaux tried. If I'd really been a woman, I'd have found his attentions sweet. Sissy and her Count, laughing as they swirled by, were kissing. 'She' was a man! Sissy had been fooling me too! Anita was kissing the guy she was with. I was to make love to her after this evening was over? After what she'd said! I felt like I'd walked into a viper's pit and was being bitten all over.

"You aren't well, milady Michelle," my 'husband' said to me. He introduced me to his friends and their smiling Countesses. He was fortunate to be the husband to such a beautiful wife, several said. We women rarely spoke. I judged by the whispers that many of the 'women', though they looked so gorgeous, even to possessing lovely breasts like mine, had sandpaper voices as I did.

The sickness excuse I should use and leave this insane ball in one piece. "I should leave," I whispered

But the Count wouldn't hear of that. He took a glass from a table and gave me two pills from his pocket, covering them with champagne. "Mild, prescription, pick-me-ups," my count said to me. "I'm a doctor in my other life. I always carry anti-depressives with me. Help you to get over a lost boy friend, I think"

I thought of Anita, her thin arms sweeping her hair back as she smiled or laughed at me. Oh, yes, it was a lost boy friend, I thought bitterly, as the Count of Bordeaux asked me to dance another waltz with him. So I did. It was what I was supposed to be there for, wasn't it, I thought angrily, a man deluded

into thinking that ‘pretty women’ liked him. But the Count did not sail me about the dance floor. This time, he put both his arms about my thin, pulled in waist, and drew me to him.

“Put your arms about my neck,” he murmured. “It will cushion the feeling that’s going to hit you any second.”

Wow, I felt something all over me. I clutched at my ‘husband’. His hand stroked my back. He twirled me as my feminized body seemed on fire. I put my arms about his head as I felt him so intensely hugging me. Then, it all eased. I felt so well, so alive. I smiled up at my Count as he swirled me, my dress feeling so wonderful about my legs. I could feel my breasts, false as they were, pressing into my husband’s chest. And then I tasted his lips. Ooo, they were so wonderful, just perfect, as we circled, his hands caressing my back and ...

“You’ve drugged me,” I whispered to him, feeling fantastically female as my dress outlined my figure as I swished.

“Not really,” my husband whispered in my ear. I shuddered against him as he held me. I clutched his hand, squeezing it to breaking point while he grimaced. “It’s a pick-me-up!” he gasped. “We give it to football players. We give it construction workers to go faster and faster on the job. We give it to hookers for, well, you can guess. It’s banned now as are all ephedrine drugs for athletes. It’s the interesting side effects! You and the other girls want to be the best girl at the hall. Half the girls here tonight called me for pills. I told you, I’m a doctor.”

“I don’t want to be a girl,” I told him, as we circled slowly and more slowly while all about us was

color and glitter and intoxicating perfumes. I began to shiver as a surge of femininity seemed to flow over me, my whole body almost bursting into flame as I really felt so feminine, so flirtatious. “I don’t want to be a drag queen.”

The Count of Bordeaux was shocked. He stared into my eyes. He must have been able to see I was lying. “You don’t?” he asked. “Then, then, why are you here, Michelle, dressed like this? Are you some kind of policeman out to catch me?”

“No, no,” I murmured. “C-can we sit down?” We sat but my count didn’t stay with me long. I sat, my senses beginning to scatter. I couldn’t concentrate on anything. I wanted just to join the swirling girls on the dance floor, be one of them. Someone came and sat with me. Someone talked in the distance as there was a large movement to the tables.

“Barry gave you some of his pills,” said a voice I recognized as nausea threatened to overwhelm me. Women in long, beautiful dresses filled in the tables about me. Oh, I didn’t want to be one of them any more, I thought, my quivering stomach ready to heave.

“Guy,” I murmured. The bartender from *Candy’s* helped me to my high heels and took me to the Ladies’ Room. I did throw up, shuddering in shame and humiliation while Guy stayed with me, holding me, chasing off other ‘women’ while I recovered.

