

NEW TOWN, NEW LIFE

By Audrey Taylor



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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NEW TOWN, NEW LIFE

By Audrey Taylor

Chapter One

I shifted my bag to my left hand and continued down the street of this small town. There had to be a room to rent somewhere in Sheville.

I was really beat, having been on the road for the past three days from the big city where the people were so distant and cold. I was ready for a change.

This small town seemed nice and my ride had just let me off at the outskirts. Betty had been real nice to me since I'd shared the driving with her for the past 14 hours, as she returned from a weekend visit to her sister's family.

"This is a cozy little place, a bit off the beaten track," she'd said. "I'm sure there's rooms to rent in the center of town. Just walk straight ahead, past the beauty salon and the bank and you should be able to spot some."

As I passed the bank, the late afternoon sun was casting shadows across their large windows and I could see they were closing for the day. I needed to find a place before dark. At the corner, I spotted an old building which had a clothing store on the ground floor with a 'rooms for rent' sign swinging in front.

It would sure be good to get in a bath and wash off the dust and grime of three days travel. The 'inquire within' sign found me standing inside at the counter speaking to a pleasant looking middle aged woman.

"I was wondering about the rooms you have for rent," I inquired.

She evaluated me with a penetrating look, as I took my surroundings in for the first time. There were dresses and ladies undergarments on various racks and displays; several mannequins in chemises, with one in particular catching my eye dressed in a sexy, black bra and panty girdle.

"I usually rent only to women, but you seem harmless enough, although you do look like you could use a bath," she replied. There she goes, noticing my slight build and appearance, although I stood 5'7" and weighed 150 pounds. The woman I'd driven to town with had made a similar comment when she'd picked me up at the service station.

"I have several rooms upstairs but at the moment only one is available. It will run you \$250 a month and a month's security in advance. If you have any trouble with my other tenants you will have to leave, forfeiting your security. We have a really pleasant group of people here and I mean to keep it that way."

My mind did some quick calculations and realized that the \$500 she was seeking would make a considerable dent in my bankroll. However, it was far cheaper than the place I'd previously stayed at, so I asked, "Could I take a look at it?"

“Just a moment,” as she called to the back of the store, “Rose, can you come up front a minute, while I show this gentleman the room upstairs?” She turned to me, “Why don't you leave your bag on the side over here, and follow me.”

A middle-aged, attractive blonde ducked past the separating curtain from the back, “Charlotte, I can't get Mrs. Carter's dress altered with all these interruptions. She's expecting to pick it up by noon tomorrow. I hope you won't be long.”

“This should only take a minute,” Charlotte said as she turned on her heel and went through a doorway which led upstairs. I trailed behind her admiring her fine figure as she mounted each step.

'This place could have some fringe benefits,' I thought to myself.

On the second floor she walked down a hallway. “This is my apartment on the right, and the living room here on the left is shared by all the tenants. There's a kitchen past the living room which is also for the group, and you're expected to leave it clean after you use it.”

Further down the hall, she reached into her sweater pocket for a key and opened a door on the right. I followed her in and was surprised at the large size and pleasant furnishings within. “Don't mind the slightly feminine decor, for I usually rent to a woman. That won't bother a find gentleman like you, will it?”

I looked around at the 'slightly feminine' room. The pink and lavender coloring of the wallpaper and curtains were definitely disconcerting, but I tried the bed and found it to be firm, which was important for my troubled back. This room was well beyond 'slightly feminine', still I asked Charlotte, “where's the bathroom?”

I was really beat and the cost and comfort seemed too good to be true. So it's a little feminine.

“It's down the hall on your right. We both share the same bathroom so we will have to set up a routine for using it,” she said as she beckoned me to follow her.

It was huge (as big as my room), had a big tub, separate shower/steam area and left me in total shock. *'Wow,'* I thought, *'I could sure get accustomed to this.'*

“Mr. . . what's your name? Are you interested? My seamstress is waiting downstairs and I have to get back,” Charlotte inquired.

I felt the pressure of my decision.

“I'm Frank Flanders, and I do have one question,” I replied. “Are there any jobs available in this town? I do bookkeeping and other general office duties. I am definitely interested in the room, but I need to find a job pretty quickly in order to stay.”

“There are plenty of jobs in town. Whether you're suited for them is not for me to say. I happen to need some help with my bills and other paperwork at the moment, but I can't deal with that right now. Shall I fill out a lease agreement?” she asked.

Stifling a yawn I responded, “Yeah, I guess so.”

“Good,” she said. “Why don't you get your bag and settle in while I prepare the lease. Then you can sign it and pay me the first month's rent and the month's security. Tell Rose I'll be down in about ten minutes.”

Rose was quite pleased when she heard I would be renting the empty room. “It sure will be interesting having a man around the house. We're always needing help with something or other.”