“Barry and his pills,” Guy said bitterly. “Half the girls are on them, even your pals Anita, and Sissy. I wasn’t wrong, was I? You being here makes you a drag queen.”

“No, I’m not,” I said to him, quivering that a man could think that of me, even though I was dressed

like this beautiful French courtesan. I was so ashamed at what he must think of me. The whole story poured out of me into Guy's astounded ears. "I just want to get out of here now," I told him, shuddering.

"Why don't we get even with that cabal of conniving drag queens first?" asked Guy. The door rattled again where he'd locked it. "Can you get your makeup back to what it was, Michelle?" I stared at him. "There's a good girl," he said, stroking my arm. I shivered and leaned away from him. "The pills are still in your system. If you left now, with your skirts drifting all about you, if a man grabbed you and kissed you, you'd react the way you did when Barry was kissing you on the dance floor."

"Barry?" I asked stupidly as Guy opened my purse. I looked at the girl in the mirror.

"Not Barry Davies," said Guy with a grin, hitting himself on the head. "You, you're his roommate! Gee, the number of times we laughed at that, Barry D getting a straight roommate. Oh, man, you never had a chance with those crazy drag queens. Now, let's show them."

I shuddered at my image in the mirror. "I have to be a woman again," I whispered fearfully as his hands caressed my arms. I began to shiver again as he put his arm about my waist. I felt his lips on my ear, ringlets bobbing about my neck, my long earrings falling onto my chest.

"Oh, yes, baby," said Guy. "You are a fabulous woman, Michelle. We're going to get even with all of those queens, I promise."

I don't how I did it. I only know that Guy encouraged me. When I faltered and shivered at his kisses,

he eased back. He told me it was the drugs in my system. He wouldn't let me make a fool of myself. He'd be there for me right through.

*******10. Queen of the queens*******

It must have been an hour before we left the Ladies' Room. The supper was over, the cleanup in full throttle. Wine was being poured. Speeches were being given by voices that weren't female even though they came from the mouths of very pretty women.

"I need to speak to my friends, the judges," said Guy as I clung to his arm, this being the only way to get properly out of the place, Guy said. He kissed me. He was right about how the drugs made me feel. Oh, I had to keep on doing that, kissing him, as I felt so girlie and femmy. Oh, I was high, I knew, but I was a beautiful queen, wasn't I? Guy told me I was.

I minced as nicely as I could, my dress swishing so wonderfully about me, clinging to Guy as he twirled me. "Michelle, I have to hand you back to the Count of Bordeaux for the parade," Guy whispered. "I can trust you, can't I, Michelle? He's not the one for you. All you have to do is parade with the girls. I'll do the rest."

I nodded, loving the feel of the ringlets at my neck that Guy had adjusted for me. The Count of Bordeaux stood at his table, looking very concerned, as he should, the rat, I thought, smiling at him, sa-shaying up to him on Guy's protective arm.

"She's all right now?" asked Barry, yes that was the bastard's name. All bastards are named Barry, I thought, and giggled.

“She wants to be in the parade,” said Guy, putting his arm about me, giving me a squeeze. He turned me to him and kissed me, softly and quickly. It was like a fierce flash of lightning through me. I wanted more, the flash felt so exhilarating. “Take her, Barry. No alcohol and no more of your date-rape pills.”

“They’re not!” Barry said hotly, looking around to see whether the other conversationalists about us were listening in. They weren’t. All the women were leaning into the men and smiling away, snuggling up to the men they were with. Most of the men were smiling back and looking very pleased with themselves.

“If I say that,” said Guy, “or Michelle does, the police are going to be here in seconds. You’ll be arrested, Barry, being a doctor. There’ll be one unholy scandal! So look after Michelle, Barry, or you’ll answer to me. Guide her through the parade and let her go at the right time.”

Guy left me after calling me ‘her’. I stood uneasily with my Count. He stood awkwardly with me. Someone at one of the mikes directed a parade to begin. Barry brought me to sit beside him as laughing men and women came dancing and swirling in their beautiful gowns and tuxes around the tables. Many of the waiters, waitresses and cooks came to their entry doors, smiling and pointing as the parade whirled about the room. I sat, my stockings crossed, enjoying the stimulating swirl of colors. I almost cuddled up to Barry in my long, swishy dress but I could hear Guy, in my head, telling me not to.

We were at almost the last table to join the parade. The Count of Bordeaux took my hand. I felt another electric charge go through me as he

wrapped an arm about me and danced a few steps with me as my skirts swirled about me. I felt so wonderful.



I smiled into his face and hugged him as we circled the other glittering, seated women. It took quite a time. I saw Sissy, smiling at me. I must have passed Anita but I don't remember. I danced when the path was clear and skipped with Barry when it wasn't, smiling and feeling so excited. Well, I was done with this charade in a very few minutes.

It took forever to get my dress perfectly placed beneath me, when we sat, Barry talking to me, even though I wasn't listening. Couples started assembling on the dance floor. I saw Sissy and her tall partner. Anita danced out as the Count and Countess of Anjou were called. Then, 'The Count and Countess of Bordeaux!' shouted the woman who wasn't really a woman from the podium. Barry put his arm about me, making me stand.

All the people around us applauded as we minced out onto the floor. Music began to play as Barry held me. I didn't mind. I could waltz with anyone now, I thought, smiling brilliantly at him. The music stopped, lights on, cameras flashing. Most of the couples left the dance floor, some of the women pouting at the podium as if they didn't want to leave.

I stood there, Barry's arms about me. I put my arms about him, femmy feelings running through me, as I cuddled up to him as he smiled down at me. All the men in their short, white wigs and satin coats looked so dreamy, I thought, a golden halo about everyone. Then, Barry had to go. I went to go with him but Debbie, looking so lovely in her white gown, a tiara in her hair, laughed at me and told me to stay where I was.

A beautiful woman, her wig actually blonde and beautiful, stood beside me, her figure so shapely,

her breasts so beautiful, her smile dazzling. I smiled back as she curtsied to Debbie. I heard the name, 'Michelle, Countess of Bordeaux'. I had to curtsey. I made it. I did a deep curtsey like a woman and I didn't fall. I felt so proud of myself! Even Anita, I noticed, among the six of us dressed like women, smiled and applauded me.

We waited a little, the blonde woman beside me, oh, she had to be a woman, turning and waving to the crowd as we all stood there. "And this year's king and queen," said the woman at the microphone, "The Count of Paris and the lovely Countess of Bordeaux, King Guy and Queen Michelle."

I stood there in a shocked, little world of my own. I've seen the tapes. I looked overcome. I was. I looked girlish and struck by lightning as the other girls, save for the voluptuous Charlotte who'd stood beside me, hugged me, even a smiling Anita. I was escorted to a throne by Debbie. She had me sit while she put a tiara in my hair and a sash about my dress.

Debbie kissed me, gently. "I'm so glad it's you who's Queen," she said wickedly to me. "See! A man can do anything he wants in this world, even be a woman."

Reality claimed me for a moment. I shuddered at all the noise, the clapping, the balloons and party favors whizzing around. No, I didn't see Charlotte screaming that it was all a fix as she charged out, holding her dresses up so high that the pictures of her showing off her underwear, her stockings and garters were what made the newspapers the next day.

While I was being crowned, a man was being crowned beside me. His hand closed over mine. I turned in fear but there was Guy looking at me. I tried to pull my hand away as he grinned. "Beginning to wear off, is it?" he whispered. "Only a little to go now."

I was urged to stand and curtsy to the King. We danced alone around the ballroom, everyone standing and applauding me as I clung to Guy, trying to move my high heels quickly enough not to fall. Yes, I know the video shows us whirling beautifully together, my arms about his neck, him hanging on to me by my waist. I'm smiling, I know, but in terror, not in pride and love.

The rest went as Anita had once explained it to me. The Counts escorted King Guy to the Bridal Suite through the amazed hotel. The princesses and former Queen escorted me to the Bridal Suite, taking away my huge wig when we got there, which I was so relieved at. I was almost in tears as I had the brunette wig I'd worn to Candy's put on my head then. My dress was undone. I lost my skirt and petticoats, but I gained a ruffled nightdress. I was escorted, pulled and tugged, by giggling 'Princesses' to the bed where Guy was already half under the covers.