These sure seemed like nice folks, I thought, as I lugged my suitcase up the stairs. Once I can get myself a job, this shouldn't be a bad place to hang out for a while. What a difference from the unfriendly big city where everybody moves so quickly and could care less.

As I unpacked my clothes and started to put them in the dresser I encountered an array of woman's clothes. Needing only two of the five drawers, I moved the clothes to the other three drawers. The closet also had some hanging dresses and coats which I moved aside as I hung up my suit and raincoat. Boy did they need a cleaning and pressing. On the floor were a bunch of high heeled shoes and slippers. *Who do these belong to*, I wondered.

“Frank, do you spell your name with a 'k' or a 'cis' at the end,” Charlotte inquired?

I turned around a bit startled and said “It's Francis on my birth certificate (thanks Mom), but I would appreciate your calling me Frank.” I couldn't believe it; I had just let the truth slip out to this stranger. It had been such an embarrassment when I was growing up. I was really tired.

“Francis is such a nice name. I wouldn't be so up tight about using it. I've set up the lease for one year and then we can go on a month to month basis. Why don't you sign it right here by the X, so I can get back to the shop,” Charlotte impatiently suggested.

“What happens if I can't find a job and have to leave? Can I get out of the lease?” I was concerned. “By the way, whose clothes are those in the dresser and closet,” my curiosity escaped?

“Those are some of my clothes that don't fit me anymore, but they still have plenty of wear in them. Just push them out of your way and when I get a chance I'll move them somewhere else.” Off-handedly she added, “you can use anything that fits; might as well have someone get some use out of them. I'm sure you'll be able to find a job in town, but if you have a problem just let me know, we'll figure something out,” Charlotte answered my concerns.

“I appreciate that, (the job assurance, not the clothes), and once I've showered and caught up on some sleep I'll go through the want ads.” I yawned again as I signed the lease and gave her the \$500 in cash as agreed.

“Thanks Francis, I can see we are going to get along splendidly. I'll leave a towel and soap for you to use in the bathroom. See you later for dinner, we do eat precisely at 7 o'clock. It's Gertrude's turn to cook. Have a good nap.” she concluded as she shut my door and went back downstairs.

I was annoyed by her use of 'Francis' but that was nothing compared to her suggestion that I could wear any of her old clothes that fit. She certainly had some strange ideas. I sat in a hot bath for thirty minutes using the scented soap she left for me and felt deeply relaxed. There was a robe hanging on my door which I borrowed to get up and back from the bathroom.

Chapter 2

I don't even remember hitting the bed, for the next thing I knew I was being shaken by the shoulder, "better hurry, or you'll miss dinner." I peeked up to see Charlotte gazing down at me, "Why don't you wear that robe to dinner. It looks cute on you and seems to fit okay. I'm sure the others won't mind. Just put on a pair of panties so you don't give the girls a peek at something they shouldn't be seeing."

I was still in a daze as I watched her pull the pink panties out of one of the drawers. She sat me up on top of the covers where I had fallen asleep and assisted each one of my legs into the panties. Still in my drugged state, she assisted me up, and lifted the panties into place. They felt strange, but very soft and smooth.

All of a sudden it hit me and I screeched at her, "what are you doing? I'm a man, and men don't wear panties and robes. Especially in front of other people at dinner."

"Of course you're a man; however, wearing what is available is okay in my book. While you were asleep, wearing the robe I might add, I took all your clothes and put them in the washing machine." They were a total mess (*I hadn't cleaned them in weeks.*) "and if you expect to stay here any length of time that will not be tolerated. I would think you would be a little grateful for my help, and," (she looked angrily at me), "don't EVER raise your voice to me again. If you would rather skip dinner, that's fine. This certainly is NOT a good beginning."

She abruptly left the room.

I sat there bewildered. It looked like I was getting off to a poor start, that's for sure. She was right, my clothes were a mess and I should be saying 'thank you' to her for helping me. I looked in the mirror (I looked silly), and shrugged to myself saying what's the big deal. With the robe closed no one would spot the panties and I couldn't go naked, could I.

All of a sudden my hunger hit me, and that was the deciding vote. I hadn't had a good meal in several days and the odors from the kitchen forced me find a pair of slippers (only a small heel) and venture forth, following my nose to the dining room.

I stopped off at the bathroom to wash my face and continued past the kitchen to find a rather large dining area. Everyone was already there, so I sat in a vacant seat by the window.

Charlotte introduced me to all the ladies.

"I'd like you to meet our new tenant Francis Flanders (there she goes using 'Francis'). This is Maureen," motioning towards a young attractive brunette on my left. "She lives upstairs with Gina," looking at the cute redhead next to her. "You've already met Rose," we nodded, and as a matronly woman came in the door from the kitchen she continued, "and this is Gertrude whose responsible for our delicious dinner tonight."

I breathed in the aroma of the roast beef and several steaming vegetables and smiled to each of them in turn. I took the potatoes from Maureen as she passed them around the table and proceeded to eat like a king (even though my attire was definitely not of male royalty).

The meal was marvelous and nobody mentioned my robe until dessert when Maureen said as an aside “Francis, that robe is frayed and is certainly not appropriate for wear at dinner.”

All the ladies were dressed, most casually but none were in lounging costumes like myself.

Having overheard her comments, Charlotte came to my defense, “I asked Francis to wear the robe tonight because all of his clothes are in the washing machine and he was running late. I'm sure there are other clothes he will use for dinner in the future. Please excuse his appearance tonight.”

I smiled at Maureen (take that) and dug into my hot apple pie with my head down, trying to ignore what they were thinking. I felt the panties sliding within the nylon robe and got a sudden chill, and a strong reaction began inside them.

'Oh my God, how will I get back to my room without being totally embarrassed,' my mind was going like an express train.

Over coffee and tea, the women were talking about their day and their plans for the evening. Most of them were looking forward to watching a movie on cable except Gina who was going out to bowl in a league she belonged to.

“Are you interested in seeing the movie tonight with us?” Maureen asked me. “It's supposedly a true story of a wife accused of killing her husband. Sandra Kelly plays the wife, she's one of my favorite actresses.”

The meal having revived me, and looking at Maureen's lovely eyes I responded, “I'll give it a try, and see if I can stay awake.”

“Well let's get started if we expect to watch it from the beginning,” Rose prompted us as she stacked the plates at her end of the table.

Everybody pitched in and Gina tossed me an apron saying, “I'll wash. Why don't you help by drying and Maureen can put everything away.”

Seemed fair, so I put on the apron (helped hide any bulges), and carried some dishes into the kitchen. Gina, wearing a similar apron was already at the sink, scrubbing away. With everyone helping we had a spotless kitchen in under twenty minutes. We all retired to the living room, but as we passed my room Charlotte suggested that we see if there was anything more suitable for me to wear for the movie.

As she looked through the drawers she found a pair of blue slacks and a yellow sweater. “I don't know how these will fit, but why don't you give them a try.” She turned her back as I removed the robe and put on the slacks zippering it up on the side. As I put the sweater over my head she commented, “they seem a bit snug in the waist but will certainly do for now. Let's go, the movie's about to start.” I kept the slippers on.

I sat next to Maureen, who had saved me a seat on the couch and smiled as she said, “You look much better.”

I sure couldn't wait until I had my own clothes. In the mean time, their acceptance of me sure felt good, as they completely ignored my dressing in feminine clothes.

“Your hair could use a little work,” Maureen added. “If you like I can help you with it tomorrow evening before dinner.”

I gave her the 'thumbs up' sign, “that'll be great.”

“Sssh, the movies starting,” Gertrude admonished, and we all quieted down and paid attention.

A few minutes later Gina stuck her head in the doorway and said good night as she headed off to her bowling league. I noticed a cute yellow team outfit, skirt and blouse, which looked super on her. We all wished her good luck and I was again struck by the good naturalness of these women and how they cared for each other. It was so uncommon these days.

About halfway through the movie I conked out. Maureen nudged me off her shoulder when it ended and walked me to my room. Saying good night, she went upstairs to her room, and I proceeded to undress (in my half conscious state) and put on a nightgown. Charlotte suggested I wear it in case I had to use the bathroom during the night. I slipped under the covers and fell into a deep sleep, not really caring what I had on.

Chapter 3

I slept like a baby, and was brought to consciousness by my nostrils. Coffee odors permeated the air. I suddenly had an overwhelming urge to use the bathroom. I shot up, located a robe to cover the pink nightgown I was wearing, opened my door and rushed headlong into Charlotte. “Oh, I'm sorry, but I have to use the bathroom quickly,” I said as I continued on. (Thank God she wasn't in it.)

“Well please give yourself more time in the future,” she replied as she straightened herself out and continued to her room.

As I sat and urinated (the robe and nightgown were too much to handle standing), I thought of my bumping into Charlotte's softness and made a mental note to apologize properly later.

As I washed my face, I looked in the mirror at myself and admired the beautiful nightgown I had on. Not the usual bumps, but still it looked good. I used to envision girls dressed like this, not myself. It sure felt cool and clingy.

On my way to my room, I met Gina, who startled me and watched me turn beet red before I was able to get my door closed.

This was really ridiculous. I had to find my clothes and get into them immediately. I opened my top drawer and was astonished to find it totally empty, except for some of my personal papers. The second drawer was no better, completely empty. *What was I going to do?*

After several moments of contemplation, listening to the thunder and watching the raindrops hit my window, I screwed up enough courage to tighten my robe and go over to Charlotte's room. Of course I had to run into somebody, this time it was Rose on her way to the kitchen for breakfast.