"Just go with it," whispered Guy. "They're all stoned as it is." The way the Princesses and Debbie retired with the Counts, Debbie with the former King, was like a harem of pleasure-seeking women, each with a man to entertain. I don't think they even looked at Guy and me as Debbie closed the doors. She gave me a wink and cheeky wave, her lipsticked mouth whispering "Enjoy!" as I looked down the bed to her.

Guy padded to the door, locking it. He smiled as I sat up nervously. He poured two flutes of champagne which he brought to my side of the bed, handing one to me. "I much prefer your hair this color," he murmured, touching a long strand of brunette hair that had fallen over my shoulder.

I shivered as I held out both hands, my fingernails so long and red about the glass, so feminine; I took a sip of the cold bubbles. There was lipstick on my glass. "I should wipe all this makeup off me," I began, thinking of the nightie I had to get out of as well.

"Not yet," said Guy with a smile. "Let me enjoy looking at the girl who fooled me with her kiss at my bar."

"Your bar?" I shuddered. "*Candy's*?"

"I do own it," said Guy the bartender. "It's meant to be a bar for all the prettiest drag queens in the city. Oh, you didn't know! Well, we do let a few women in like Barbara. You met her, I think. She was keeping an eye on her husband, Jennifer. You met her, didn't you? Yes, any guy," he pulled a face at that, "who wants to meet a drag queen comes to *Candy's*. All the in crowd knows that."

"I went there with Anita," I said, shivering as I sat there in a nightdress chatting with another man.

"Yes," said Guy. "I'd pegged you as a guy who likes drag queens and the special way they like to make love."

"Special?" I asked. Guy took the wine from my hands then and set it on the table beside the bed.

Guy stroked my bare arm and the flash of lightning went through me again. I think I whimpered as he swung onto the bed in his purple pyjamas.

“I’m not a drag queen,” I protested to him. “I’m not gay!”

“You could’ve fooled me,” whispered Guy as he put his arms about me, kissing me. I knew he was going to do that and let him. I could have pushed him off the bed. I could have started throwing things. But I didn’t. It was just like the time when he’d kissed me in his bar, only this time we had no audience.

“Say it was Barry’s drugs in your system,” said Guy, as he eased off his pyjama jacket. He put my feminine hands on his muscular, manly chest. He kissed me again as he stroked himself with my hands. Then he put them around his neck, as he wormed his way under the covers. His body touched mine, his legs all about my long nightie, and the stockings and garter belt I still had on.

So, I’ll say it was the drugs that made me thrill so much to being kissed and loved by Guy. Yes, I was loved. He was my king and I was his queen. He was French kissing me in moments. I loved it. I helped him to slip my nightie from me and kiss my false breasts. I don’t know why but it felt like I really had breasts! The man kissing and fondling them was kissing and fondling me. Well, he was.

I could feel how he was aroused as I hung onto him. Guy got on top of me and helped me to take off my little corset and undo my stockings. Oh, how womanly I felt as he slowly took off my stockings, kissing my legs as softly as he did so. I was whimpering by then but he took pity on me, kissing me

thoroughly, my mouth open to welcome him as I sank into bliss as I lost my panties and my gaff.

“This is the special way, face-to-face,” murmured Guy as he lifted my electrified body. I remembered so clearly how I’d done it with Debbie. Only, now was my turn to be the wife. Oh, I liked my turn. I enjoyed every second of it as Guy penetrated my tush as I held onto him. I kissed his face frantically as he rocked me, my legs kicking off the bed sheets and being high in the air, as I was royally filled with his male essence.

Guy was queenly spattered as well but, after he came, he only pulled me tighter to him. “Michelle, ma belle,” he crooned at me. I mauled his face and neck and mouth with mine as I felt him grow in me. Oh, Debbie, I thought, I hope it was as wonderful for you as it is for me! I crossed my legs over Guy’s back and hung onto him, bouncing as Debbie had bounced for me. My pleasure in having Debbie as a woman was a hundredfold more than loving Marsha. It was a thousandfold more for me as a woman when I bounced on Guy’s manhood, convulsing in a feminine orgasm beneath him.