“Good morning Francis, don't you look chic,” she commented in passing.

'Thanks I really needed that,' I thought as I knocked on Charlotte's door.

"Just a minute," she called, "who is it?"

"It's Frank. I need my clothes, Charlotte."

I smiled as Maureen passed me and said good morning.

Charlotte's door opened, "I wasn't able to get the dryer to work last night, so I figured we'd hang them up outside this morning." She had on a robe similar to mine, only hers had marvelous bumps conspicuously missing from mine.

"Great, so what will I wear today to look for a job. No one's going to hire a man dressed in a woman's nightgown, are they," I said a bit exasperated. "I can't keep running around in these. It's embarrassing, all the girls have seen me and probably think I'm strange."

"Nonsense, I'm sure they will understand when I explain the situation to them. It's no big deal. Why don't you go take a shower while I search for some clothes that you can use until yours are dry," she suggested.

As I headed for the bathroom Maureen said, "don't forget to wash your hair so I can trim it for you later."

Closing the bathroom door, I took a deep sigh. I thought, '*I can't wear my clothes wet,*' started the bath putting in some bath oils I found and decided to make the best of it.

After shaving with a borrowed razor (*gotta pick one up*), I settled in the bath and relaxed basking in the sweet aroma and enjoying the large comfortable shape of the tub.

Charlotte knocked on the door saying she had left a few things on my bed.

"They're the best I can find, and I hope they fit. I'm heading down to the store to open up. Why don't you stop by after you have something to eat and I can give you some suggestions with your job hunt."

"Thanks Charlotte," I called through the door. "I'll see you later."

She was really trying to be helpful.

Relaxing so completely I almost forgot to wash my hair. Finding some shampoo and conditioner in the cabinet, I used them generously on my head. As I brushed out my hair with a borrowed brush (*I hope Charlotte didn't mind*), I noticed how long and tangled my hair had become. I couldn't remember my last haircut. Finally dry and again in the robe I headed back to my room.

As I passed the kitchen the coffee smell beckoned me to stop and get a cup, bringing it along to my room (of course nobody was around). Spotting the clothes on the bed, I decided to give them a try. There was a fresh pair of panties (black no less), a pair of jeans and another sweater, this one was light green. As I looked at the socks, it hit me.

How were my clothes going to dry while it was raining outside? It certainly didn't look like I was going anywhere today to find a job (the green sweater wouldn't work). Hopefully on Saturday.

The borrowed clothes fit fairly well although the pants were tight in the crotch, not really made for my equipment. As I headed to the kitchen, I thought of Charlotte and how well her old clothes fit me, yet our shapes were so different. I had a bowl of cereal and another cup of coffee, and wondered who was paying for all this food. I put my dishes in the sink and seeing it was after 10:30, and feeling refreshed I headed downstairs.

Walking into the store, I passed a woman all buttoned up in a raincoat and hat, ready to open her umbrella and carrying a load of packages.

Charlotte called over her shoulder, "Francis, just in time to help Mrs. Franklin get her new things to her car. Here's a raincoat you can use."

How could I refuse?

The raincoat was purple with a matching hat and appropriately dressed I carried Mrs. Franklin's packages around the corner to her car. It was sure pouring and we had a little difficulty getting them in her trunk without squashing anything. She handed me a dollar with a "thank you young lady," and as I hurried back inside I realized that my hair and borrowed clothes had misled her into thinking I was a girl.

I was sure happy I was getting a haircut later.

Charlotte helped me off with the dripping raincoat, hanging it in a corner to dry. My shoes were also dripping wet and she suggested I go up to change immediately, "there's a pair of old sneakers in your closet that you should be able to wear," she said as she compared our feet. "Be sure to put a dry pair of socks on too. We don't want you getting sick after your good deed."

I found the sneakers and socks and after getting my feet completely dry, put them on. It surprised me how snug they fit. Charlotte and I certainly had our similarities.

Returning, I realized that this day was shot, between no male clothes and the pouring rain, and decided to see if I could be of any assistance in the store (*to help make amends for my bumping and yelling incidents*).

Both women were in the back, so I took a long appreciative look at the mannequin in the black bra and panty girdle before joining them.

"How do you expect me to alter this dress properly if I don't have a model," Rose was asking. "I must be sure before doing the final stitching, and you know how fussy Mrs. Carter can be. She specifically needs this dress for the dinner at 'Maxwells' tonight."

Charlotte glanced my way as I parted the curtains and halted her response as she studied me thoughtfully. Looking in Rose's direction, she queried "you know; we might be able to use Francis as an emergency fill-in. He has all the basics right; similar height and stature and we could alter the other areas to her dimensions. If he's game," turning my way, "he could be a real lifesaver."

Rose looked my way explaining, "Margaret, our regular model, called saying she's feeling awful this morning and because of the weather will definitely not be in today. With it pouring out, you certainly aren't roaming around town today looking for a job, are you? I can call Mrs. Carter and delay her pickup until three o'clock, which should

give me enough time to complete the dress properly. What do you say, Francis? Willing to give it a try?"

I was stunned.

They were asking me to be a model for a woman's dress; didn't they realize I was a man. Yet it was difficult to refuse them; I had just been thinking about making up to them for my earlier mistakes and here they were asking me to help them in their dire need.

"I'll do it, but you've got to promise me you will tell absolutely no one about this. Absolutely no one!"

Both Charlotte and Rose smiled.

Charlotte said, "We promise, and we won't forget how you came through for us, when we needed you. Now let's get you out of those clothes and into some new undergarments that will give you the right bumps in the right places."

She motioned me over to the changing room in the back.

Waiting for Charlotte, I took off my sweater and slacks and glanced in the mirror. I wasn't too concerned about her seeing me in the black panties as she had helped me into a pair the previous evening and appeared to think that there was nothing unusual about putting panties on a naked man.

Soon she entered carrying several items and handed me a panty girdle asking me to put it on.

As I pulled it up my legs I felt the pressure of the tight fabric and as she suggested, I arranged myself carefully before letting the girdle fall into position. *Boy it was real tight and made breathing difficult.* The mirror showed new sweeping curves to my hips and derriere caused by hidden inserts totally disregarding my actual shape (*you couldn't trust what you saw in a skirt anymore*).

She carefully measured me saying, "perfect, a 24" waist (*no wonder I couldn't breathe*) and a 34" hip measurement." Reaching for a pink brassiere she continued, "you really do have the right dimensions for us to work with," as I put my arms in the straps. She secured it behind me, making it even more difficult on my breathing. "She's a 34D cup, so we have to put these prostheses in to fill you out properly," and she had me lean forward as she placed some authentic looking breast forms in the cups of my brassiere.

As I straightened up I felt the weight of them on my back, thankful that the brassiere had good support. I had to adjust my posture to handle them.

"My God, how do women carry these heavy breasts around all day? It must take some getting used to," I said.

She smiled knowingly at my comment, while holding up a full slip for me to put on. It fit over my breasts very snugly. Charlotte left for a moment and I thought as I looked in the mirror, *'they may not be real but they sure look good.'*

I had quite a figure as I turned sideways to look at my silhouette.

Charlotte returned with some stocking for me to put on.

When I asked, “how come,” she said I needed the stockings to get into the high heels that were coming next. The heels were required to be sure the dress laid right in the fitting. After she helped me garter the stockings, I put on the high heels and with her assistance walked back to the fitting area. She put my hair in a pony tail and put a light coat of lipstick on me saying, “this should help the picture, in case someone should come in the back and see you.”

‘*God! I hope not,*’ I thought in a mild panic realizing that they were just taking for granted the possibility that I considered to be just awful, that a stranger might see me this way!

Rose was ecstatic, “Francis, you look terrific and I can't tell you how much I appreciate your doing this. We really owe you big time.”

Slightly embarrassed by her enthusiasm I raised my arms as she assisted me into the evening gown.

“Here, get up on this platform so I can see what adjustments are needed. Turn around slowly, so I can see all the angles. Good.”

She stopped me frequently to chalk mark areas that needed fixing and after what felt like an hour but was probably only twenty minutes, she had me step down and removed the dress carefully.

I sat down and rested. It had been difficult standing in heels and doing turns while balancing the extra weight of my breasts with the tightness of all the undergarments. My back and legs were feeling it, particularly my calves.

“Why don't you see Charlotte for something to throw over your slip,” Rose suggested. “I'm probably going to be awhile with these adjustments and I will need you for one more try on.”

Peeking around the curtain, I motioned to Charlotte, she was with a customer, to come to the back.

Several minutes later, she approached, “Let me get you something to cover you up, before you catch a chill.” A moment later she was holding up a cute yellow dress for me to put my arms in. “You can run upstairs and relax until Rose is ready for the final fitting.

I encountered nobody new as I walked through the store and upstairs to the apartment. ‘*I forgot to ask Charlotte about my wet clothes,*’ I thought and turned around to go back to the store. Just then I heard a new customer come in and my heart beat in new fears. ‘*Forget it, I was not meeting any new people unnecessarily if I could help it. I'd talk to her later.*’

It was almost noon as I put on the television and relaxed on the couch. Seeing my hairy legs up on the coffee table I smiled to myself. ‘*Well, I don't get paid enough to shave them,*’ I thought.

“Hi Francis, it is you, isn't it,” Maureen asked standing at the doorway to the hall causing me to look at her in startled fear.

I jumped up and blurted out, “I couldn't get my clothes dry, and Rose needed to finish a gown fitting and Margaret is sick.”