Guy liked what I was doing. I was a beautiful queen. He had so many things to show me he loved to do to his queen. Well, we had the room till ten o’clock the next morning and we weren’t sleepy. The pills energized me, I’m sure, making me a loving woman, well, a loving drag queen.

I was so willing to learn from a wonderful man as Guy. Oh, I left every male inhibition behind as I awakened his manhood with my mouth, let him have me doggie-style, my little tush quivering like a bitch in heat, as he climaxed inside me, until he col-

lapsed on me and cuddled me as he thought about another way I could love him.

*******11. A different guy for a roommate*******

It took one of Dr Barry's pills to get me through the next day. I was the Queen of the Artists and Models! I had to go public! The beauticians, cosmeticians, and hair stylists were so wonderful. I was on television news, Guy's arms all about me, me smiling. Not all of the stations carried our kissing but there was plenty of it. I didn't mind at all.

Another night with Guy was just what the doctor ordered after a day in drag. Dr Barry's pills got me through. The oddest thing was to meet Donald Black with Debbie and Anita at one of the evening receptions. I knew Donald knew who I was as he stared at me, a female, open-mouthed.

"I think a promotion is in order," I whispered to him, holding out a limp wrist to him when we were finally introduced. "Anita owes me."

Donald Black glared at me but the message was sent.

The following day, Guy laughed and laughed at me as I sat in front of our dressing table mirror, still in my nightie and 'boobs'. I tried to get my hair and face, especially my eyebrows, back to look like those of Jimmy Banks. It must have been the pills but, even in a suit, shirt and tie, sent up to our room for me, I still felt so womanly. It must have been the lack of hair and the aroma of womanhood about me. Guy, my lover, kissed me, me in my mannish clothes, my eyes closed, feeling as if I was a woman again.

“Give it a few days,” my boy friend told me kindly. “It will all wear off.” Guy got me through the first day at the Bentham Trust by showing me how to paint my eye as if it was bruised and encouraging me to shave off my eyebrows completely as if I’d fallen near a fire and got singed. The red dye with the blue made that convincing.

I didn’t know what I’d find in my apartment. Anita’s coat and purse were on the couch as usual. She was nowhere to be seen but Barry, no, Debbie, had her room closed. I didn’t knock on the door. What was the point? I gently opened the door as the sound of two people making love came to me from the bed.

Anita and Debbie were both quite naked, Anita’s breasts bouncing and real but apart from that, it was hard to tell which one was which, so much were their bodies entwined. They both had their hair loose and flowing, long earrings dangling at their ears. They both had penises, of course. They didn’t hear me. They just went right on. Then Anita sort of twirled on top of Debbie and each had a penis in her mouth.

Anita saw me and partly sat up, her face writhing with her passion. She was so much more passionate in kissing Debbie’s manhood than she’d ever been about kissing me, I observed.

“Jim, go,” Anita gasped at me. Debbie looked up at me, part of Anita in her mouth. “Please go. Leave us alone for a while.”

I didn’t have to be told twice. I called Anita a few names and told her what I thought of her as a man. I should have left the apartment but I sat and had a drink. Finally, they came out in matching baby doll

pyjamas. They came and perched like pretty girls on either side of me on the sofa.

“I’m sorry, Jim,” said Anita. “I didn’t want you to find out in the way that you did. It just happened that way. I did plan to marry you. I was going to let you make love to me.”

I burst out laughing. Anita glared at me. “And who gets custody of the garter belt when we break up?” I sneered at her.

“Jim,” said Debbie, Barry, my roommate. “I’m going to move in with Anita now, at least until I get married. Would you be one of my bridesmaids?”