“Hey, wait a minute, calm down. It’s all right, I just came home for some lunch and thought perhaps you would like to join me,” she offered soothingly. “Come on, sit in the kitchen as I make a salad, and slowly, tell me all about it.”

Well so much for keeping it a secret. I followed her into the kitchen, listening to our high heels click on the floor, and sat at the table watching her make lunch. I gave her the full story, blow by blow, and she listened with a sympathetic ear.

“I’m waiting for the final try-on and then it’s good-bye to my dynamite curves,” I smiled over at her.

“You’re really helping out in a pinch. Not many guys could do it. I’m impressed,” she looked at me, as we brought the salad and plates to the dining room.

Over lunch she talked about her hair stylist job at the beauty salon up the street, and how she intended to open her own place someday. She loved to play tennis and attend concerts when they came to town, and enjoyed movies if they weren’t filled with killings and horror.

I enjoyed talking with her (and remembering her supporting shoulder the previous evening), but soon Charlotte was interrupting, asking me to return, for Rose had completed her work. Reluctantly saying good-bye, I went back downstairs, carefully negotiating each step in my high heels so as not to break my neck.

“How are you feeling in these clothes?” Charlotte inquired. “You’ve been in them almost two hours and you seem to be handling the heels quite well.”

I thought to myself *‘I’m getting used to them’* and said to Charlotte, “I hope we can finish soon so I can change into something more comfortable.” I also noticed my back wasn’t feeling the strain as much; *I must have adjusted my posture to handle the weight of the breasts as well as the balancing on the heels.*

Rose had the gown over my head and me back on the platform, in a flash.

As I twirled, she critically watched how the gown fit, making still more markings here and there. I started to daydream about being at a ball and dancing in the arms of a handsome prince.

“Okay Francis, you can step down now. Only a few minor fixes and we should have it complete,” as she lifted the gown over my head. “By the way, where were you just now? Fantasy Island?”

I blushed as I turned away and almost dropped dead on the spot. It’s a good thing she couldn’t read minds, or could she. She said it would only be a few minutes and then we would have the final look and get Charlotte’s approval.

I put the dress back on and wandered to the front to talk to Charlotte. I was getting used to the skirt brushing my legs and the feel of the nylons, it felt quite exciting. The tightness of the brassiere made me wonder what real breasts would feel like. Charlotte was busy with a customer, so I nervously browsed around the dress section to avoid contact.

“You know with some eye make-up and some work on your nails you could easily pass as a young lady,” Charlotte mentioned as she approached me.

Again I blushed (this was becoming a habit), as I hesitantly brought up the subject of my wet clothes. "I can't stay all day in this outfit. Can't we find someplace indoors to hang my wet things so they'll be dry by tomorrow," I suggested.

"There's not much room in the basement and I don't want your clothes all over the apartment. Right now Rose is finishing the gown, so I have to stay put in the front. Why don't you run upstairs and get us some fruit from the fridge; we haven't been able to take a lunch break and we're still rushing to be ready by three o'clock for Mrs. Carter." As an afterthought she said, "we'll get to your wet clothes later."

It was almost two o'clock as I hurried upstairs and made a dash for the bathroom. I almost wet my panties, struggling to get the panty girdle down and of course found myself sitting like a lady (*did I have a choice, holding up the dress and slip while my ankles were captive to my panties and girdle*). Afterwards, pulling up the girdle and straightening myself out turned into a major project (getting the nylons straight drove me crazy). No wonder it took women so long in the powder room and I wasn't even doing make-up.

I put some fruit in a bowl and went back downstairs with a bit more confidence, having worn the heels now for over four hours. I could feel my ass doing bounces as I walked and wondered if a guy would find it appealing. *My God, what would I think of next?*

Charlotte was busy again with a customer showing her some brassieres to select from. They discussed the different ways each of them gave support and I kind of hung back waiting to offer her the fruit bowl.

"Now take Francine here. She's got the full back support style made by 'Olga' and you can see the marvelous uplift it gives her, while providing the additional back support she requires," Charlotte winked at me as they both examined my bosom as my heart raced in terrified fear with the realization that I might be discovered in my shame right there and then. *Whatever was Charlotte thinking?*

The lady asked me to turn around so she could feel the back construction (*what could I do?*) and asked how I liked the style. Lifting my voice, and feeling her fingers all over my back, "this style definitely gives me what I need in a brassiere, comfort and support, both in front and back. I've tried many others, but this one fulfills all my needs the best.

"Charlotte, let me bring this fruit back to Rose before she collapses from starvation," as I grabbed the bowl and hustled behind the back curtain. My heart was beating a mile a minute. How could she do that? I was finding it hard to catch my breath, the clothes were so tight and constricting.

Rose spotted me, said she was done and came over to help me remove my dress. Holding the gown up, she carefully placed it over my head and pulled it down over my body. She grabbed a peach, took a big bite and studied the gown as I slowly turned on the platform. She finally seemed satisfied, for she went up front to ask Charlotte for her approval.

Both Charlotte and the bra-shopping lady came to the back and looked me over.

“This is Mrs. Carter's gown for the dinner tonight. Nobody's to know, but you'll keep this a secret, won't you Sandy?” Charlotte inquired of her customer. “Our regular model took ill this morning, but fortunately we were able to persuade Francine here to substitute for this fitting. She's a Godsend, and doesn't she look good?”

“She definitely has Mrs. Carter's full figure, but could sure use more attention to her face and hair,” Sandy replied.

Charlotte looked at Rose, “You've done a beautiful job. I'm sure Mrs. Carter will be pleased, but let's hurry and get this off Francine so you can clean up the loose threads and stray wrinkles.”

Soon I stood before them shivering in shame in my slip, as Charlotte continued talking to Sandy about the brassiere I was wearing. She felt the back again and decided to try one on herself.

While Charlotte went to find her size, Sandy continued to stroke my back, whispering low to me so Rose couldn't hear, “You're very attractive, you know. I would love to see you alone sometime soon. Here's my card (she placed one in my hand), call me so we can make some plans.”

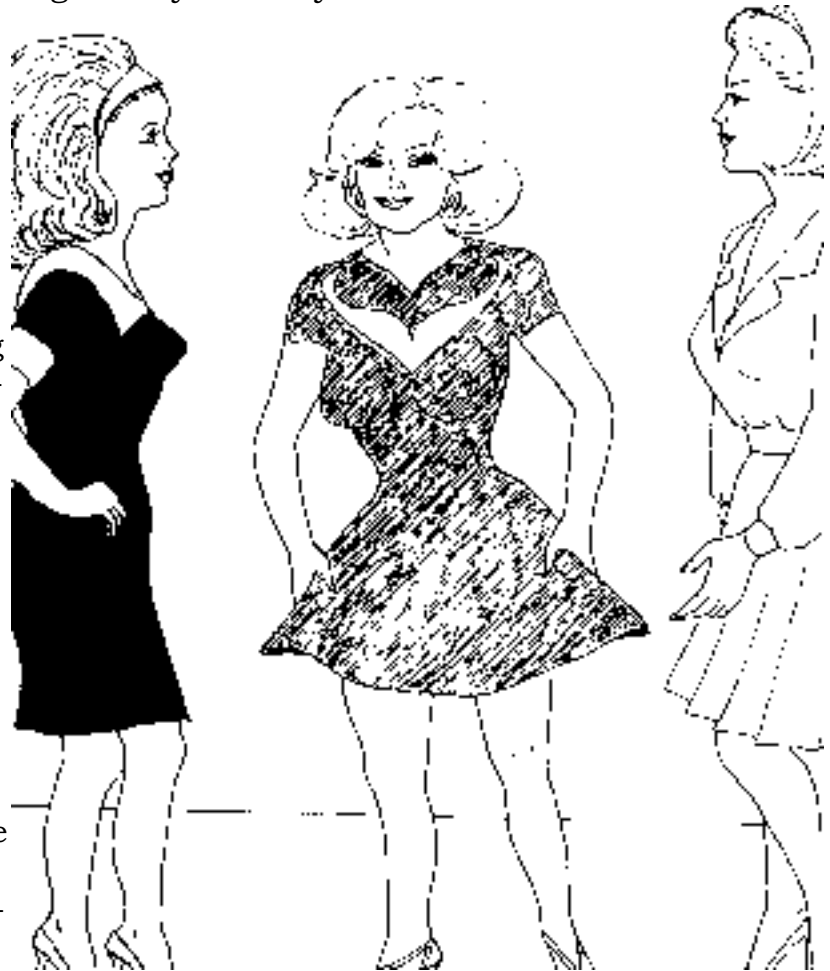
Her perfume filled my senses.

As I closed my hand around the card, I felt some intense pressure in my girdle. It's fortunate I had it on, or I would have given myself away. *Was she interested in me as a woman, or did she see through my disguise and want me as a man dressed like a woman?* I wondered, as I enjoyed her stroking until Charlotte's return startled me, “Here's your size Sandy. You can try it on in the dressing room up front.”

Sandy left with a smile, holding a pink brassiere in her hand, leaving me wondering whether she needed the same support as I did (of course hers was a real need).

Charlotte suggested I put my dress back on, go upstairs and relax until she had finished with Sandy and Mrs. Carter, who was expected shortly. Then she'd help me change.

Understanding we wanted to keep my masquerade intact for the moment, I did as she suggested, secreting Sandy's card in my brassiere (no pockets anywhere) as I



dressed, then asked for a newspaper as I left. She handed me the 'Weekly Gazette' which I tucked under my arm.