I was speechless. I stared at Anita who smiled at me. “Debbie’s not marrying me,” she said. “Debbie’s marrying my father. He can’t get it up any more in a normal way. Debbie’s showed him some lovely ways he can have a sex life again. Daddy is quite in love. As a wedding present to me, he’s going to make my fiancée a VP. You’ll take Dynes’ job.”

I didn’t say anything. I’d already heard that Mitch Dynes was gone from the firm. He was going to be replaced by some woman from outside the firm was today’s rumor, when I’d left that afternoon.

“How can you marry her Daddy?” I asked Debbie. “You’re still married to me until our divorce comes through. I may want a reconciliation.”

Debbie’s cheek dimpled. “I’d like to try that,” she said in her lovely imitation of a woman’s voice. I could see her as an actress on stage.

“If I really was a woman,” Debbie-Barry went on, “I’d be your wife in a second, Jimmy. I do like you immensely. But I’m not a woman, not yet. I’m sorry if I stole Anita from you but it isn’t easy to make a

living as a drag queen anywhere. Anita has shown me the way, one she took with her Daddy. Now I'm going to be her new Mommy after Donald marries me. I'd really love it to have Michelle as one of my bridesmaids and best friends."

"I don't think Michelle will help us," said Anita, standing up. "She's got a gay boy friend now. Our crazy games are passing her by. Ooo, Debs, you look so lovely in that baby doll."

They had their hands about each other as they whirled and twirled and giggled their way back to the bedroom.

I have a new roommate. As soon as Debbie moved out, Guy showed up and asked to move in with me. He meant into Debbie's old room. I suppose I shouldn't have said 'No'.

I hadn't told Anita but Donald had asked me to take Mitch Dynes' job, "a promotion". Like me, Guy was invited to Donald and Debbie's wedding. His date would be one of the bridesmaids. Debbie included a note with her invitation, pleading with me to be her bridesmaid along with Anita and Sissy.

"The only way I'd go is loaded up with Dr Barry's pick-me-up pills," I told Guy, in *Candy's*, flushing as he read the note aloud. The following day, Guy brought me a vial at work with two hundred of pills in it.

I was in quite a state at being manipulated until Guy also gave me a suitcase with all my queenly clothes in it. I'd forgotten I'd agreed, as Queen, to appear at functions with him as King and Queen.

Supposedly, I'd contracted to do it in entering the contest.

Bad idea, with a dress about me, and Dr Barry's pills inside me, I was a pushover for Guy, proving I was wrong. He was right about the pills and me in a dress. He only had to touch me and I swooned like a woman, hating myself for a while. I think he must have been giving the pills to me every day after that, before and after Debbie's wedding.

Soon I wasn't going into work as Jim Banks. Guy told Donald that 'Michelle Smith' would take up Mitch's duties after the wedding. Of course, I was Debbie's bridesmaid. She had eight, all girls I knew from *Candy's*, including Jennifer but not Barbara. Guy was one of the ushers with Colin, Steve, and Trevor, from *Candy's*.

We bridesmaids and groomsmen had quite a party after Debbie's wedding. Though the others ditched and switched, I remained faithful to Guy. Yes, we are roommates, in one room really.

The day after the wedding, a rumor came true. Michelle Smith, a woman from outside the Trust, was appointed into my spot as VP. There was a picture of her from one of the socials I'd had to attend as Artists and Models Queen. I didn't have my tiara or sash at the time but I did have on a pretty dress and my makeup had been done by experts.

No-one, not even me, recognized Jim Banks in that photo, I was sure.

Michelle Smith took up her duties in the reorganized Bentham Trust. And I have another job at nights. When one of Guy's waitresses is off, guess who's called upon to flirt with all of the customers in

her tight, femmy clothing. She's rewarded, too, by sleeping with the boss!

Guy and I went through our own delightful wedding ceremony at *Candy's*. Ooo, Michelle was such a sparkling bride! I'm Michelle Candy now as I've taken my husband's name. I don't take pills any more but it makes no difference. I only have to kiss my husband just a little and he wants to fondle my real breasts and take my panties and bra off me.

Oh, yes, it's my turn, me, Michelle, to be the wife now. I'm not letting anyone else have that place in my life any more.

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