I passed Sandy, as she was returning in her pink brassiere and admired her generous charms. While holding her hands underneath her breasts, she told me I was right about the good support it offered, and was definitely going to purchase several today. I smiled, gave her my best 'happy you're happy' parting, and continued on my way upstairs.

When I entered my room, the relief hit me, as I felt the tension of my encounter with Sandy. I laid down on my bed, giving my legs a rest and listened to the raindrops pattering against the window.

Chapter 4

It was dark as I opened my eyes to a light knock on my door. "Who's there?"

"It's Maureen. Can I come in for a minute?"

"Sure," I answered as I lifted myself into a sitting position, stretching to get some of the kinks out.

She turned on the light as she entered, "You're still dressed as a model. I thought you were through this afternoon and all your curves were going 'bye bye'. Listen, I have some time right now to get to your hair, but we've got to hurry, or I'll be late for my date. You did wash your hair earlier, didn't you?"

"Yes I did. What time is it?" I asked getting groggily to my feet.

"It's 6:30, so if we go to my room right away, we should be done by supper time. You can change later when I'm not so rushed."

I shrugged and followed her upstairs to her room.

As she sat me in a barber chair by the window I noticed the apartment she shared with Gina had a living room, where we were, and two doorways leading to what I assumed was a bedroom for each. As she began to cut my hair, she seemed to be making it shorter, so I relaxed, shut my eyes and went off to fantasy land, occasionally feeling her thigh brush my arm. She talked continuously, rarely needing a response from me, covering all the gossip going on in the shop, and ending with her date coming up at eight with her friend Bill, to see a movie called 'Tootsie'.

What seemed like a short time later, she was asking me to lift my head so I could see the results. Looking in the mirror I could only groan as I saw a beautiful hairdo attached to my head.

"How come the female hairdo? It looks great, but I wanted it cut much shorter and less wavy. All I need is some make-up and I could be going on your date with Bill," I ended sarcastically. I'd wash it out later tonight and get a real haircut tomorrow, assuming I had some of my clothes to wear. Meanwhile as I stood up in the dress and all the undergarments which were still doing a good job, I could easily have passed for a secretary or receptionist. Just a little plain, no make-up.

“You were dressed so feminine I thought we could see how you would look with your hair done properly. I am a ladies specialist, you know, and this style does bring out the attractive features in your face. You do look good. Why don't you wash your face, let me put a little make-up on you, and then you can come with us to see Tootsie (*wonder where she got that idea*). I heard it's really super.”

She was so 'matter-of-fact' about the whole situation, that I smiled at my difficulty in saying no. When I accepted her invitation, she had eye shadow, mascara and lipstick on me in no time, and after I glanced in the mirror and was astounded, she pushed me out the door, “Come on, let's go to dinner, and see if the other girls think you can pass.”

Walking into the dining room the women all said good evening and smiled at my appearance.

“I was wondering where you were,” Charlotte said. “I looked for you in your room, but you weren't there. You look very nice and as Sandy suggested earlier, it looks like your face and hair have gotten some badly needed attention.”

Looking at Maureen she added, “You did a nice job, darling, I remember what he looked like before and it's some improvement.”

“Thanks Charlotte,” Maureen responded. “Do you think he can pass if he joins Bill and I at the movies tonight?” She took some vegetables being handed to her by Gina.

“He definitely looks like a Francine to me,” Gertrude offered.

“I can't spot anything masculine at all,” Gina added. “He probably will have to be careful he doesn't get in trouble with the guys.”

Rose smiled at me and said, “You look very feminine, and could easily pass.”

“We'll see,” I responded to all their comments, “right now I'm starved. Maureen can you pass me the potatoes, please.”

We all concentrated on supper, and soon we were again stacking and bringing the dirty stuff to the kitchen. Once again in an apron (much different bumps), I did the washing while Rose and Maureen did the drying and putting away of the dishes.

Afterwards, I decided to go with Maureen (I love Dustin Hoffman) so we got our coats (I borrowed one from my closet), she loaned me a purse with a few essentials inside, and we went downstairs together when the front door bell rang. Thank-goodness that I didn't have to wait, I was already having cold feet when the bell rang.

“Now, just relax, and think, ‘I'm a girl, I'm a girl,’ and everything will be perfectly normal,” Maureen urged with a lovely smile as she opened the door for Bill, causing me to think of the classic lines from Some Like It Hot.

‘*Boy, am I a girl!*’ I swore nervously under my breath.

Bill greeted me pleasantly, and helped us into the car as if he had known me all my life as a girl, and I secretly sighed in relief.

Maureen had informed me that she and Bill had a friendship of many years, nothing romantic, and did things like this quite often. We all chatted about the rain and when it would let up, and soon we were there.